Episode 24: Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone

Lauren 0:01
Welcome to the Launch Your Blog Biz podcast. I'm your host, Lauren McManus, I used to be a full time tax accountant and CPA with a whole lot of limiting beliefs and "I can'ts" whenever I thought about starting my own business. Fast forward a few months, and I quit my job after starting and growing my first blog to six figures in just a year. This is my space to share and yours to listen and grow, about how to build and scale your own blogging business and design a life on your terms. Let's get started.

Lauren 0:35
Hey, y'all, welcome back to another episode of the podcast. I hope that you all had an amazing and safe Happy New Year and welcome to 2022. What are we going to do this year? You know, I was going to call this episode, How to create your best year yet," which is super basic, I know. But as I was making the notes for this episode, I realized that what I really wanted to talk about was all related to your comfort zone and that's what most of it really boiled down to.

Lauren 1:08
I realized that I think that this is far more important and compelling than some vague chat about being your best self and being intentional and setting goals. Those things are all really important, but I think that all of those things actually happen outside of your comfort zone. And in order to make these things happen, you need to really discover that new space, and honestly just get better at getting there in the first place. The more work that you're doing outside of your comfort zone, the more learning growth, success, personal and financial, that you're going to achieve.

Lauren 1:45
Now, my husband doesn't appear to have a comfort zone, he thrives in social settings, and actually derives energy from it. I swear he doesn't have any fear of failure in any capacity and it's absolutely infuriating. I'm over here riding the struggle bus to school every day. But what comes very naturally to him is also a choice that each one of us can make, it might be a lot more difficult for us than what comes naturally to someone else. But the more that we work at something like this, the easier it will become for us.

Lauren 2:18
I will say I think that I feel like I've been struggling with this a lot more since the pandemic, it's definitely been on my mind a lot more. I'm not sure if it was getting trapped in isolation for two and a half months in Panama or bouncing around to various countries without a home for four years, or feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome for so many months in certain countries because of the pandemic. But I do feel like it's been a lot harder for me to really claw my way back in some areas of my life, especially in social settings. It just takes me more energy for me to be social these days and I honestly feel like more of an introvert than I ever used to be.

Lauren 3:00
I also wonder too, I think it's probably becoming more apparent as I get older. You know, as kids, we just generally have no fear and don't think about things like this, we have very little of a

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comfort zone, and it generally grows bigger and bigger as we get older. I also have noticed that this comfort zone issue, it's been more apparent since things have slowed down in my business last year. So when you're in the stages of constantly moving forward and building your business, you really don't have too much time to think about stuff like this, you just do the next thing on the list.

Lauren 3:36
Sure you procrastinate here and there, but you really don't take as much time to think about why you procrastinate. But do take some time to think about this, regardless of what stage you're at, because being mindful of this is the very first step towards improvement. Anyway, my husband was one of the lucky ones, I suppose. But for all the rest of you, I hope that this episode really inspires you to work on pushing those boundaries of your comfort zone.

Lauren 4:04
Now let's first talk about the danger of your comfort zone, of staying in your comfort zone. Well, the number one most dangerous thing I suppose is, besides lack of fun is the lack of growth and whether this be personal, professional, mental, emotional, the more that you stay inside your comfort zone, the less growth you're going to have. So personal growth in learning how to do new things, professional growth in tackling the next big project, mental emotional growth in not reflecting on arguments or just getting defensive or you know, sticking to your safe space when you do argue right? You're not actually thinking about how you're impacting other people.

Lauren 4:51
These are all things that stunt our growth and being in your comfort zone, it's really hard to go against the grain and not just the grain, but really your own personal grain more specifically. Which is even tougher to overcome, at times. And it does suck sometimes to see people who just do it so naturally, you know, and we have this feeling of I wish that I was more like that. But remember that you don't always see what's on the inside for them, just because you see someone jump into something doesn't mean that they didn't have a tough internal battle to push themselves to do that, it may be harder for them than you think.

Lauren 5:30
Lastly, with this comfort zone, the radius of our comfort zone does grow larger as we get older. So do think about that, because how much you challenge your comfort zone now is also going to determine how wide that comfort zone is five years from now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now. And my parents have a couple friends that have actually gotten pretty reclusive, as they have gotten older. I knew them many years ago when I was a kid and I remember thinking, they were so social and fun, how did they become that? But I think that that's what it is, right? Just a little bit of that growth of that comfort zone every year until it just becomes so large that we just live in it permanently.

