

E63 - 5 lifechanging lessons learned in 2024.

Welcome to The Empowered Edupreneur Podcast. My name is Michelle Smit, and I am an ex-teacher turned online business coach for Edupreneurs, the owner of Digiteach and a six-figure entrepreneur. I am in love with empowering educators, just like you to create freedom filled online businesses and lives they love.

If you are looking to uplevel your skills, your finances, your mindset, and change the trajectory of your life as an educator in business, then you are in the right place. Think of this podcast as your weekly dose of business and mindset development to help unlock the infinite potential within you to play bigger with your life and go after your dreams.

We are going to have so much fun together. So thank you so much for pushing play today. Now let's dive in.

Hello, hello. Welcome back to my podcast. I'm excited to chat to you today, and we are just a couple of days away from the new year, from entering into 2024, and I don't know how that happened because it feels like literally a month ago that I was celebrating the new year. It's pretty wild and definitely in a reflection period. I always go into a bit of a reflection period leading into the new year, I really enjoy reviewing my year and looking at the lessons that I've learned and what has sort of stuck with me throughout the year in life and in business.

And that's what I'm going to be talking to you about today. I'm going to share five life changing business lessons I learned in 2023. I think these lessons are really amazing for business and have helped me build a business that I've sustained ultimately that I haven't burnt down to the ground yet.

And I think that's important. I really think building a business that is sustainable in the long run is absolutely essential. Otherwise what's the point, right? And obviously a lot of these lessons that I'm going to share with you also relate to life and are just really valuable in life as well.

Alrighty. So let me dive in the first lesson that I have sort of learned is that community and relationship building is just everything for me. And I think it's

everything in business. I think businesses are built on relationships, and that's why when people say that AI is coming and this and that and whatever, whatever is going to replace us, I just don't see that happening anytime soon because connection and relationships and community is something that I look for, and I know that many people look for and crave.

And I don't know if it's just because I value relationships so highly. If I look at my personal life relationships with my friends and my family, and just being around people where I have authentic, real connection with.

Is really high up on my list of importance. In terms of fulfillment and happiness relationships is right at the top for me. And I need to surround myself with really good quality relationships and people. And that is just in my life. And when I look at my business, my business is built upon relationship building and I believe that I have been able to be successful in business.

Year after year, because I really value building relationships with people. And it's not like, hey, I'm going to build a relationship with you because I want to use you or have you buy my stuff later. I really love building relationships and connecting with people. That's one of my highest values is connection.

And it's why I even started this podcast because I was craving deeper connection. I was craving having, forming deeper connections. And I know that even though I can't hear you or see you on the other side, if you're listening to this, our connection is getting deeper as a result. And for me that is meaningful and yeah, I think if, if I look at this year and I look at my business, I just see relationship building and community as just being an essential part of the business.

And I really urge you to prioritize this in the next year as really, really value the people that come into your world. Give them your time of day, don't treat them like a number, don't treat them like a name on an email list. Give people your time of day. And I know online business, there's a lot of automation and semi passive stuff that can happen and I'm all for it and I have it in my own business and I'm here for it.

But I prioritize real connection with people. In my email inbox, I'm always replying to everyone, myself most of the time, and in my Instagram, on my DMs, and just anyone who connects with me. I just really value that, and I always respond, and I just know there are human beings on the other side,

with lives, and emotions, and feelings, and stuff like that. And I like to see them, right. And I like to feel seen. And so if you can cultivate that in your business.

And if you make that something that is really a part of your business, an essential big part of your business, I don't think you're going to have a tough time. I don't think you're going to have a hard time growing your business. And if I look at how I've grown mine, that's been. Really, really important.

And I've really seen that I really acknowledge that that is, that is how my business continues to grow and thrive and it is where it is today. So definitely wanted to start with that. And I think it's an important one.

All right. So the next lesson is maintaining your core values in everything you do in your business.

Now I think this is so important because if we don't build businesses that are in alignment with our values, we are not going to sustain it and we're going to resent it and it's going to feel terribly misaligned. And it's going to feel like you're abandoning yourself for your business. And I know people always thinking that they have to sacrifice something for their business.

