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

I don't know about you, but I have some big goals.

I want to travel, like, a lot. I want to visit all the medieval castles I can find. I want to shop the Christmas markets in Germany. I want to see the Great Wall of China. I want to explore the ancient medina in Marrakech. I might even take the train.

I've also always wanted to live in another country. To immerse myself in other cultures. In fact, right now the husband and I are looking at options for buying a vacation home overseas where we plan to spend a few months each year.

These are both bucket list items, and I have smaller goals as well. I want to write a book or two or three. I want to invite more affiliate partners to help spread the word about our courses and coaching programs. I want to grow my email list, and appear on more interviews and have more visibility overall.

So what's stopping me?

A few weeks ago, I had a chat with myself. I do that a lot, by the way. Anyway, I had a chat with myself and I said, "You know, some of those goals have been on your list for years now. What's standing between me and getting them done? What's keeping me from visiting all the castles in Europe? What's stopping me from publishing a book or three?"

And the hard truth I had to face is, it's my habits that are holding me back. Let's talk about it, because if you're not achieving your big goals, my guess is your habits are to blame, too.

This is episode 117 of the Tiny Course Empire podcast, and today we're talking about bad habits, and I don't mean eating to many donuts or having an extra glass of wine after dinner. I'm talking about the kind of habits that keep you stuck in a rut of "I'd love to do that" while making no progress at all.

Let's get into it and get it fixed.
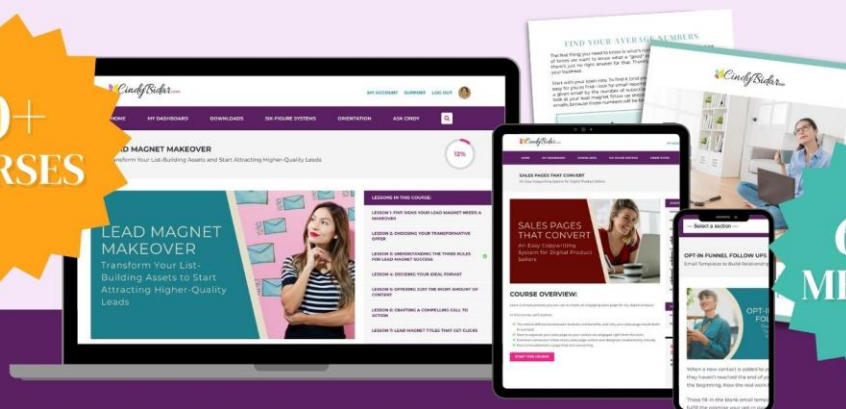
Hey, it's Cindy, and thank you for spending a few minutes of your day with me.

You'll find the show notes and recommended resources for this episode at TinyCourseEmpire.com/117.

While you're there, be sure to hit the subscribe button. New episodes drop every Monday morning. Next week, we're talking about digital courses, and how to know if you're ready to finally dive in and create yours.

But that's next week. This week is all about those nasty habits that are keeping you stuck.

Seeing problems instead of solutions

Let's start with my friend. I'll call her Problem Paula, and she has a bad habit.

Whenever a new idea is presented, she's fallen into the habit of saying, "The problem is…" and then following that up with all the reasons it won't work.

If I suggest we try a new restaurant, Problem Paula tells me they don't have enough parking. If I want to take a weekend trip to Sedona, Problem Paula tells me it's too crowded this time of year, and besides, she has work to do. If I suggest we

host a birthday party for a mutual friend, managing everyone's food preferences is too much trouble.

Paula's real problem is that problems are all she can see. She's fallen into the habit of spotting all the reasons why something won't work, and it's blinding her to all the good things. What's worse, it's preventing her from seeing potential solutions.

Look. Everyone has days where the obstacles are so big we can't see past them. I get that. And some things really are problems.

But if the problem is the first thing you see in every situation, that's a habit. My dad would have called it seeing the glass as being half empty instead of half full. Some people call it being negative or pessimistic.

If you catch yourself serving up a problem every time you're presented with an idea, here's how you can break that bad habit.

Challenge yourself to pair every problem with a potential solution.

Years ago I took a course about becoming the CEO of your business, and the woman who taught it said that she has a policy. Anyone who approaches her with a problem must also bring a potential solution. She literally has a form they have to fill out to even get an appointment on her calendar, and in that form, she asks them what they want to discuss, and if it's a problem, what the solution is that they've found.

I love that idea, because it creates a boundary. It lets her employees know that her desk is not the dumping ground for every problem. She's not the fix it person, and if they can't at least do the preliminary problem solving, then she isn't willing to waste her time on it.

I was reminded of that recently when I read We Should All Be Millionaires, by Rachel Rogers. In it, she tells the story of Shonda Rhimes—she's the creator of Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, and Bridgerton, to name a few—and Shonda has a similar policy. She has her creative time blocked out on her schedule, the time when she's writing and making millions of dollars for it, and no one is allowed to interrupt this writing time unless they are bringing her a solution to a problem.

