

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 86: LESSONS I LEARNED THIS YEAR

I'm your guide, Tara Swiger, and I help makers and artists become the experts of their own business. And one of the best ways you can do that is by learning the lessons of your own business. If you're in one of my programs or you follow me on [Periscope](#), you know that I'm an evangelist for reviewing your month, and your year, to see what you've learned, and how you can apply that your next adventure or goal. That's the way to ensure that you are regularly moving forward and getting better and better at doing your particular kind of awesome.

Today I'll be sharing what I've learned this year in my business and in the businesses I've worked with. But before I get to that, I want to let you know about something time-sensitive: My two biggest programs, Lift Off and the Starship, are now open - as of December 14th, 2015 - and they'll be open until December 23rd.

Lift Off only opens once every 6 months and several of you listeners have asked me to announce when it's open, so here you go: *Lift Off is open and you can join now at TaraSwiger.com/lift.*

Lift Off contains 6 months of weekly lessons that guide you through building the foundations of your business. For 26 weeks you'll receive at least one email a week, that will guide you through the most important areas of your business:

First, with Chart Your Stars, you'll get clear on where you want to go and what kind of business you want to be building. Students have said that this, which you do in your very first week, is the most powerful tool they've used, as it helps them get really focused on why they hadn't reached their goals yet. After you Chart Your Stars, you make a map, which includes setting a goal for the next three months and then determining everything that needs to be done in order to reach that goal.

After you know what you're working on, you take Pay Yourself, which will ensure that you are profitable as you grow. You'll not only learn about profit margins and break even points, you'll

apply it to your own business and discover exactly how many of your product you need to be selling in order to reach your income goal.

And then once you know *how many* items you need to sell, we answer the question: How do you sell them? by focusing on marketing. You'll get a signed copy of my book, [Market Yourself](#), and a six-week course that walks you through each step of creating your own marketing plan, including who your people are, what your message is, and how to use tools to reach those people. You end the class by making a marketing plan you can actually stick with.

And then, to make sure you actually have TIME to do your marketing, you take *Wrangle Your Time*, my class on making the most effective use of your time, no matter how much (or little) you have.

So [Lift Off](#) is a guided tour through all that PLUS this year I've added a monthly group coaching call, so you can ask me all your questions and get some insight into your business.

You can sign up or learn more at TaraSwiger.com/lift.

If you want all of Lift Off plus more personal help, community, and accountability, check out the [Starship](#). It's access to Lift Off (whenever you want it) plus access to every class I've taught, plus a 24/7 community where you can ask all your questions and get not just my replies, but that of other business owners in your same industry, some of whom have been in biz for over 10 years and others who are making 6 figures in sales. There's the forum, a weekly chat and an Accountability Partner Program, where I match you up with someone who you can check in with daily, weekly or monthly!

So the Starship is on the same page as Lift Off, just scroll down a little - it's all at TaraSwiger.com/lift. The Starship has a limited number of spots and along with Lift Off is open until midnight on December 23rd.

Now I wanted to let you know about these programs both so you don't miss their open boarding time AND because throughout this podcast I'm going to mention lessons that I learned by working closely with dozens of other businesses: those of Starship Captains. And I had to explain what the Starship IS, so you didn't think I was going crazy, when I say "Starship Captains." :)

The big lessons I learned this year about

- ★ Time
- ★ Confidence

- ★ Possibility and mindset

Time

This year is the first time I really dove into talking about and thinking about time and how we, creatives, get everything done that we need to get done. Now, I start putting together my first class on this, Wrangle Your Time, because I has created [Lift Off](#), and I wanted it to walk you through the foundations of building a business, and I knew the foundation were:

- ★ Know what you want
- ★ Be profitable
- ★ Share your work (i.e., marketing)
- ★ Get Stuff done.

I had classes for the first three, but not for getting stuff done, even though I got asked out it alllll the time, and my most popular posts on my site are about how I get things done. I'll link to the posts and podcast episodes about managing time and getting stuff done, in the show notes, at TaraSwiger.com/podcast86.

- ★ [How I get things done](#)
- ★ [My exact system](#)
- ★ [How to get things done, part 1](#)
- ★ [How to get things done, part 2](#)
- ★ [Get More Done](#) (class with CreativeLIVE)

So to create this class, I started digging into both what worked for me, and what worked for the Starship Captains, many of whom had kids and worked full-time jobs, or were homeschooling their kids - in other words, people who have a lot of other stuff going on and still find the time to build awesome businesses.

