

Ep #21: Yoga and Business



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With Your Host

Susi Hatley

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hatley. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hatley.

Susi: With this episode I want to dig into the concepts of yoga in business. That's right, the idea of making money, of making a living as a yoga teacher. Now, this call might be controversial for some and I understand it because for most people in the industry of yoga it's an impossibility that you can earn a living as a yoga professional.

When you look at stats like ones I've recently read which is that most yoga teachers are hobbyists, earning about \$5,000 a year, and that yoga therapists fare a bit better at \$10,000 a year it makes sense why people believe it's impossible to make a living as a yoga professional. As I said, with this episode I'm going to show you that it is possible and in fact that I am currently training 15 yoga teachers right now how to earn \$100,000 as yoga professionals.

This is an episode about the evidence and about the skills you need to grow in order to be able to earn a living as a yoga professional. The first step along the way is to understand two basic tenets. The first is, like any professional, you need to have two sets of skills. The first is you need to have the skill of a good technician. You need to be technically sound at the art and skill and science of teaching yoga or being a yoga therapist.

The second is you need to understand the business of starting, of growing and building, and sustaining a client base. Without those two skills it's going to be very, very difficult for you to make a living. You could become very, very good and honing your craft as a yoga teacher or a yoga therapist, but if you don't know how to grow a business you'll be really smart and really skilled with no people to teach.

Really, in my mind, what I believe to be true is the greatest success is when we can share our skill and our love for what it is that we do and help other people discover and transform and feel really great about their lives.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatley

Ep #21: Yoga and Business

That, to me, is a win, win, win all around. When I've been teaching my trainees in business principles one of the key obstacles that they face is this idea of marketing. Most of them hate the idea of marketing. They think it's slimey, they think it's sleazy, they think they have to be crafty and they think they have to conniving.

Then, I say to them these three simply bullet points. If you are confident in the skill that you have, if you love to teach or guide others, if you love your client base then all of the marketing, so-called "marketing" conversations happen very, very easily. Because you can't help but talk about your business. You can't help talking about what's possible for people. It's easy.

People feel the energy of that easiness around you and it's not about being conniving, it's not about offering something to someone that they don't even need. The conversations just become between two people and the possibility of helping someone get better. What could be better than that? But the key is this, you need to be confident in your skill to help. That's the first one. You need to love to teach, and you need to love your client base. So, if one or more of those does not exist then you need to do something to have it changed.

The next piece of this puzzle is that most people do not want to be sold yoga and they don't want to be sold yoga therapy. What they are looking for is purchase a solution to their problem. So, when you're having conversations with potential clients, be sure to really listen closely. Listen closely to what they're saying in terms of what is working and what's not working in their life. What are the problems that they're facing? What are they talking about that they need change in?

Address your solution, if you have one, if your expertise truly is one that will solve their problem. Address it in the terms that they're talking about. People don't need you to describe what style of yoga it is that you teach or to define yoga therapy and how it's different from anything else. You simply need to outline how your expertise can be a solution for them in words in ways that they can understand. If you can offer that then you will do really,

Ep #21: Yoga and Business

really well at building and maintaining then growing and sustaining an excellent yoga practice.

Now, the next piece of this yoga business puzzle is that a lot of people get concerned about having a chaotic schedule. They see some yoga teachers out there who are earning more than \$5,000 a year, they see the yoga therapist out there earning more than \$10,000 a year and what they're seeing is teaching a lot of classes, teaching a lot of privates, and doing it in a way that they wouldn't want to do it.

I remember that, too. I remember starting out and I saw a yoga teacher who was earning quite a bit of money and they were teaching 35 classes a week and that was not something I wanted to do at all. Simply because one person was doing it that way I knew I didn't have to do it that way. I didn't have to do it the way that somebody else was, so I came up with my own way and I based it off of what I believed I wanted in my life.

Even back then I did not believe in a concept that's widely believed which is work-life balance. I've never believed in that idea. I'm going to share to you in this way. Do you write two obituaries when someone has passed away? Or read an obituary about their personal and then their work life? No, you read one obituary about a person who lived a life.

There's not a work-life balance, a work other there and a life over here. You are the center of it all. You are the hub and out of that hub ripples it all. So, you are the you that is the you. The me, who is recording this episode, is no different than the me who teachers, the me who's a parent, the me who goes out for a run or does my yoga practice. It all just ripples through each other.

