

Tiny Course Empire Podcast Episode 100
Five lessons learned on the way to 100 episodes

PLEASE NOTE: This is a machine transcription. Some punctuation and spelling weirdness are to be expected.

Two and a half years ago I sat down to record the very first episode of this podcast. I'd been a podcast listener for years—right now I'm subscribed to about 25 different shows, and I listen to dozens more on an episode-by-episode basis.

So when I decided it was time to really embrace content marketing as a tool in my business, podcasting was my first choice. I knew a few things going in.

I knew I had to be in it for the long-run. Content marketing is all about long-term strategy, not quick wins, so I was committed to a long-term plan.

I knew I had to be consistent. Probably more than any other content medium, podcasting really benefits from a consistent publishing schedule.

I knew I wanted to teach, not interview. I've never enjoyed listening to interview style shows, and I never wanted to create one, so I knew going in that this would be a solo show—just me and my thoughts about running an online business.

I also thought I was really prepared, but there are always some things you really can't know ahead of time.

This is episode 100 of the Tiny Course Empire podcast, and today I want to share with you some of the most important things I've learned about myself and about business on the way to this recording.

Hey, it's Cindy, and thank you for spending a few minutes of your day with me. You'll find the show notes and the recommended resources for this episode at tinycourseempire.com/forward-slash-one-hundred. While you're there, be sure to hit the subscribe button. New episodes drop every Thursday morning, and next week we're going to talk about how to start a business when you still have a demanding day job that takes up all of your time, But that's next week.

This week is all about the lessons I've learned and the key takeaways that I've found on my way to this one hundredth episode of the podcast. So let's dive in. The first important lesson I kind of touched on this a few minutes ago is that building anything worthwhile is going to take time and probably more time than you think

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it's going to take. I know that a lot of us really want to create things quickly we want to have the business we want to, you know, have the lifestyle we want all those things and we want them all yesterday, I'm right there with you, but truly building a business is a long term plan it is not something that happens really quickly and content marketing is not something that happens really quickly either.

When I started this podcast, I committed to doing it for at least three years without any hope of any kind of revenue from it. And to be honest, this podcast was never meant to be a moneymaker for me it was meant to be about brand awareness, which it has been, but I never intended it to have a huge audience reach, at least for three years. Right now as I'm recording this, we are getting about 500 downloads per episode, which is not money making territory if I was going after ad dollars that wouldn't cut it, but still 500 downloads per episode is nothing to sneeze at but I'm not going to get rich from this podcast.

But I knew going into it that this was going to be a long term thing, that I was going to have to do this for a long term, for a long time and before it really started to pay off for me and I was willing to do that. There are lots of junk products out there and there are lots of sellers out there who promise you riches in a weekend, and sometimes they even have the screenshots to prove it you can find people who are selling you, training that promises that you're going to make, you know, 30 thousand forty thousand dollars this month if you just follow their plan and you can see that they're making that kind of money.

But what you don't see is all the work that came before it. So I could tell you that I work an hour or so a day and that I earn multiple 6 figures and that's true. But that's not the whole story is that I've been doing this for years i am in my twelfth year of business right now and I used to work 60 or 70 hours a week. And before I quit my day job I worked every single evening and on weekends on my side hustle before I could quit my day job and do this full time. And even after my course based business took off and I was able to let go of all of my clients, I was still working 40 or more hours every single week creating a catalogue of courses.

It's only in this past year or so that I've really been able to dramatically cut back on my working hours, and that's only because I spent all of those years building that foundation, creating those relationships, building up my email, list creating courses, creating content. And now it's starting to pay off but this is 12 years later. So

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building a business, building a podcast audience, building A blog audience, building an email, list all of those things take time.