And yes, sometimes you have to put in the hustle. You have to put in the hours. You have to put in the energy. There will be some sacrifices, but you don't need to sacrifice your values for your business. You don't need to sacrifice what you truly believe to be important and true for your business. In fact, you need to infuse that in your business, in everything that you do, and really keep it connected to what is important to you, what is valuable to you, what is meaningful to you.

So for example, just like how I was saying, relationship building, and connection is a value of mine in my life. That is just a very high value of mine. I want to have strong friendships and strong family around me and real bonds. And quality bonds. And I knew that that was something that I wanted to build my business around.

And so since I opened shop literally five years ago, that has been at the forefront. And so I infused my business with that value at the forefront. That's why people often come into my world and become friends afterwards, or I have clients and coaching clients and DBA students who come in. And then we

actually become friends because I value building meaningful relationships with people.

And I've infused it at every point in my business. So if People email me, I'm making sure that I maintain my value of connection and I respond. I don't ignore people unless they're trolls, then I'll ignore you. I don't treat people like numbers. I always give them the time of day.

So that is a core value of mine that I've maintained throughout the business, and I've infused it into my business. So when I'm doing launches, I make sure people feel seen, heard, understood. if people are in DBA. I make sure that they feel seen, heard, understood. I prioritize my core values in my business.

And I think you absolutely need to do that. And I just realized this year that I've been doing it without even realizing but it is something that if you can consciously do that. And make sure that you just don't abandon yourself and what's important to you. So for example, if you are building a business and it's important for you to keep your personal life relatively private, say you do have children and you don't want to put this on your social media, you don't want people to see all that stuff.

You need to honour that as a core value of yours, or as a core thing of yours that you want to maintain the privacy in your personal life, and you don't have to sacrifice that to build business. You can absolutely maintain the privacy of your personal life and grow your business. There are ways in which you can do that.

There are just different ways of doing it. You just don't show your face as much, or you don't post that stuff, but you post other things. And so there is a way to build your business and grow your business, which is in complete alignment with your core values. And I think what's important is just finding what those values are.

Really do that. Even at the end of this year, do that as a little insightful question, ask yourself, what are my five core values in my life and in my business that I'd like to pull through. And then build everything in relation to that, don't abandon yourself for business or for money.

For example, if someone comes into my world and is willing to pay me, 5000 euros for my platinum coaching, and I don't see them as a good fit. But I know

they're willing to pay me that money. But I know it's a misaligned fit. My core value is to not sell that offer to that person because it's not going to serve them best.

And I've now realized that through a lot of trial and error, obviously I had to get to a point where I could see what's a good fit and learn who is a good fit? What is a in aligned fit look like? So I've had to stumble to get to this point. But now I know this is not a good fit for you if you are X, Y, Z, then things like that.

And I have declined people on calls where they're like, I want to do platinum. And I'm like, this isn't the right thing for you at this point. And so that is me maintaining my core value. In my business, no matter what, because I want people to get results. And I want aligned coaching fits and things like that.

And so me declining to work with someone in a coaching capacity. Is me seeing that this is a misaligned fit and me being honest and choosing to maintain that core value of mine over making money. And I think that's important. I think if you keep abandoning yourself to make money, it's a soulless path.

It's not satisfying. It's not fulfilling. Money is great and I love it to bits, and we all need it. But money, when you abandon yourself over and over again is not what we're here for. And it's not necessary and doesn't feel as good. And what ends up happening If you do have these misaligned fits, you have nightmare coaching or client relationships that don't work out which is actually detrimental to the business overall.

So lots of different ways you can look at how you can maintain your core values and also another one is me not forcing people to buy something. And me not using massively manipulative sales tactics to force someone to make a buying decision when they aren't ready. That's against my core values.

I feel very wrong about that. And so I make sure that people don't have that as much. Yes, I will have urgency. Yes, I will have scarcity. Yes, it will be real life stuff, but I'm not going to make you on the spot on a phone call in a sales call or in a discovery call pay for my product or my offer on the call just to close the sale and put you in a bad position.