The key is to come to that space of really understanding you, the yoga of you. Then, allowing that to ripple away because if you come into this idea of work-life balance you're going to try and make everything fit. You are going to be pulled in so many different directions and it's going to be a lot harder to make decisions. You're going to lose the yoga in the business. When you lose the yoga in your business it starts to become very frazzled,

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hately

Ep #21: Yoga and Business

you become depleted, and you start to move into the world of burnout. That's not what we want to have happen. We want to help maintain the fluidity and the flow in the business. We want to allow for the prana or an Ayurvedic term, the ojas. We want to build that up so that there isn't the depletion. So that there is the ease and there is the vitality. That is entirely possible and doable.

The key is to recognize that you are the you that are the you which leads me into a very down and dirty, nitty, gritty way of making that happen and I call it the calendar. A lot of people do not run their lives with a calendar. A lot of business people don't run their lives with a calendar and yet the ones who do are the ones who not only get the most done, but they tend to have the most ease in their life.

In the yoga training programs that I run the calendar is such a sacrosanct part of what it is that I do that almost every training program I run has it at some point throughout it. In our module 3 of that IAYT program it's right at the beginning. Every yoga business training right at the beginning because it's so fundamental to building the client base and to bringing in that components of the program and having you succeed with them.

So, what do I mean about this calendar? The calendar is literally just that and when yoga teachers are starting out their yoga therapy businesses I suggest to them that they block off the time where they actually want to teach their private sessions, where they want to teach their group sessions, where they want to take time to do their administration, where they want to take time to build in any programs. So, then they outline really clearly in their calendar when different aspects of their work are happening.

Within that, too, it's when's your family time going to happen and when might you go for the run or do your yoga practice or things like that? Once they get that all settled in they start to see if they like their calendar. If they like it, they'll keep it and if they don't like it, they'll change it. Everybody's calendar is different.

Ep #21: Yoga and Business

Early on in my career I decided that I only wanted to teach Monday through Wednesday, so I had very, very full days starting early in the morning going to late at night Monday through Wednesday, but then Thursdays and Fridays were a lot lighter and were focused on different tasks completely and had very little to do with teaching, but had to do with some administration and some course creation.

Then, after I had my kids, I had a set of twins back about three years ago, it changed again. Instead of focusing on when my teaching was, because I wasn't doing very much of it, I was just focusing on the key thing I needed to do every single day. So, the calendar depends as much on the season of your life as what it is that you want to do.

Another example of this is I had a trainee in a program a number of years ago whose twin sons were going to be graduating from high school at the end of the training year, so she was enrolled in the training year during their last year of high school and she had a lot of concern about how she was going to complete the requirements and then build her business and spend the time she wanted to with them before they graduated.

I offered her this, start with when you're going to spend time with them. Put that big rock into your calendar first if that's the most important thing. Then see where the white space is and start to build the rest of it in there. Fill it out, see what works, see what doesn't work, adjust and continue. That's the great thing about a calendar is you can set it up, you can try it out, give it a whirl, if it doesn't work you can always adjust it.

But you do need to start from somewhere not having a blank calendar so that when someone asks you when your private sessions are you are like, "Any time. What times works for you?" Rather it gives you structure in your day around this is when it happens. Then you can really focus your time very specifically on what task it is that you're doing. You can focus specifically on the tasks of growing or of honing the craft of being a teacher and really build the business and build the life that you want. One which isn't a work-life balance, but one that the you that is the you ripples throughout.

[From Pain to Possibility](#) with Susi Hatelly

Ep #21: Yoga and Business

Some key features in this episode are this, we are in an industry where it's believed that it's impossible to make a living as a yoga professional.

There's the stats to prove it and I have the evidence and stats to prove it otherwise. The key features thought are to recognize that when you deeply love your clientele, when you know that you're good at what it is that you do and you love to teach conversations happen really quite easily and you don't have to be slimey or sleazy. You just have to connect. That your work-life balance becomes not even an issue because how you utilize your calendar is serving you and is serving your family or whomever else is close to you.

The structure of your calendar helps serve the life that you want to live. Your calendar becomes like your yoga mat to your practice. The sacred space for where you do your business. With that I've got one final question to ask you. Take a sip of your tea or your water or your coffee or whatever it is that you're sipping on. I want you sit back, and I want you to imagine your life one year from today. Where are you at? What are you doing? What have you experienced? What has happened in your business? How have you made a difference? How much money have you made?

If you and I were to meet exactly one year from today what would you tell me? How has your life evolved? How awesome is it now? And with that, write it all down. Take a look at that list and then start going for it. Start building the yoga business of your dreams. Surround yourself with people who also believe that it's possible and you will be amazed at what happens.

So, if you are ready and you're wanting to build a client base to build a business to make a profit to earn a living doing what you love and making a massive difference in the world around you send us an email at www.functionalsynergy.com. I'd love for you to join me in the next version of the Yogi Business Program that begins this January.