And it's time that's well spent because of the payoff is amazing, but it does take time and if you think about it, you know this is true in life as well it's not just in business i mean, you can pitch a tent in a few minutes, right you can go out in your backyard and pitch a tent, and you can have some place to sleep tonight, but it's not going to be as stable as a house that you spend several months constructing. You can look at. You know, weight loss is a favorite topic of mine it's something that a lot of women of a certain age kind of struggle with and you can starve yourself for a month or six weeks and you can lose 20 pounds before that New Year's Eve party, but you're going to gain it back again because you didn't lose it in a sustainable way.

But if you lose it more slowly, more sustainably, then it has a tendency to stay off so this is true in business, it's true in life, and we all know that but we still some part of us wants to believe that, you know, there's a possibility that we could, we could be the exception we could be the, you know, the person who comes from nowhere and is an overnight success but those overnight successes, they're really not so overnight they put the work in, they put the time in. They spent three years or five years or eight years on their podcast before it finally took off and it finally found their audience.

So if you're setting out to build a business of any kind, I really, I want to encourage you to dream really big i want you to dream about replacing your day job, or retiring your spouse, or paying off your mortgage, or packing up your house and moving across the country. All of those things are possible i've done them all and so have many other people that I know. And you can do them too, but you're not going to be able to do them in a week or a month and maybe not even in a year. So keep that dream in mind, whatever that dream is that you have, because that's what's going to give you the motivation to keep going and that's what it takes to reach those dreams.

So be in it for the long haul be committed to taking the action, to doing the work that it takes to build that business that is sustainable and that will support you and that will retire your spouse and allow you to travel and allow you to pay off your mortgage and all of those things that you want to do. Be willing to put in the work be willing to put in the time, because that's what it takes and along with that,

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consistency and I have beaten this drum for probably as long as you've been listening to me but consistency matters.

Consistency trumps brilliance. Every single time. You can have the most brilliant idea, but if you are not consistent in creating your products, if you're not consistent in marketing your products, you are not going to be successful and built in business. Brilliant products don't sell if you only promote them once and then you give up. And I'll give you a good example of that. Steve Jobs January ninth two thousand seven at the Macworld Convention announced the brand new iPhone that they were creating. There was a lot of buzz around it of course it was a brilliant piece of engineering it still is a brilliant piece of engineering.

But I guarantee if that was the only mention he ever made of it if Mac, if Apple didn't promote that product, it would not have become the success that it is today. They consistently promoted it, they consistently talked about it and they got other people to talk about it and that's how marketing works. That's why businesses are successful so you have to be consistent in your efforts. Brilliant blogs, the most well written, best, most entertaining blog will never have more than a handful of readers if you only publish six articles over three years, you know, think about the blogs that you enjoy reading they have lots of content and they publish consistently.

You have to be consistent too. The same thing goes for YouTube the most brilliant YouTube creators will never earn a living from posting 12 videos, especially on YouTube, because the algorithm rewards those who publish consistently. Now sometimes the opposite is true, and this is where the magic really happens. Consistency can actually lead to those brilliant ideas because what you do consistently, you improve upon, you get better at it the more you do it, the better you get. I heard a story one time about a photography class and the instructor decided that he was going to grade 1/2 of the class based on the number of photographs that they turned in, and he was going to grade the other half of the students based on them turning in the best photograph they could take.

So 1/2 of the class their goal was to take as many photographs as possible, take all the photographs they could. The more they turned in, the higher their grade was going to be. The other half of the class, all they had to do was take one amazing photo, and if they took one amazing photo, they were going to get a good grade,

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right so they had to take the best photo they could and that was going to be the entirety of their grade.

And what happened might surprise you. Because the students who had to take more photos, the students who were tasked with turning in as many photos as possible, actually took the best photos. The students who only had to turn in one, who only had to turn in that one really amazing photograph, who only had to focus on taking one really great shot, didn't do as good of a job as the students who only had to take a lot of pictures. That's kind of the power of consistency, especially when we're talking about things like content marketing, email marketing product creation.