That's another example of just, it's not in alignment with my values. I'm not going to do it no matter which salesperson tells me. Just know your core values, feel into your intuition about it and build your business in alignment

with that. For me, that's been really valuable, and I think that's something that I wanted to relay onto you.

Okay. The next lesson is infusing joy in everything you do. Prioritizing joy. Damn, if we could just prioritize joy more in our business, wouldn't that be more exciting? Wouldn't that be more fun? Wouldn't that be more playful? Instead of taking everything so seriously, just be like a kid in a candy store and just play and be open to things.

Just learn, play and learn like a child does. And really building in joy into the things that you do in whatever way that looks for you. So if you know that certain things makes you really happy, build that into your business somehow. So if you know that one-on-one connection makes you really happy, then build out.

A one-on-one offer, if that really brings you joy. If you love a one-on-one offer, but you don't like having a full schedule, then build out a one-on-one offer at a higher price point where you don't have a million calls. You just have a couple of calls. And so you have the spacious calendar, and you have the one-on-one connection.

Think about how you build your business and prioritizing joy as a real key thing of it. For me, I love slow mornings. I love a spacious calendar. I love a handful of one on ones and Voxer coaching clients because I can connect and that's really important for me. But a handful of them because I do not like a schedule with hundreds of calls in it.

Yeah. I like launching in certain ways that brings me more joy than other ways, there's certain ways that I'm just like, no, that's not my vibe. The whole sales process of just doing many, many sales calls, which sounds like dread in my body. And so I'm not going to do that. I'm going to go for the thing that makes me feel happier overall, all the time, all the time.

So if you can prioritize your joy and your happiness. And find the thing that's going to feel the lightest and most aligned for you at all times. That's a great way to approach your business. Also, from the perspective of this is instead of I have to do this, it's, I get to do this. I'm grateful. And I'm lucky to be able to do this.

And how can I have fun with this? How can I make this more fun for myself? How can I make this more joyful? What can I do to bring my vibe into this? You can totally infuse all sorts of things into your business that brings you joy. And we forget that, we forget, we follow all these things, and we do this and that and we get so serious.

Adulting is so serious. When you become an adult suddenly everything is so serious, and life just becomes heavier. And it's like, can we just go back to being childlike and playful and infusing that into what we do and prioritizing it. So making it a priority and not just forgetting about it altogether, because I know people build businesses and grow their business and joy is not prioritized in that process.

And I'm not here for that at all anymore, because it's not sustainable. That's the only way I've been able to stay in businesses because I'm like, cool. I need to listen to what feels right to me. And I need to do that, and I need to prioritize that. And if that means taking a month off to be to connect with my family and friends and not work a lot, then I'm going to do that because for me, that's what I need at that moment in time.

And it always benefits me, always benefits me. And when you prioritize joy, you'll see you'll have more energy, you'll have more creativity. And that will feed into your business and there is a return on investment on that.

Okay, the next lesson is a good one. Its alignment isn't meant to feel easy. It isn't meant to always feel easy. I think people think that alignment means everything's going to flow and it's just ease and it's just natural and completely easy, and quite often, doing the aligned thing is actually the scariest thing you can do. Doing the thing that is close to your heart and feels like an absolute yes inside is often the thing that scares you most because it's often so vulnerable or it's just plain right terrifying. So for example when I started my business, I built it in the online ESL teaching space, and that soon was very misaligned for me, very misaligned, but I was making money. It was great.

And I was just not happy in that situation. And I knew internally, I wanted to move into the online business space and the launching space. And I knew that was the aligned thing. I knew it was in my heart, but it terrified me like no other, because it was essentially closing down my current business and restarting an entire new business and a new niche.

Terrifying, so scary. Especially when you're making money and you've just quit your job and you're doing the thing and then suddenly you're like, cool, this is misaligned, I need to change direction. That decision to change direction. Scariest decision, but best decision because it was the align decision, but it wasn't easy.

And so when you are in this process of business and building an online business that is bringing you obviously freedom and all these amazing things that you want. Just know that the aligned thing isn't always going to be the easy one. It's actually often going to be the scariest one. So if it's scaring you.

