

Tiny Course Empire Podcast Episode 110: How your comfort zone holds you back (and what to do about it)

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

A couple of weeks ago I got an email from a marketer and he was telling the story of how he built a faceless. I'm saying that with air quotes can you hear them? A faceless business online that's doing three hundred thousand dollars per year in sales with no employees selling \$27 products. It's basically the Tiny Course Empire model that I teach, but with the added benefit of being, as he says, faceless. In other words, you don't have to be seen to be successful.

Now, I'm not going to lie; I love the idea of this I'm pretty sure that there are a lot of introverts like me who would find this really appealing as well. But there's a problem with this business model. I don't think it's going to work very well in the very near future.

Last week, I was on a webinar with another online course creator who predicted that text-only content is going to stop being effective very soon thanks to AI.

Today, I talked to a friend who told me that Amazon is limiting the number of uploads to KDP that you can make in a single day because the platform is being flooded with AI-generated content.

This is only the beginning, my friends. The future of online business is not faceless. The best, most successful businesses going forward will be personality-driven. Your customers and your clients will want to know who you are and what you're all about. They'll want to know that you're not just generating ideas and content with an AI engine and using it to drive traffic and get clicks.

They will want to know that you're human.

And that means if we want to stay relevant, if we want to be successful, if we want to still be here in a year or two or three, then we have to be willing to stand up and be seen. The problem is, that's a hard thing for a lot of us introverts to do. It's way outside our comfort zone. In fact, I know a lot of people, myself included, who started their online business because they wanted to be anonymous. They didn't want to have to talk to people or get on video or host webinars.

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This is episode 110 of the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, and today I want to talk to you about what it takes to put yourself out there and be seen, why that's so hard to do, and how you can learn to love it or maybe not love it, but at least be willing to be seen, be willing to be the face of your business.

Hey, it's Cindy and thanks 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](http://tinycourseempire.com). While you're there, be sure to download the online business road map. This step-by-step plan is going to show you exactly what to focus on during this phase of your business, whether you're just starting out or you're ready to scale. So today, like I said, I want to talk to you about comfort zones, and I want to start out by diving into why comfort zones are even a thing like, why is this something we even have to deal with? Why is this something we even are aware of? Why can't we just do what we need to do to grow our business? Why is that not easier?

Well, it's not easy because you have a brain, and your brain's most important job is to protect you from danger.

Anything that is perceived to be a threat is resisted, and it doesn't matter if that threat is a tiger hiding in the tall grass on the plains of Africa somewhere or if the threat is a stage on which you want to stand and speak to an audience. They're both equal in your thoughts they're both equally dangerous according to your brain in this area deep down inside called the amygdala, which only sees threat yes or threat no.

Your brain is hardwired to seek out pleasure and avoid pain and avoid danger, and anything that is uncomfortable is seen as dangerous.

And therefore your brain takes steps to keep you from approaching it, to keep you from going after it, to keep you in that comfort zone. And again, this is just your brain doing its job it's doing its brain things it's what we want it to do because it's also the same thing, Like I said, that keeps you from walking up to a tiger and trying to scratch it behind its ears because it's dangerous, right we don't want to be doing that your brain doesn't want you to be doing that. Likewise, your brain also doesn't want you to get up on stage in front of a bunch of people.

It doesn't want you to fire up a camera it doesn't want you to send that email making an offer to your email, list because all of those things are equally scary in your amygdala even though we know they're really not, we know they're really not that bad they're not. There's a difference between petting a tiger and feeling a little bit uncomfortable, but we still instinctively want to avoid those uncomfortable feelings we want to avoid feeling humiliated or embarrassed we want to avoid feeling ignored or overlooked or rejected we want to avoid feelings of anxiety.

We want to avoid situations where we're going to be self critical. And this plays out in your business and if you think about the times that you maybe played small, that you didn't put yourself out there, you'll see it i can as I was outlining this podcast, as I was working on this content this morning, I came up with so many different ways that this has played out in my business, and maybe you'll recognize some of them too. So, for example, the fear of being humiliated or being embarrassed might keep you from starting a YouTube channel or launching a podcast, or even sharing your opinion about something.

That fear of being embarrassed, of being humiliated, of someone telling me that I was wrong, delayed the launch of this podcast for years. And even as little as a couple of years ago. I never would have publicly spoken out and said that I thought that marketer that I was talking about in the beginning of this episode, that I thought that he was wrong, that his business model was wrong. Because when I stand up and say that I'm inviting people to tell me that I'm wrong, I'm inviting people to embarrass or humiliate me.

And that is an uncomfortable feeling. Another way that this has shown up for me in the past is thinking that I had to have an empty house before I could hit the record button, that I couldn't speak into a microphone when anybody was within earshot. Well, I'm happy to tell you that the husband is in next room, probably listening to me record this right now. I no longer care that he can hear me i no longer care that anybody else is in the house with me but in the beginning of this podcast, I had to wait to record until he was not home because I was embarrassed to be doing this in front of people.