The more you do it, the better you get at it and you will eventually reach the point where what you are creating is so much better than what you could have created before had you not, you know, kind of worked that consistency muscle so don't discount the power of consistency it's not all about, you know, just being out there it's about the practice that you are putting into it as well. Another thing consistency is not about, it's not about doing the same thing in the same way every single time. I would call that stagnation and that's going to kill your business just as fast as inconsistency will. If you want to grow your business, just show up.

It doesn't have to be in the exact same way every single time. An example of this is sometimes I play around with my email format right? Sometimes I mail in the morning, sometimes I mail in the afternoon sometimes I send a newsletter style sometimes I send, you know, a short email sometimes I send long emails and some people might look at that and say, well, you're not very consistent with that, You're not consistent with your style, you're not consistent with your format.

You know, how can you tell us that we need to be consistent when you're not being consistent? But what I'm actually doing there is playing with the formats i'm playing with the ideas i'm not settling on one thing and never trying something new i'm not stagnating i am trying new things i'm seeing what works i am experimenting a little bit and you should be doing that too. But do it within that bubble of consistency, right so email your list every week, or every day or however often you email but change up your email formats that's being consistent.

Cal Newport talked about this on his podcast a few weeks ago he was talking about someone who wanted to start a YouTube channel with the goal of having 100

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million YouTube subscribers and his advice was just start pumping out content. Learn the ropes, get good at it that's the foundation that consistency can help you build. And in a lot of ways, that's exactly what I've been doing with this podcast For the past 100 episodes i've been learning and testing and changing things up to find the best methods and the things that appeal to my listeners the most.

But above all else, the number one thing that I need to do is just show up. Now if you've been listening for a while, you will know that there are some weeks that I don't show up. There are some weeks that I miss. There were a few weeks a year ago where we missed maybe two months of podcast episodes we took a hiatus and it's OK to give yourself some grace like that too. It's OK for you to say I'm not going to show up this week. I don't have it in me this week i can't do it. I'll be back next week.

Life does in fact get in the way of your plans sometimes, and that's OK. Just don't let it completely derail you. The more consistent you are, also the more consistent you will want to be this is a really amazing thing that I have discovered since I've been in business. Your brain likes consistency too, so if you make a work schedule and you stick to it, your brain will show up. If you are one of those people who says I don't know what I'm going to write my email about every day or I don't know what I'm going to blog about every week.

What you will find is if you start showing up, if you start being consistent, your brain will reward you by showing up with ideas i rarely sit down to record a podcast and don't know what I'm going to talk about i rarely sit down to write an email without ideas to write about because my brain knows when I sit down to work, it's time to go to work because we've been doing it for so long we've been consistent with it for so long that it just gets into work mode easier.

And you will find that too if you are consistent with your schedule. What I like to do is I like to batch my days so on Mondays, for example, I write my emails for the week On Tuesdays is podcast writing and recording day. Wednesday is course creation content. Thursday is usually call day. You get the idea. So if you create a schedule like that, you will find that it is easier for you to be consistent as well. Now if you need extra help being consistent and showing up consistently, then get yourself an accountability partner or do what I did and get a few hundred accountability partners and what I mean by that is I create deadlines in public.

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For example, this podcast is a public deadline. I say in every single episode. New episodes drop every Thursday morning. Here's what I'm talking about next week. So you can bet I'm going to show up next week because I created a deadline in public. Now you can have accountability partners you can have personal accountability partners i have several people who I am accountable to and who are accountable to me. But there is nothing quite like being accountable to a stranger. Because I'll tell you what, I can email my accountability partner i can email angela i can email kurt i can email any number of other people and tell them, yeah, I just didn't do what I said I was going to do this week.

And none of them will really give me any trouble over it because they're my friends. But strangers? Strangers want to know where is that podcast episode? Your customers want to know where is that product you promised us? Your affiliates want to know where is that product you promised us we could promote? So creating deadlines in public will really help you to remain consistent and to publish when you say you're going to publish and to deliver what you say, you're going to deliver in a timely manner. So create those deadlines in public. One thing that you're going to run into when you are creating deadlines in public, when you're creating deadlines of any kind, is that you are going to want to put out your best work you're going to want to put out a highly polished whether it's a podcast or it's a product or it's a YouTube video or blog post or email, whatever it is that you are creating, you're going to want to put out your very best work.