That doesn't mean it's misaligned or there's anything wrong. It actually means it's the thing you should do. And I know that is scary to hear, but often the thing we should do is the thing that scares us most, and that is guiding us to that alignment and constantly keeping aligned because alignment is a constant process.

You know, you constantly have to keep your business aligned and things are going to change and evolve because you're going to change and evolve. So you're constantly having to look at yourself and really find out what is the thing that I want to do next? And even if it terrifies me, is this the thing that I actually really want to do?

And am I just not doing it because I'm scared? Because that happens a lot of the time, often the thing you need to do is the scary thing but you're not doing it because you're scared. But that's the aligned thing to do. And don't get it wrong don't think the aligned thing's going to feel easy. The aligned thing often isn't going to feel easy And so I just wanted to mention that because I think that's a very good lesson and thing to keep in mind in life and in business.

Because you can apply this to life as well. So say you're in a relationship and it's not really the aligned relationship and you love the person, but something's missing perhaps. And you feel in your heart something's not right. And. The easy option, especially if you've been in that relationship for like 10 years, you know, you could even be married.

The easy option is to just stay in the relationship and keep going the way you're going, in the sense that that's the easier option. The harder option is to really say, this isn't right anymore. And potentially have a divorce and go

through that. That is the hard option, but often, this is the thing one needs to do to get back into alignment, right?

I'm not saying go and divorce your partners, but I'm just showing that as an example. Alignment is actually, the thing that takes most courage and requires you to be most brave and face the, sometimes, the deepest insecurities that you have. And that's amazing and terrifying at the same time. So keep that in mind, if it scares you, pay attention.

It's probably the thing you should do. Alright, the last lesson that I have reflected on is something that I've said a lot this year, and I think it's so powerful. Is choosing the story that gives you power and doesn't take your power away. What does that mean? We have limiting beliefs and stories in our minds all the time.

We create stories all the time. Everything in our mind is ultimately a story that we've created based on how we feel and our emotions and our perception and all sorts of things, just our mindset and everything. And we get into the habit of these repeat stories that are very disempowering. And ultimately that really just limits us and keeps us trapped.

And so when I look at my mind and when I'm going through like thinking something, especially if it's in business I often find myself creating stories, we all do. We create stories based on things. And when I look at that story, I have to ask myself, does this story give me power or does this story take my power away because I get to choose the stories.

I get to choose exactly what I tell myself and the stories I create and the narratives I create on based on things and most people create very disempowered stories and narratives that really don't take away their power. And if you do that all the time, you're just constantly taking away your power. And in business, you need your power.

You need your power, and you need to hold on to it as much as you can. You need to cultivate power in an internal power. And that starts with the mind. It starts with the thoughts, starts with the stories. And so just a simple question to ask yourself, it's so simple. Does the story give me power or does it take my power away.

If it takes your power away, you've got to choose a different story because you want to choose a story that gives you power. And it's all about reframing. You can take one event and you can reframe it in many, many different ways and you can look at it from many different angles. And an example of this would be, say you get on a discovery call, and you pitch your program or your offer to the person and they decline, and they say they don't want to take the offer.

You can then walk away and create a story about how bad you are and how your niche doesn't have money. I hear that one a lot. And how you're not good enough and your offers not good enough and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Like you can keep going down that rabbit hole. And that's the narrative that you create based on that outcome.

Or you can leave that call and firstly, you can learn from it. You can say, okay, cool. This person didn't buy. Let's maybe look at what their objections were. What, what was the reason behind it? Let's learn from that. Let's try build that into the offer and do it again.

Like that could be the story you tell. Cool. Let's learn from it. Let's do it again. Done. Simple. Or you can look at it as okay, that was a misaligned fit. That person isn't actually meant to work for me for right now. It wasn't meant to be. And I might have not seen how it's a misaligned fit, but they saw it as a misaligned fit for whatever reason.

And It's just the name of the game. And I don't actually want to work with people who are misaligned fits. And so they did me a favour by declining. You could even reframe it like that. So there's a million ways you can reframe a single event. And the way you want to reframe it is the way that gives you power that doesn't take your power away.

