

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 160: WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN 35 YEARS

I have written online about my birthday for the last 8 years!

This will be the ninth!

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- ★ [29](#) (I opened the Starship!)
- ★ [28](#) (I launched this site!)
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Links mentioned:

[Mindset: the key to your success](#)

[Affirmations and mindset with Joeli](#)

[Map Your Business](#)

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Hello and welcome to explore your enthusiasm, episode 160.

Each year on my birthday, I look back at the past year, and at past birthdays, and try to make sense of it all. So today I'm going to share the big lessons of this last year, and well, the last 35 years. You can find past birthday posts, linked in today's show notes, at TaraSwiger.com/podcast160.

To do this birthday review, I use the monthly questions found in my book, [Map Your Business](#). The book has these questions every month for 12 months, so you can start whenever, and make

reviewing your month (and planning for the next) a regular part of your business (and life!). You can find the book at TaraSwiger.com/map or on Amazon.

Let's start with the celebrations. Now, if you're in the Starship, you'll know that we start each person's check-in with the question: *What is going well?*

The reason? It is REALLY easy to forget the good stuff that's happened! It's easy to gloss over all the milestones you hit, because you just keep setting bigger goals!

Also, acknowledging even the smallest win builds your confidence so you can do the next bigger thing.

I make it a point to share a few of my celebrations here in my birthday episode each year... but I have to tell you, it's not easy. I don't want to seem like I'm bragging or I'm full of myself. But I have to practice what I preach, and model celebrating progress!

WHAT WENT WELL THIS YEAR:

I dealt with my anxiety, panic and depression head on after a lifetime of smooshing down my feelings. NOT FUN. But good!

I got SUPER committed to doing the things that make sure I have a good day (I'll record an episode about this soon!).

Despite taking more time away from my biz, this podcast, and product launching than ever before... *I had my best year in biz in 2016, and 2017 is on track to surpass it.*

Jay and I made a lot of progress toward making his dream a reality. In that process, I met a lot of bank managers and small biz advisors and despite my fears - they all approved of, and were impressed by, my business. Since I started Blonde Chicken Boutique in 2006, I expected to be looked down on or seen as "tiny" or "not a real business," but after a few meetings with small business specialists in financing and management, I've finally gotten over that fear. They like me, they really like me!

I discovered and got obsessed with 2 new business models (retail shop + direct selling). After years of thinking of direct selling as "not a real business," I've been proven wrong... because in just 2 months, I've built a "real business" from it.

If my goal here, in my business and life, is to "explore my enthusiasm" and let that enthusiasm be my guide, I have definitely gotten better at it this year. My enthusiasm took me in some new directions and I am having SO MUCH FUN learning new business models, industries, and technology. It's not at all where I thought I'd go, but it aligns so much with my mission and enthusiasm, that I'm learning it's okay to just GO WITH IT.

Also worth celebrating - I'm catching myself when I care what other people think...and just saying, "stop it." This year I did waaaaay more scary things (I think I say that every year! I seem to always be freaking myself out with brave new things.)

THE LESSONS I'VE BEEN LEARNING THIS LAST YEAR.

These are, of course, lessons I've been learning my whole life; they've just become clear this year.

Neil Gaiman said, *"The moment that you feel, just possibly, you are walking down the street naked, exposing too much of your heart and your mind, and what exists on the inside, showing too much of yourself... That is the moment, you might be starting to get it right."*

This year I did a lot of vulnerable sharing and exposing my heart and mind... and everything in my life got better. And I'm not just talking about my podcast on anxiety or being on a panel at Midwest Craft Con where we talked about depression (that was hard!)... I was also more myself, both online and in my real life relationships.

And this made things BETTER. We were pretty real here before, talking about what things are hard and feeling alone, but this year the podcast got real-er, and I'd so much rather talk to you about mindset and mental health and confidence, than just about anything. And...

This next lesson has been edited for language, because I know lots of you listen with your kids (which I LOVE!). My longtime friend and VA, Jess Cook, said (in response to me worrying about what people would think about something):

"I don't give a single f what strangers on the internet have to say about it."

Whoa. This was exactly what I needed to hear, when I needed to hear it, and I read the post she wrote ALL THE TIME.

I worked, consciously on stopping giving f's about what strangers on the internet (or even friends!) think about me, my biz and my choices.

And I got a lot better at it!

I'll be honest, some of this was medically induced. One of the anti-anxiety meds they put me on put me in an immediate, deep depression where I couldn't even stand to turn the pages of my books. I **TOTALLY** stopped caring. And when I stopped taking the meds and came out of it, one good bit stuck with me: **realizing that Not Caring was OK. That the world wouldn't fall down because I stopped worrying about what it thought of me.**

Now, I'm no expert on it, but I remember what it felt like to not care what people thought and you know what? It was pretty great. Realizing that the world would keep on spinning, I could still do good work and I didn't have to worry about what other people thought?! That was a revelation.

It all ties into this: the mindset you choose impacts your results.

THIS is why mindset is so important when it comes to business. Your mindset determines your ability to implement. What I mean is, when your mindset is stuck in victim mode, or in believing your abilities are fixed... you don't actually **DO** the work.

I've been reading, thinking and teaching about this for a few years, but recently this hit home in a **REAL** way - when I totally open up to the possibility that I **CAN** do this, that I **COULD** learn how to do things, I get a lot more done. And not in a pushy, exhausting way; it just comes more naturally.

I also learned this (again) with my husband and our plans to buy the local comic book shop - when we lost hope that it would happen, we stopped working on it. When it all felt **TOO HARD**, we didn't do anything. The key to us taking action was first believing it was doable. And that **WE** could do it.

We'll be talking more about this in upcoming episodes, but you can learn about fixed and growth mindset in [this episode](#). I want you to ask yourself: Do I really believe that this is possible and that ***I*** am capable of it? If not, you've got to work on **THAT** before you just try to bust through your to do list.

So that's what I've learned this year!

If you have enjoyed the show and wanna send me some birthday love, the best way to do that is to leave a review and share it with your friends. To do that is to hit "subscribe," whether it's on

your podcast app or YouTube, and then leave a review on iTunes or hit the “thumbs up” on YouTube. Then click the share button on the video or in your player, or head to TaraSwiger.com/podcast160 and share the post on Facebook or Twitter. And of course, I love to see what you work on while you’re listening, so post a photo on Instagram and share that you’re listening to #exploreyourenthusiasm. I’m gonna sit down with a cup of coffee and enjoy all your posts on that hashtag!

Thanks for reviewing and sharing it and I hope you have an enthusiastic day!