Lauren 6:16
So do be aware of this, you know, getting worse over the years if you aren't challenging it. Let's talk next about what lies outside of that comfort zone. Now, the first thing living outside that

comfort zone, unfortunately, is generally fear and overwhelm. You know, I guess that actually, I suppose it lives just inside your comfort zone, because you do feel a lot of fear and overwhelm. But it's more like when you're trying to get outside of the comfort zone, you're feeling a lot of fear and overwhelm, to transition out of it. But remember that this is usually temporary, and it does dissipate when you've done the thing or you've made progress, right?

Lauren 6:54
How many times can you think about completing a task or even getting some part done or starting an event and you're like, "Oh, wow, that wasn't nearly as hard as I thought it was going to be." And there's this massive feeling of relief, after you actually do the thing. Unfortunately, you know, that also doesn't seem to be a big enough motivator for us to just tackle that fear and overwhelm, right. The thing is, that relief is there and getting outside your comfort zone, you know, beating this fear and overwhelm and actually doing the thing and paves the way to so many amazing feelings, like confidence, success, happiness, personal growth, and really true fulfillment.

Lauren 7:38
These are all the things waiting for you just outside of your comfort zone is just about how to get there, right? When I talk about my husband, and not feeling all of these things, and just naturally doing all these things, I will tell you that he also very much lives in a world of confidence, success, happiness, personal growth, and fulfillment. He lives at a much higher energy level than I do naturally, and I am very jealous of that. But I do realize that all of those things are within my power, I just have to work a little bit harder at them.

Lauren 8:10
Let's talk about how to transition from your comfort zone to beyond that. And you know, I don't really have any exact science for you here, this is something that you need to look for, you need to feel it, and you need to sense it and work at it. But I'm going to tell you a little bit more about how I've been able to feel it, sense it, and work at it. I feel it the most, you know, being inside my comfort zone when I don't want to do something. But I know that I should be doing that something, and I know that it would make me feel better afterwards.

Lauren 8:46
I'm not just talking about cleaning the kitchen, I'm talking about my two hours a day of practicing German, of getting the courage to actually sign up for the lessons with that tutor, which took me weeks to actually sign up for. But the moment that I got in that classroom with her, I felt just so good about the progress that I was making, and I was so happy and I was so wishing that I had done it sooner. I'm talking about getting asked to play that game in the park, you know, I'm talking about a team sport kind of thing and saying no, because you don't know how to play or you think you wouldn't be good at it. I absolutely despise team sports and I think it's because I've just never been great at them.

Lauren 9:26

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I'm talking about clicking the button to pay for hosting for your podcast because you know that as soon as you click that button and pay for hosting, you actually can't put off recording your first episode any longer once you're paying for it. Which is something that I waited to do until the last possible moment with my podcast or paying for blog hosting for the same reason. Paying for that new course because it means that you'll have to do the work now. I'm talking about that feeling that you'd like to be one of those people that signs up right away for karaoke, but you know, you'd have to be slightly drunk or have to be forced into it by your bestie.

Lauren 10:01
Y'all, just any feeling of, I really wish I could do that, or I want to do that but, you know, maybe not today, maybe tomorrow or another time." You know, anytime that you can kind of feel that resistance. I think that we often also brush that feeling aside as quickly as possible, or we make excuses for it like, "No, I'm not feeling great today. So I'm not going to go play that sport." Or "No, I'm too busy with work today. So I'm not going to go practice German today." We generally make excuses and push it to the back of our mind as quickly as possible. Because looking deeper into it means that we have to admit that we are not doing what we think that we need to be doing, you know, we have to look at why that is, right.

Lauren 10:48
This kind of leads us into the three steps that I want to tell you about to help you recognize and overcome some of this internal pressure. First of all, step number one is recognizing those internal pressures, blockers, and limiting beliefs and identifying them. So actually, being mindful, as I said before, is the very first step. When an opportunity to do something comes up, whether it's something in your business, whether it is a new project, whether it is something to do in your social life, there can be so many different areas of your life that this applies to, but when something maybe slightly outside of your comfort zone comes up, and your first thought is to say no, immediately, well recognize that, recognize that resistance to that.

Lauren 11:36
The next step, number two is to ask yourself why you feel that way? Why don't you want to do that thing? What are you afraid of? Are you afraid of embarrassing yourself? Of not being good enough? Of messing up? Is it that you actually don't like that thing? Because that's not something that you also have to force yourself outside your comfort zone for, if you actually think that you wouldn't like this thing. But if it's because you are deep down, afraid that you're not going to be good at it, or you're afraid of embarrassing yourself, we're not messing up, those are the exact reasons that will pinpoint you to, "Okay, this is a problem. And this is me wanting to stay in my comfort zone."

