

Episode: 030

Title: Inspiration to Ghost Town: We're Back But What Happened?

Hey, y'all. Welcome back to the podcast – after a super long hiatus. Or if you're new here, there's no hiatus at all and that's great. Either way, I'm really glad that you're here today because I have a lot to say. The last episode that I published was 1 year and 4 months ago. One day, I dropped the mic and I just didn't come back. I've received so much feedback about how helpful this podcast was for my audience and my students. An inspiration, if you will. And then I just ghosted.

I mean, I wasn't gone. I've been working behind the scenes the entire time. I never just abandoned Create and Go. It's my livelihood. But as far as my listeners are concerned, I suppose I was gone. And for that, I apologize. I do have reasons, and at one point, a month or two into the quote, unquote "break," I actually did record a follow up episode to explain what was going on.

But after I recorded it, I realized that I was doing it for the wrong reasons. I was doing it to explain myself, yes, but I think I was doing it more to have myself heard. I was going through a really hard time and I think I just needed to get it off my chest. But I never edited that episode. I deleted it at some point. Because I realized that I wasn't recording it for the right reasons.

Y'all don't need the full explanation, although I will give it to you anyway because honesty and transparency is what we're about. But I think it's only important now that I'm showing up again. Because that's what really matters. So in this episode, I'll tell you a little more about what's been going on over the last year and a half.

Okay, so if you listened to the last episode that was published, I explained that my mom passed away somewhat unexpectedly towards the end of 2021. At the time, my dad was also in the hospital for a stem cell transplant. My dad had MDS type II, which is a form of cancer in the bone marrow. It didn't go well. We reached a point where we turned off his medication, after a long discussion with the doctors about it, and were mentally preparing to say goodbye to him. I couldn't believe it. My parents were only 69 and I was losing both of them within the span of 3 months.

But as I mentioned in that last episode, my dad is okay now. They put him back on medication with the exception of a major and important medication that was keeping him alive but also causing a lot of problems. The road to recovery was long. My husband and I uprooted our lives in Germany shortly after moving there to back in Florida to help take care of him.

I'm so grateful that I have 2 brothers and a wonderful husband that were there throughout all of this. It was awful and my heart goes out to any of you that have experienced losing loved ones or have watched them suffer. I feel beyond grateful to be able to say that my dad is back in much better health again. I'm actually meeting him in Italy next month for his first trip abroad since his treatment. But it wasn't just that, y'all. I gave a quick summary of that in my last episode.

During this time, the revenue from our business was declining. We saw our best months of revenue ever during the pandemic when everyone was at home researching new jobs and side hustles to start. When everyone had nothing but time on their hands. But then when the world slowly started going back to normal, we, like so many other businesses, saw big shifts in our traffic. Organic traffic was lower. Paid ads weren't working anymore. What's going on? We had hired a very expensive ad team to help us get our ads back on track. I recorded webinar after webinar after webinar. Nothing was working. It was expensive and it was time-consuming. I was trying to learn German and feel at home in a foreign country when I was spending half my time in Florida anyway.

And my business partner, Alex, and I just weren't seeing things eye to eye anymore. We had different goals and different dreams and we were on completely different paths. We couldn't agree on much and couldn't really figure out a path forward for the business that worked out well for both of us. Hell we tried, for a long time. And it was really hard for me.

My business is my whole world. I'm not a hobby person. I like to do yoga but I don't do sports. My passion is my business, even though my husband says it doesn't count. All of this, y'all, was really hard for me. I wish I was an incredibly optimistic and positive person like my husband is. But despite my efforts to change, I can't help but fall on the slightly pessimistic side of the scale – and don't worry, I'm going to get to the positives real soon here. But it felt like everything in my world was crashing down on me at once.

Alex and I decided to sell the business. It was the only thing that made sense for both of us. Running it the way that we were wasn't working out for either of us. We even went as far as submitting our financials and everything to Empire Flippers to sell it. We had Zoom meetings with them on what to change and fix. After they did a full evaluation of the site and financials, they said that we needed to get our revenues a little more consistent because of the recent decline.

So the plan was to work on SEO traffic to get it to the point of consistency. So we were writing a bunch of articles but you know SEO growth in the right way, the sustainable way, it takes time. And Alex and I still weren't in a good place as far as co-parents to this business. But long story short... Everything happens for a reason.