And as that deadline approaches and you start to realize this is not perfect, you're going to start to get a little bit of anxiety about it you're going to start to think, oh, I should just tell people, I'm not going to do this. I'm going to change my mind i'm going to postpone it for a couple of weeks. Well, let me tell you what Perfection is overrated i have talked about this before on the podcast, but if I had waited until I perfected my podcast game before I launched this show, we would not be here today you would not be listening to me i would still be planning this podcast i would still be thinking about it i would still be considering my artwork i would still be considering my format.

I would still be planning my episodes. I would not be in front of this microphone right now recording this episode because perfection is never achieved and it is way overrated. And I want to tell you, I know that I'm not perfect because if I go back and I listen to some earlier episodes of this podcast, they are pretty cringe worthy and I guarantee that in two or five or ten years, if I come back and I listen to the

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episodes that I'm recording this month or this year, i'm going to feel the same way i'm going to feel that they are pretty cringe worthy. But I still have people who email me every single week and say thank you so much for your podcast i really get a lot out of it.

I really enjoy it i learned something, you know, I'm so glad that you are talking about these things because other people aren't talking about them i love the way you explain things it really works for me, really helps me to make more progress in my business, and that's even though I happen to think my podcast is not always as polished as I want it to be i don't always speak as clearly as I want. I don't always cover the topics in depth as much as I want. In other words, I'm not perfect, right? Nobody is perfect so don't wait for perfection, because most people are never going to notice something that you screwed up or something that you feel that you screwed up on they're not going to think the same way.

And showing up is so much more important than being so highly polished so don't wait until you're perfect before you start and perfect your processes as you go. That's how we all get better. We perfect the things that we continue to work on. And again, the more consistently you show up, the more consistently you work on these things. The better you will get and the last thing that I have learned from 100 podcast episodes is that I should be celebrating all of my wins and you should too.

Now, I talked earlier about how this podcast is getting about 500 downloads per episode, and well, Joe Rogan might not find 500 episodes. Really anything to even think about i mean, that's nothing to him, right? For me and maybe for you, 500 episodes, 500 downloads per episode is pretty fantastic and I'm definitely going to celebrate that i am definitely going to celebrate that I made it to 100 episodes when I know that statistically speaking most podcasts never make it past 10 episodes and I celebrated my tenth episode for that very same reason.

I am definitely going to celebrate that I make multiple 6 figures i'm not making millions. I'm not in the seven figure territory i'm not in the 8 figure territory where some people are who are in this niche. But that's OK i am celebrating where I am and what I have achieved and what I have accomplished. And you know, you should be celebrating those wins for yourself as well, however small they are. So here's what I hope that you can take away from this episode. I hope that you will commit to putting in the time it takes to create something amazing for your business.

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I hope that you're willing to show up every day, whatever that looks like for you i hope that you'll write more blog posts and send more emails and create more products. I hope you'll never be so afraid of failing that you can't let anyone see what you're making. I hope that you'll let your audience hold you accountable, if that's what it takes to get it done. And I hope that you celebrate every single victory, especially the little ones, because those are often the most important ones. Now i'd love to hear from you.

Click over to [tiny course empire dot com forward slash one Hundred](http://tinycourseempire.com) and leave me a comment please tell me about what you're creating tell me about what you're struggling with tell me about what your goals are, or just pop over and say hi it doesn't matter what you say, but it does make my day to hear from you. And could you do me a favor? If you're enjoying this show, would you go over to Apple Podcasts or wherever you happen to be listening and leave me a rating and review that helps the algorithms know that you value this content and so they'll show it to more people? That's the best way to help us grow.

That's it for me this week i'll be back next week with my best advice for starting your business or your side hustle while you are still dealing with a day job. Have a terrific rest of your day and I will talk to you again next week.