O this fear of humiliation this fear of embarrassment is probably showing U in a lot of different laces in your business. Fear of rejection is another one. This is the one that will keep you from applying to speak at a conference, or will keep you from making an offer to your mailing list or for asking for an interview spot. This is what

prevented me from reaching out to potential new affiliates or new JV partners it prevented me from applying to speak at different events. It prevented me from applying to participate in bundles. It's really had a detrimental effect on my business growth, and it's probably had a detrimental effect on your business growth as well if you think about all of the things that you didn't do or that you didn't try just because you were concerned over the rejection, the fear of feeling anxious is another one that's what prevents you from doing anything that might make you a little bit nervous, like presenting A webinar or teaching a live workshop.

This fear of feeling anxious kept me from teaching live for a long time, and what I found out was that's exactly what my community wants more of they want the live interaction, they want me on the webinar, they want those live workshops. But I didn't do it because it was much more comfortable for me to be able to edit what I said before i put it out there in public. And I wanted to stay there i wanted to stay in that comfort zone i didn't like that feeling of being anxious. The fear of self criticism, that's the one that keeps you playing small, That's the one that keeps you right where you are because right where you are is comfortable and fine and you're happy there, right? So fear of self criticism keeps you, keeps you playing small.

So we know it's really hard to step out of the comfort zone and we know how avoiding discomfort can impact your business i've just given you several examples of how it impacted my business personally, and I want to invite you to really consider that in your business, where is where are these fears where is this comfort zone keeping you from doing what you really want to do? But also we want to ask, what can we do about it how can you start to put yourself out there how can you start to get out of that comfort zone or expand your comfort zone a little bit so that you can grow your business? Well, it turns out that a little bit of stress is actually a good thing a little bit of anxiety, a little bit of nervousness is nervousness is actually a pretty good thing, according to psychologist Robert Yerkes and John Dodson.

Stress and in this case, like I said, we're talking about things like anxiety, but stress can actually improve your performance. Now, we tend to think that if we're really nervous or we're anxious about something like, say, standing up in front of a group to speak or firing up your webinar software and teaching live, we think that anxiety is going to make us trip over our words and we're going to sound like an idiot like, I think right now I sound like an idiot because I'm speaking off the cuff.

But in reality, that's just the movie that your mind has on repeat every time you think about stepping out on stage or firing up your webinar software or launching a podcast, that's just the real that your mind has on repeat. But statistically, that is not true. What actually happens, thanks to a little bit of anxiety, is that you perform better than you would have if you hadn't been nervous.

Now, I have seen this play out in my own life. My very first speaking engagement, the very first time I was ever on stage as a speaker at a live event and I'm not talking about, I'm not talking about a zoom event i'm talking about like on a stage in front of actual people. I was super nervous. But you know what i did really well. But the second time around, I got a little cocky. I wasn't so nervous and I did not do nearly as well that time. So I can tell you from personal experience that a little bit of anxiety actually will improve your performance it will improve what you are putting out into the world it will make you a better speaker, a better marketer, a Better Business owner so don't be afraid of that feeling of anxiety, that feeling of stress.

So we know that feeling uncomfortable is really just an emotion and it's not harmful or serious or in any way it's not going to hurt you it's just a feeling that you have. And we know that little bit of stress can actually be a good thing, can actually help you improve as a business owner, as a human being, as a citizen of the world.

So what does that mean how can you actually use that information to get out of your comfort zone to expand that area where you are comfortable so you can start putting yourself out there? Well, according to one study I read, actively seeking out discomfort improves our ability to learn and can boost your motivation so just like feeling a little bit of stress makes you perform better, seeking out that stress improves your abilities to learn and improves your motivation. So what are some things that you can do even outside of the business realm that would put you in a place where you feel just a little bit uncomfortable, but that will encourage you to grow in that way.

Some things that I've done in the past years ago I belonged to a church and this is going back 20 years or so. I belong to a church and that church had a social group where they got together once a month at someone's house and that person hosted dinner, hosted a little dinner party, some games, and I volunteered to belong to this social group even though that was really uncomfortable for me i really did not like having to show up at someone else's house and it was just really uncomfortable. But I did it because I knew that was a way that I could expand my personal comfort

zone. The same thing with a book club that I belong to once a month we meet and we talk about a book that the host has chosen for the month and showing up to those first few meetings.

Super uncomfortable. You have to show up to someone else's house, ring the doorbell, make sure you're at the right house it was just all of these anxiety producing things that made me not want to go. Of course, now that I've been doing it for a few months, it's much more comfortable. The first social meet up I went to here in our new hometown in Southern Arizona was really hard for me as well really hard to just show up as the only person and as someone new to that group and introduce myself and you meet all these new people, really uncomfortable. But these things all serve to expand like I said, your comfort zone.

