

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 211: ON MY 36TH BIRTHDAY

It's my birthday month, and that means it's time to review my year and share the lessons I learned from another year on the earth.

Each year, on my birthday, I share a bit about my birthday review process. Just like we do at the new year, I look at what was great, what wasn't, and what lessons is my life teaching me?

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 on [Amazon](#).

In the show notes, at taraswiger.com/podcast211, I've linked to all the past birthday posts - they go back 9 years - this will be the tenth! And I gotta tell you, I read back through last year's transcript and it was SO GOOD. I needed to re-hear the lessons I learned last year!

This year had some ups and downs - it involved a LOT of travel and time spent with family and students I love. It involved a LOT of extrovert-ing and teaching live classes and pushing myself to out of my comfort zone. It also involved an inordinate amount of 'failures" - so let's dive into the lessons I learned from my challenging 35th year

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY. IT NEVER HURTS AS BAD AS YOU THINK. FAILURE IS DATA.

Your business is an experiment, YOUR experiment. And failure to achieve something you wanted isn't a total loss - it's data for your ONGOING experiment.

I read recently that looking at failure as data kept you from acknowledging failure and recognizing that it's an absolutely vital, unavoidable fact of life and of building new things.

But I disagree - you can't avoid failure, or the pain of failure. Seeing it as data helps you reframe it, not so it's *less* hard, but so that it's not ONLY hard. So that you can see the value and learn what you need to learn in order to move forward.

Some of our failures this year:

- ★ My book got rejected from about a dozen publishers, meaning it won't get a traditional book deal. That sucks, because I spent a lot of hours writing a fantastic book proposal and I really fell in love with the book topic.
- ★ I set out to do a company-sponsored challenge with my essential oil business - where I'd hold at least 6 live classes per month, travel every month and basically make Feb - June a massive period of growth. Well, I failed out the first month. I make a fatal planning flaw in my first month, some people who had committed to me let me down, and I didn't recover my confidence in time to fix it. It's really easy to think I flunked out because of some other people, but the fact is, I didn't recover quickly, I wasn't flexible and resilient. That *sucked*.
- ★ The comic book shop that Jay and I spent all of 2017 working on buying, fell through. The owner didn't give us what we needed him to give us, in terms of paperwork, until it was so late and we were so exhausted...and then even though the banks really really loved us, we couldn't make the deal happen. That sucked and threw our "what we're doing next" completely out the window. We had to figure out what Jay's doing, to still help make this dream happen, but in a whole new way. We're still figuring that out - looking for a solution that works for the life we want to live in the short and to make our goals come true in the long term.

I share all this with you so that you can see - even after being in business for 12 years! Even after being self-employed for 9! Even after building a yarn company and a teaching business that met all my goals..I still failed at three different business goals in the last 12 months! And those failures rearranged my life, my expectation, what I thought was going to happen in my future.

Now, don't you worry about me. I'm working on learning the lessons from these adventures and I DO see them as adventures. These were three things that I wanted to do, that I was AFRAID TO TRY and I am so so glad I tried them. I am so glad we tried to see if it was possible and that I learned what I earned.

When it comes to the book - I now know how to write a book proposal. I have a fully outlined and planned book that I could write and self-publish if I wanted.

For the travel challenge - I did still take three trips and grow my business tremendously, and I learned I am capable of doing 4 classes in 2 days, of organizing something like this, and how to make it better in upcoming trips.

When it comes to the shop, both Jay and I know SO MUCH MORE. and I've seen Jay grow in his business knowledge and confidence so much during the process - this was definitely the first step in making our plan to have a comic shop become a reality. Without moving forward in this, we would never believe or know it's possible.

That brings me to my lesson - failure never hurts as much as you think - we were reallllly afraid to try all three of these things because "what if it doesn't work out?!?!". The answer, after it NOT working out is really simple - well, now you know. Now you do the next thing, with the data you gathered from this trial.

EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING.

So this is something I advise my students about alllll the time, and I didn't take my own advice! And just in the past few weeks, I've decided that I've learned this lesson - everything is everything, it all belongs together. Let me explain.