Now, you don't have to be the head of a 20-person team or writing binge-worthy TV shows to put this policy in place. Even if it's just you and your laptop, you can challenge yourself to never settle on a problem without also identifying a potential solution.

If I come to you and say, I think you should create content to attract your ideal audience—because you absolutely should be doing that—but if your response is, "Well Cindy, the problem with that is I don't know where to publish content or what my ideal client wants or where they're likely to find me" and you move right into that problem as if it's insurmountable, you and I are going to have a problem of a different kind, because now you're closing doors that don't have to be closed.

Challenge yourself to figure out a solution. In fact, I'm going to take that even further. Don't just look for a single solution. Challenge yourself to brainstorm at least ten solutions whenever you hear that voice in your head say, "The problem is…"

There is almost always a solution, but if you're too intent on closing the door, you won't be able to see it.

My friend Problem Paula could take an Uber to that restaurant. She could ask me to drive. She could go on a Wednesday afternoon when the place is empty. She could suggest takeout instead.

There are lots of solutions. But you can't see them through a closed door.

And just so you don't think I'm immune from this particular bad habit, just after I wrote this episode, the husband and I were talking about ConvertKit—which is our email platform—and how it doesn't make it easy to keep your mailing list clean. You can't unsubscribe people in bulk, you can only delete them, and I don't like that option.

But instead of working to find a solution, I continued to insist that it's an unfixable problem. So yeah. I have some work to do on this habit myself.

Over-thinking

Ok, let's close that door for real now, because I have another habit that might be getting in the way of your success, and that's over-thinking.

Miriam-Webster defines over-thinking as thinking too much about (something) : to put too much time into thinking about or analyzing (something) in a way that is more harmful than helpful.

What this looks like in real life—and again, I'm going to pick on myself here, because I am 100% guilty of doing this—so here's the scenario.

I'm setting up a new opt-in offer for the CLEAR Framework—you can grab that on the show notes page, by the way, or by visiting cindybidar.com/clear—so anyway, there I am setting up this new opt-in offer and here comes the overthinking.

What if I need to know where these subscribers came from? I'm doing a few summits this summer, and I want to know where people found me. So off I go down that rabbit trail to add UTM parameters to my links.

Then I think, maybe I should just duplicate the opt-in pages for different summits, that will be easier, right? So off I go to do that.

Then I think, ok, but I want all of these people to see my Six-Figure Systems sequence, so how can I connect all of that together? And what if people are on more than one summit and they sign up in two different places? How can I control for that?

And listen, before I knew it, I had turned a simple opt-in funnel into a massive and complicated thing that offered little to no extra benefit—either to me or to my subscribers.

A better choice was to just keep it simple. So I went back to the drawing board, and I turned that ridiculous monstrosity of a funnel into a simple, linear sequence of emails that gives new subscribers what they most need, and that invites them to join us in Six-Figure Systems.

I stoped overthinking and overcomplicating things, and just got it done.

Is overthinking a habit? Heck yes! I believe it's a protective measure. It's my brain's way of ensuring everything is perfect, so that nothing can possibly go wrong.

But the thing is, nothing will ever be perfect, and something can always go wrong. And really, in the grand scheme of things, does it matter if I have a perfectly designed funnel?

No. Not at all.

And here's the other thing. Done is always better than perfect, and money really does love speed. You cannot sell what doesn't exist, and you can't change people's lives if they don't know who you are.

To break the overthinking habit, you have to accept that simple is good enough. Challenge yourself to find the simplest, easiest, and fastest path for getting that

project done, whether you're building a new website or launching a new coaching program.

You don't need a custom logo and theme, and professional headshots, and 35 published posts before you can launch your website. Pick a free WordPress or Squarespace theme, add an about me page and a home page, and click the publish button. It's good enough for now.

Likewise, you don't need a fancy shopping cart and three upsells and a downsell before you can launch your first course. Create a sales page. Add a PayPal button. Set that button so that once someone pays, they're automatically redirected to the access page where your course content is. Keep it simple. It's good enough for now.

Remember, nothing we do as creators on the internet is carved in stone. It's easy to change later, when you have more time, more skills, more insight into what works and what doesn't. But you won't ever have more skills or more insight until you start putting your stuff out there.

Publish that lead magnet. Put up a sales page.

Don't overthink it. Just do it.

Chasing "better" tools and ideas

Earlier this year we went down a "let's change everything up" path for a while. We looked into changing our course platform, and our membership plugin and potentially even our branding.

We were trying to simplify things—which I'm all for that. I think simple is almost always better, but we also had to ask ourselves, is this really making anything better? Or are we just adding more work to our plate for no real benefit?

In episode 115 a couple of weeks ago, I offered some frameworks you can use to make better decisions, and when we were thinking about changing our tech stack, it was the goal posting question I leaned into. I asked myself if doing all the work to change platforms—and at this point, it's a LOT of work—would really move us closer to our goals or not?

In the end, it was easy to see that this massive project wouldn't make our goals more attainable. It was just a distraction.