And they help you grow as a human being and not only that, but they're going to help you feel less anxious when it comes to doing similar things in your business. Now, you might think that going to a church event, or joining a book club or going to a social meet up, that feeling of discomfort doesn't have anything to do with the business. Feelings of discomfort with feeling anxious about getting up on a stage or sending an email to your mailing list.

Those things aren't related, right? But your brain doesn't see them as being any different just like your brain doesn't see the difference between the tiger that's hiding in the grass and sending an email to a potential affiliate. It doesn't see any difference between showing up to a book club event and speaking on a stage they both cause feelings of anxiety, and getting past one and practicing one will impact your ability to do the other or to feel more comfortable with the other situation as well. So here's what you can do. Make a plan for things that you can do to actively get out of your comfort zone, to actively push yourself, to stretch yourself just a little bit.

But I want you to remember something now I said that a little bit of stress is actually a good thing and that it can improve your results but it turns out that a lot of stress has the opposite effect. So don't try to do all of the things at once. That's too much don't try to launch an affiliate program in a speaking career and get interviewed on 17 podcasts and write a book and start a YouTube channel. Way too much anxiety you are going to shrink your comfort zone if you try to do all of that instead of expanding your comfort zone. So instead, what I recommend that you do

is make a plan.

Decide ahead of time what you're going to do to start expanding that comfort zone of yours. You can think of it like a cozy little blanket, and right now the blanket is small and it's nice and it's familiar, but maybe it feels a bit restrictive maybe you can't really do too much because you're all wrapped up inside of it. What you want to do is make it just a little bit bigger. Not, you don't want to, you don't want to leap from, you know, tiny little blanket to a great big king size thing you want to make it just a little bit bigger so what can you do to expand it just a little bit at a time.

Now maybe that means that you're going to update the head shots on your website so that they're current. Or maybe you put your own face or your own name on your site for the first time. Or maybe you commit to emailing your list every single week with a brand new offer. Think about the places in your business where you could be more visible but that you've been resisting, and choose one thing that you can do that makes you uncomfortable. Add that to your To Do List and give it a deadline. If you need some ideas or if you need some help, then I'd like to invite you to join me inside 6 figure systems.

We have step by step plans to help you master the most important business systems, including email, marketing course creation, content development, and more. But if this episode resonated with you, if you're feeling like it's hard to put yourself out there to step out of your comfort zone, then pay special attention to some of the email templates we also have inside. Those are going to make it easier for you to reach out to new clients and new affiliate partners, and to make offers to your email list too.

You can get access to all of the training and all of the resources and all of those email templates for just seven dollars for your first week. Just go to [TinyCourseEmpire.com/join](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com/join) to get started.

So the bottom line here is that the more that you step out of your comfort zone, the easier it becomes it will feel uncomfortable at first of course, your brain will offer up all kinds of excuses for not sending that email, or for not applying for that speaking position, or for not reaching out to that potential affiliate partner.

Just recognize it for what it is it's your brain trying to protect you from what it sees as a threat. Then do the thing anyway. Yes, it will be hard, but you can do hard

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things and it is so worth it. In fact, I would go so far as to say that if you want to stay in business in the future, this is something that you must do there is no other way anymore.

The faceless business is not going to survive this new generation of generative AI tools. You really have to be willing to put yourself out there, so that was a lot to take in so let's do a quick recap. First of all, recognize that your comfort zone is your brain trying to protect you this is normal and it's expected, but don't make it out to be more than it is don't let your brain lie to you and tell you that the feeling of getting up on stage is just as important or just as dangerous as that tiger that's hiding around the corner waiting to take a bite out of you.

Remember that emotions feel terrible that feeling of humiliation or rejection or self criticism or anxiety feels bad in the moment, but they're not really harmful to you. So if you can spend just a few minutes examining that feeling and getting curious about why you feel that way, maybe you want to journal about it maybe you want to talk to a trusted friend about it. But getting pulling it out, getting it out into the light of the day, and really examining it can help it feel less terrible.

Make yourself uncomfortable on purpose. This is really important. It will improve your results across many different areas of your life. And make a plan then follow your plan and remember that the more that you do anything, the easier it becomes. And that includes the things that feel so uncomfortable right now. I want to let you know too, that coming up next week on February 15, 2024, I'm hosting a free webinar all about Imposter Syndrome. If you are avoiding stepping out of your comfort zone because deep down inside you worry that you're a fraud, well, you are not alone. I'd love to talk to you about that and how you can get past that feeling.

You can register for the free webinar [TinyCourseEmpire.com/imposter](https://TinyCourseEmpire.com/imposter). Have a terrific rest of your day and I will talk to you again next week.