And I do this all the time. So yes, sometimes I get trapped into disempowered powering stories we're not always going to be perfect. But I'm always consciously questioning those stories and I'm saying, well, is this just taking my power away? Like, how can I look at this differently? If you can do that, you're going to be building up a lot more internal power and that's what you need in your business That's what you need.

You need to build yourself up. You can't break yourself down constantly because you've got enough obstacles as it is. You really need to prime your internal game for success. And success means giving yourself more power and

vouching for yourself and priming your internal game for success. And that's what it looks like.

Okay. It looks like going through hardships and going through challenging things. And not letting that take your power away, but letting it teach you something, give you the lesson you need to learn and reframe it in a way that really gives you power. And that is it. Those are my lessons. Those are five lessons.

I'll just recap them. Number one, relationship building, and community is absolutely everything in business. People buy based on relationships. So prioritize. Real life relationships. The second one is maintaining your core values and everything you do in business. You don't need to abandon yourself for your business.

You get to infuse your core values into your business. And that is actually something that you really should do into your business and into your brand. Because people will connect with that. Number three, infusing joy in what you do in your business. So prioritizing joy. Literally looking at how can I make this more fun for me?

That's a really good question because that's going to help you lighten your business. It's going to help you steer your decisions into doing things that are just more enjoyable for you. And you have to enjoy your business. Otherwise, it's very hard to continue it. Number four is alignment isn't meant to feel easy.

Maybe sometimes it can, and that's awesome, but alignment isn't actually meant to feel easy. It's often the scariest thing that you need to do is the most aligned thing. So don't get it confused. Just because it's scary doesn't mean it's misaligned. That's your fear talking. If you want it, and it's really what you want.

And it's out of your comfort zone. And it's going to make you feel scared, right? But often the thing that you really want is out of your comfort zone and is the thing that makes you feel scared. And in business that happens all the time. Keeping in alignment is actually very challenging because you have to be brave and have courage.

So just keep that in mind as you build your business. If you're feeling the fear of it, don't let that be masked as, oh, this isn't the right thing for me. I

shouldn't do it. You should actually often leap and do the thing that scares you most, because that's often what's going to bring you to most alignment.

And that's the same in life, often doing the harder thing is the most aligned thing that happens a lot. All right, the last lesson is choosing the story that gives you power and doesn't take your power away. Always choosing the narrative and the reframe that gives you power.

And makes you feel better ultimately, just do it because if you can do that, you can combat a lot of hardship in business and you will maintain your power through it, and it won't break you down all the way to the ground. So always ask yourself when you're creating stories, because we all do it. Does the story give me power?

Does it take it away? If it takes it away, how can I reframe that? How can I reframe it in a way that actually serves me? Because there's always a way that everything that happens in life, you can always look at it from a way that it can serve you. Even the hardest things serve us in some way.

All right. So those are my lessons. I feel they're pretty life changing. I think that they are powerful in life and in business, and I hope it resonated with you. I hope you loved it. And I am wishing you a beautiful New Year's. Stay safe, have a party celebrate with friends and yeah, be proud of yourself for what you've done this year and what you've achieved and let's create magic in 2024.

I'm in a space of creating new things. I'm restructuring stuff. Prices will probably change, as always, offers may change. I'm in a space of newness, and I'm going to leap and do some different things as well. And yeah, I'm excited. I'm excited to share this next year with you. To create magic. To keep growing our beautiful, freedom filled online businesses. To launch our scalable offers, to make money, to get back more time, all of those things that I know I'm so obsessed with, I'm excited to help you do that.

Alrighty. So have a wonderful new year's and I will chat to you in 2024.

Bye.

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a digital course or group program to scale your income and impact without teaching more hours, then I have just the thing for you.

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Creating scalable courses and programs have allowed me to 10x my hourly rates, hit six figures in my business and impact hundreds and hundreds of people around the world without having to be actively teaching all day. If this is what you desire. Grab my guide in the show notes and let me help you.

I appreciate you so much. I can't wait to connect with you in the next episode. In the meantime, go create a business and life you love.