Lauren 12:18
And every single time that you say no, it's going to make it that much harder next time to say yes. Now the third thing I want you to do here is to ask yourself, what would happen if you did fail? Would people laugh at you? Probably not. I mean, maybe you'll get a few laughs but you'll probably be laughing with them depending on what it's about, right. And more often than not, honestly, people respect you for putting yourself out there, you become that person with that

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confidence that everybody else envies, and you become that person that everybody else is looking at and thinking I wish I could be like that. So you're going to immediately become this person.

Lauren 12:58
I know for me, when I'm speaking German, I have this fear of messing up when I'm trying to order bread or whatever, when I'm out and about. The reality of it is that every time I try and I mess up, I learn so much faster than when I just don't ever open my mouth and I have to ask them to speak English anyway. When I do practice, they're often very grateful that I'm trying to practice, right, that I'm not just being an ignorant, English speaking person in their country. And when you try to play that game that maybe you suck at, because I do really actually just suck at sports. I'm not the most coordinated person. But generally you have a lot of fun along the way, right?

Lauren 13:41
Really ask yourself, What is the worst that can happen? Or what would happen if you did fail? You know, if you are going to feel embarrassed, is it because people actually think that you're stupid? Or is it just because you think you're stupid? Which is a stupid thing to think. So anyway, remember that by doing this thing, even if you fail, even if you mess up, you become that person that is that fun, outgoing person that actually gave it a try and you can possibly also inspire other people to join in. Remember that 99% of the time, it's never going to be as bad as you think it's going to be, there's almost always a feeling of elation and relief and rewarding triumph when you do that thing, regardless of the outcome.

Lauren 14:27
So just keep all these things in mind. And also make sure that you do reflect on actually taking that step outside the comfort zone and what happens next, whether it is relief or whatever, analyze those thoughts and pat yourself on the back and say good job, you did this. And I want to chase that feeling of relief and competence and success. So make sure to give that enough time as well.

Lauren 14:52
Lastly, I want to kind of lead us into a little bit of talk about goal setting and time management. Just because you know once you are outside of this comfort zone, you are in a place where you can take a lot of action and really get a lot of stuff done. It's important to get here for real growth, this is where the movement towards achieving your goals is actually going to happen. Now, I'm not much of a goal setter, myself, but I do work heavily with to do lists and I keep things on my not yet but soon list. But goals are important to set, especially when you're still in the active building stages.

Lauren 15:30
So if for you even if a goal is just to keep the one most important thing at the top of your list, and then maybe keep the "not yet but soon" things on a different list, that will at least help you stay focused on the more important thing. So do set goals for what you want to accomplish, and

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even more importantly, be intentional with your time. Those two are somewhat related, because that's really, the whole purpose of a goal is to make sure that you work towards something specific. Ideally, you do have a deadline for doing that but pay attention to where the time is spent on the road to achieving that goal.

Lauren 16:09
We do tend to have so much idle and wasted time that can lead to slower success, but also a decline in motivation, more procrastination, less focus. So you know, do things like maybe have work sprints where you actually work for two or three hours straight, and actually have a very specific goal that you want to achieve and halfway through if you're not getting there, then where have you been wasting your time, right? Why haven't you achieved it yet? Regardless of what your goal is, or goals for this new here, be very intentional and make sure that you are recognizing when you're stuck in your comfort zone.

Lauren 16:50
This is what leads to so much idle, wasted time and procrastination because we make excuses and procrastinate for as long as possible to stay in our comfort zone as long as possible. And y'all if you need some inspiration, ask yourself the same question that I talked about on the last episode, "If you could start over again today, would you still set up things the same way?" Or if there is some big looming task on your plates that maybe you've been thinking about doing for a while, but you haven't asked yourself, "Why haven't I done this yet?" Recognize when you're making excuses, right, and you need to think about the legitimacy of those reasons.

Lauren 17:34
If they aren't legitimate enough, then think about admitting that maybe it is because of fear because, you know, reason XYZ. Think about these things and make sure no matter what, that this is going to be a year where you take a lot of action even if you fail, even if you make a lot of mistakes and have to change direction. Make sure that you continue to evolve, and you're intentional with your time. Alright, y'all. I hope that you enjoyed this episode, and I will see you next time.

Lauren 18:07
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