Last year, when I started my new essential oil business, I wanted to create a site that focused on essential oils, so I created essentialenthusiasm.com. It's where I put my webinars, workshops, live events and I imagined I might blog there about wellness and lifestyle stuff that I don't about on this podcast. I started the first version of the Essential Enthusiasm podcast and it lasted about 10 episodes, but I couldn't keep up with it. Then Joeli and I had the idea to make a weekly date to talk about books and mindset and life and to make our conversations public on the Essential Enthusiasm podcast.

That podcast is awesome and I love making it each week. It makes sense for that podcast to have it's own website, IG and FB page.

In my mind, it was super divided - TS = (what I call my main site) JUST for makers and crafters in business, so I couldn't include any other aspect of my life. I even debated posting not-for-business-owner things on my FB and my IG, where my handle is just TARA SWIGER. EssentialEnthusiasm = now the podcast about books and life.

I started to flirt with the idea of starting a third site (!!).

And then, just a few weeks ago, I realized: My site is TARASWIGER.com - that is me. ALL the parts of Tara Swiger, that I want to share with the public, go on that site - info on how to get essential oils (from me!), my weekly vlog, any articles I want to write about fostering, adoption, living, whatever. It all goes in one place.

Like I said, it makes sense for a podcast, which has weekly show notes, to have it's own site. But it doesn't make sense for me to keep dividing up what I'm doing in any business - it should all be on MY home on the internet. Something like a podcast, it has a theme and a topic. EYE is going to keep being a show for women in business. EE is going to keep being a conversation about books and mindset and life. And my home on the internet (and my emails) will be about all of me that I feel like sharing.

THE ANSWER TO A STUCK PLACE IS ALMOST ALWAYS: TRUST YOURSELF MORE

Ok, we have to start with acknowledging this: starting a new business is HARD. In April of 2017 I started a doTerra business and it is now at about 50-75% of my other business income - which is shocking because I've been building my TS income for 8 years! So the fact that I could grow a whole new business in one year, is something worth celebrating.

But that doesn't mean it was EASY. It was hard. I had to learn and do a bunch of things I had been avoiding in my other business. I had to lead in a whole new way. I had to commit to showing up. To following up. In order to grow, I HAD TO GROW. And that's hard. I'm realllly glad I had this experience because it put me back in the place where so many of you are - just now learning how to do a business, just starting to get an income from it, just learning all the different moving parts.

One of the ways I had to grow - and one of the ways many of you have to grow in your business - is in trusting myself. You see, when you start a new biz, you just want people to tell you what to do. You want to follow the equation and get the same results, every time. You want to trust OTHERS to make your biz happen for you.

But that won't work. Because even a business model that will definitely work, that has fewer moving parts, won't work unless you DO THE WORK and MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

MAKING IT YOUR OWN, INVOLVES TRUSTING YOURSELF.

Trust yourself that you'll learn what you need to.

Trust yourself that you'll figure anything out.

Trust yourself that you can do it YOUR WAY and it will work.

Trust yourself more than you trust someone else's judgement about how things "should" be done.

You guys, I've been talking about trusting yourself for at least the last 5 years...and yet, I totally forgot to. For a few months, when I committed to the challenge, I tried to build my new business the way someone else said I should AND I judged myself every time I didn't get the results I thought I should get. And that made me miserable and nearly made me give up. Why? Because it's not fun to build your business the way someone else tells you to!

You know what it is fun? Treating your business like an experiment and trying new things all the time! Doing more of what you're excited about and that you feel good about and less of what you don't.

So this lesson is all about what I talked about last year - stop giving an f what other people think about you (and your business) AND it's all about trusting yourself to do it your way. To go about things the way you want to go about things, to do more of what you really love, to look at it all as an experiment.

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/podcast211](https://www.taraswiger.com/podcast211) and share the post on Facebook or Twitter.

PAST BIRTHDAY POSTS

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[29](#) (I opened the Starship!)

[28](#) (I launched this site!)

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