This is a distraction that I see a lot of clients struggle with, too, and honestly, it's a habit for a lot of people. They see some new tool—maybe it's a hot new shopping

cart or a new course platform—and the marketing is slick, and the developers make it sound like it will solve ALL the problems.

It's going to make your sales pages shine. It's going to make your courses irresistible. It's going to make your email subscribers buy more from you. It's going to make the stars shine brighter and the rain less wet.

You know what I'm talking about. But listen. It's almost never the right move to change platforms. It's almost always an expensive distraction.

Here's how to break that shiny object habit.

All you have to do is ask yourself one question the next time some shiny new tool or strategy tempts you to blow up your entire business and start over again.

Ask yourself, "What specific problem does changing tools or platforms or strategy fix?" And it needs to be a problem you identified before you read that slick sales page, too. It needs to be something you've been thinking about for weeks or months, wondering how you're going to fix it.

If that new tool legit solves that problem—the one you've been ruminating on for a while now—then it might be worth the effort and expense to change.

And if you're still not sure, come to a Six-Figure Systems Q & A call and make your case for changing platforms. Tell me all the reasons you think you need a new shopping cart or a new course platform or a new email provider, and I'll give you my honest opinion about it.

Mindless entertainment
This is maybe the worst one for me, and that's getting sucked into the rabbit hole of YouTube or TikTok. I can waste hours just scrolling through video after video, and almost none of them are adding any value to my life at all.

How many 90-second dance clips do I need to watch? Turns out, not that many. They all start to look alike after a while.

And I'll tell you when I realized I had a problem with short videos like this. It was when I was looking through my YouTube history to find a video I wanted to send to the husband. I knew I had watched it in the last couple of days, so it should have been right there near the top of my history page, right?

Except it wasn't. It was buried under literally hundreds of 90-second video shorts. Hundreds of them. That I had watched in the past two days!

You guys, that is not how I want to spend my time. I have much more important things to do, and I'm betting you do as well.

Here's what I've challenged myself to do instead. Every time I find myself scrolling through video shorts, I stop and ask myself, what else could I be doing that would benefit me more than it would just keep me entertained?

I could be reading a book about self-development or money management or business growth. Just recently I read The Big Leap, We Should All Be Millionaires, and Traffic Secrets. All of them have changed my life or my business in some way, so making reading a priority over YouTube is a hell yes from me.

Heck, I could be reading a good novel and that would be a better use of my time than YouTube shorts.

I could also be watching that course I bought about publishing on Kindle, or the one about building an email list. You probably have courses you've purchased and never implemented, too. Why give your time away to YouTube or TikTok when you could use it to grow your business instead?

I could also be learning more about the tools I'm using. I mentioned a few minutes ago that we're looking for a good way to keep the email list clean, and that ConvertKit doesn't make that easy. Well, the husband did a little research, and he found a video that has a simple solution that's worth investigating. I don't like it right out of the box, but I think with some tweaking, it will work for us.

I'll link to that video in the show notes if you're interested, by the way.

Now to be clear, I'm not saying there's no room in life for scrolling through YouTube or TikTok. It's a fun way to pass some time and I'm always impressed by a good dance move. I've even discovered several new recipes I want to try thanks to my scrolling habit, so I'm not completely eliminating social media from my life. But I am being more intentional about how and when I use it.

It's the mindlessness that the problem. That's the key word here.

I wish I could remember who said it, but I heard the host of a productivity podcast say that binge-watching Netflix isn't unproductive by definition. If you intend to binge-watch Bridgerton all day, and that's what you do, then you've had a very productive day.

It's only a problem if it's unintentional.

The same is true for social scrolling. If that's what you intend to do, it isn't mindless at all. It's when you lose control of it and suddenly realize that you've watched hundreds of short videos in two days that it has shifted from fun into a bad habit that you maybe want to rethink.

As you can see, all of these bad habits are getting in the way of my big goals. But what about you? What habits do you have that are preventing you from making progress on your business? Pop over to TinyCourseEmpire.com/117 and let's have a chat about it. I'd love to hear from you. --

And could you do me a favor? If you found this episode helpful, would you share it with a friend. You can just send them the direct link. That's TinyCourseEmpire.com/117. That's the best way to support the show, and I so appreciate it.

That's it for me this week. I'll be back next week to talk about whether or not you should consider creating an online course. If you've been on the fence about it, or you're thinking you'd like to create a course but you're not sure it's the right move for you, meet me here next week, and we'll talk it through.

Have a terrific rest of your day, and I'll see you next week.

If you like what you hear on the Tiny Course Empire Podcast, you're going love all of the courses and workshops and support you'll find inside Six-Figure Systems. That's my monthly program where we dig into online marketing for regular people like you and me. We don't do big launches. We don't have the big headaches and we don't have the big expenses that come with them. Instead, we focus on creating repeatable, sustainable systems that continue to grow over time, and that don't suck up all of our energy or require a 10 person team to manage. You can come see what we're all about at sixfiguresystems.com and I'll see you on the inside