Now, I share what I learned about how to get stuff done both in the Wrangle your Time, which you can only find in [Lift Off and the Starship](#), and in my CreativeLive class, [Get More Done](#).

But today I want to share two things I learned while doing the research and teaching this for Creative Live:

1. Everyone feels like they're not doing enough. *Everyone*. Everyone is judging themselves about how they spend their time.
2. There is no perfect system. Looking for the perfect system is a waste of your time.
3. Instead, focus on what matters most to you, and be sure you're spending as much of your time as possible, working and doing that.

Confidence

The second big lesson I learned this year is about Confidence. I realized, through in-person conversations with a lot of people this year, that a big difference between someone who has a biz they're happy with, and someone who doesn't, comes down to - of course - taking action. But what keeps people from taking action? Confidence, or lack thereof.

When I met someone who has doing awesome things, I noticed that a lot of their story involved confidence. And I started asking people about it specifically: How did you feel confident enough to do that?

And their answer was often: Well, I didn't really. But I looked back at what I had done and I decided to try it a little bit, which built confidence, so I did it some more.

So I put together what people were telling me, along with the scientific research on confidence, and I created the #BizConfidenceChallenge, a totally free 6 week e-course that challenges you to build your confidence. You can find it (and sign up for it) at TaraSwiger.com/bizconfidence if you haven't already.

So what I learned this year is a LOT about how confidence actually works, and how important it is, how it's often the missing ingredient in someone moving forward in their business or not.

Possibility and Mindset

The last big lesson of my year is related to Confidence: it's all about possibility and mindset. I've written about possibility before; in fact, I feel like every year I come to realize how much I've learned about what's possible. In other words, every year I'm shocked all over again about how much more is possible, both for myself and in the creative biz world, than I previously thought possible. This year, what struck me is that our belief in what's possible, what we're capable of, what we have the power to do, is so intrinsic to shaping our actions. Now, I don't mean that if you just think bigger everything magically gets bigger. What I mean is that whatever you imagine your limits to be, they are. If you believe you can't change, you can't. If you believe that you can, you'll actually do some stuff to change. I talked more about this and the research behind it in [episode 49](#).

So if you think it's not possible for someone who makes what you make to be profitable, you won't be profitable. You won't take the actions and decisions required to be profitable. But as soon as you accept that it is possible, perhaps because you meet someone who's doing it, and you stop fighting that it's possible, you will be able to take the actions and make the decision to be profitable.

If you think that something is out of your control, it will continue to be out of your control. Like, for example, making more sales. As long as you insist that "I can't make people buy", you'll fail to do the tasks that you could do to help people be ready to buy.

The tricky thing is, of course, *you don't know what you don't know*. You don't know what IS possible, until you find and believe someone who's really doing it. So before I met a full-time yarn maker, I didn't really think anyone could do it. And once I did, whoosh, I was committed to making it happen for myself. Until I met a yarn-maker making hundreds of thousands in dollars in sales, I didn't know it was possible.

So how do you solve this? This is the joy of the internet: it can connect with all kinds of people who are doing all kinds of amazing things. The important thing is, to not put them on a pedestal, or tell yourself they're too special and not like you.

Instead ask *yourself*, "How could that work for me?"

It's this one question that can change everything. It can bust down the doors of what's possible, it can open you up to ideas you never would have had. No matter who you're talking to, no matter how amazing they seem or different than you they are, you can always learn something by asking, "How could that work for me?"

I used the question to grow my Instagram following faster than before, to increase traffic to my site from Pinterest by 1000% (seriously!), and to actually finish my book proposal and send it to my agent.

Those are my big lessons of 2015, and I can't wait to apply them to the new year and my next projects.

Now it's time to apply this to yourself:

What have you learned this year? What are the lessons you want to carry into 2016?

I'd love to know your response - please share it with the hashtag #exploreyoureenthusiasm on Instagram.

And if you want to be guided through this kind of review every month, check out Lift Off or the Starship at TaraSwiger.com/lift, before December 23rd.

Thank you, and have an enthusiastic day!