Noah, our resident SEO and YouTube manager, ended up buying Alex out. I'm excited to say that this was a win-win scenario for all of us. Noah has been working with us for over 3 years, so this was perfect. He actually even got a Create and Go tattoo a couple years ago, which is wild but I also feel was maybe some weird sign that this was destined to happen at some point.

Honestly, I like having a business partner. After running this business for Alex for the past few years, I never wanted to run it by myself. I like having a team and I like knowing that I'm not alone in this. Because the road isn't always easy or certain. Your revenues fluctuate. Your responsibilities fluctuate. Your feelings about your business fluctuate. And when Noah bought in, he brought so much positive energy with him and for the first time in a long time, I'm feeling so inspired again.

I have the next few ideas for future episodes already planned out and shifting job roles and inspiration are two things I want to dive in deeper to. But let's move on to more important things. What are we doing now? Where is our focus?

Well, our main priority right now is getting new content to our audience and UPDATING content for our audience. One type of content is articles, so we've been focusing on writing more articles to grow our SEO traffic. That plan has been in place for the last several months. At one point we were publishing 3 articles a week but we've since come down to publishing 2 every week because even with the help of AI, it's a big time suck. I've been writing those articles while Noah has been focusing on publishing 1 new video each week for the YouTube channel.

And when we're not creating that content, we're deep into updating our courses. Every single one of our courses is getting a complete overhaul – I'm talking about every single video. Our faces are going to be on camera presenting the information, fancy video edits, the whole shabang. You know, we started our courses in a presentation style. It was what a lot of other course creators were doing at the time. And we updated the courses over time as they needed it. I even did a complete overhaul again and made the

presentations look a lot better. But it was time to ditch the presentations entirely and get our faces on camera. It's more personal and professional and I'm excited about the changes. Even though it's going to take a lot longer to record and edit every single lesson.

So I'm starting with Launch Your Blog Biz – I've already scripted everything and started recording the first few lessons. The updates will be finished on that course in maybe a month or so. We'll definitely send out an email about it. And rest assured whether you have bought this course or are thinking about buying it soon, you will get access to all updates for it!

We're working our way through each course to completely update it. Honestly, we aren't making too many major changes. We're really just doubling down on what's working for us and what has really always worked.

One thing that we haven't been so great at is the consistency. Alex and I had a tendency to run in one direction REALLY hard. We would dump or neglect many other tasks in order to prioritize this one new, shiny thing that could grow our business. First it was Pinterest. Then it was YouTube. Then it was ads. Then it was Google SEO.

Throughout all of that time, we were still consistently creating content, which is important. But we weren't the most consistent with any of these channels once we got it launched and moving. Part of that is definitely delegating tasks to your team and your VAs, if you've got them. Because you just can't do everything. But I don't think we did a great job with this.

We know people like Bobby Hoyt over at Millennial Money Man or Kelan from the Savvy Couple who have never gone more than a couple weeks without emailing their audience in years. Or publishing blog posts. That's the kind of consistency that your audience likes and the algorithms favor.

We have just been a bit more sporadic about how and when and where we're publishing content and where our sights are pointed to. And to be honest, it wasn't the worst strategy. It allows us to grow additional traffic channels and revenue streams very fast. But there wasn't always consistency with those numbers and it often led to traffic channels or revenue streams falling back off the radar at some point.

It's funny because at one point, we were earning so much money from our blog that we had multiple team members hired to help us out with managing the work and growing things. And then things shifted as our revenues declined. Other than pandemic impacts, that was mostly our fault because of the struggles Alex and I had managing everything together – I spoke more about that in the last episode.

Now, Noah and I are back to doing almost all of the work in the entire business ourselves. In some ways it feels like we've taken a few steps back and I suppose we definitely have because of the state of the business over the last couple of years. But in another way, it feels so good because it feels like we're rebuilding a stronger foundation. We're working on creating a system that is more consistent and more sustainable in the long-run. And we're excited to share this journey and all of our new strategies with y'all along the way.

Honestly, I don't have this whole podcast thing totally figured out yet. I knew that bringing it back was important. I knew that it was an important platform for me to reach our audience on. YouTube is Noah's domain and you'll find me mostly back in our paid courses, but I wanted to have a place to reach our wider audience too. I can't promise I'm going to show up perfect and never let y'all down again. I'm a human and being a human isn't always the easiest. But I will do my best.

And I want to say thank you to each and every one of you that is listening right now. Each and every one of you that supports us. Thank you for being here and for listening. This is why I came back. I want to do everything that I can to support you in return. I will see you on the next one.