

Tiny Course Empire Podcast Episode 142: Dumb things I did to derail my business before it began

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

A couple of weeks ago, an old YouTube video turned up in my feed for some reason called Dumb Ways to Die. It's a catchy little tune with cartoon characters, and it was created to promote train safety, and it details all kinds of dumb things that you can do to die. Basically, Dumb ways to die, right? This is episode 142 of the Tiny Course Empire podcast, and that video got me thinking about all of the dumb ways I tried to kill my business before it even got started.

So I thought today we would talk about those. I won't be singing, no one wants to hear that, but I hope you'll stick around anyway. This is going to help you hopefully prevent making some of the same mistakes that I made.

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START, GROW, AND SCALE
YOUR ONLINE BUSINESS**

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COURSES**

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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/142 . While you're there, download the Clear Framework.

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Study it, follow it, build a business. That's all I'm going to say about that. The link is in the show notes.

If you're new to the show, be sure to hit the subscribe button new episodes drop every Monday morning. And next week we're going to talk about how I get so much done as a solo creator and how you can too. But that is next week. This week is all about not killing your business before it even gets off the ground. So let me bare my soul a little bit and tell you about the four huge mistakes I made. Number one on my list of four ways I tried to kill my business is simply aiming too low.

I remember when I first came online, my husband asked me what my goal was and I said, you know what? I'm a simple person. I don't need a lot. I just want to earn enough to pay the bills. And on the surface, I mean, that sounded good, right i just needed to replace my day job income. At the time I was making thirty seven thousand dollars a year. This was 2011 and that was all I thought I needed. If I could just earn that much.

If I could just earn a couple thousand dollars a month, that was my take home pay if I could just earn that 2000\$ a month, that would cover the bills and I would be happy. Well, I'm going to file this under be careful what you wish for because early entrepreneurial Cindy certainly wasn't thinking about things like insurance and taxes because that 2000\$ a month would not have even begun to pay my bills thankfully, we did not earn that little because I would have been out of business pretty quickly.

The other thing I didn't realize yet was that your brain goes in the direction that you point it by saying to myself and to anyone who would listen that all I wanted was enough to pay the bills. That was exactly what I was going to get if I wasn't careful. It's kind of like driving a car. You know how you're driving down the highway, and if you look off to the right and you point your eyes in that direction for too long, pretty soon your car begins to drift off to the right? The same thing is true with your goals when you set your sights to low, you will inevitably head in that direction.

And that was really not the direction I wanted to go. I was just too afraid to say out loud that I wanted more or that I thought I was capable of earning more. And we're

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going to get more to that in just a minute. But when you are talking about what you want from your business, what results do you want? I want you to be careful not to aim too low because my aiming that low, I just want enough to pay the bills held me back longer than it needed to. And one big reason why I aim too low is because I didn't believe enough in myself.

And that's the dumb way number two that I tried to kill my business before it was even starting. I did not have enough confidence in myself. I did not believe that I was worth more than thirty seven thousand dollars a year because that was the most I had ever been paid. I could not envision that I would make a hundred thousand two hundred thousand three hundred thousand four hundred thousand dollars.

I could not picture that because no one had ever paid me that so I didn't feel like I was worth that much money. I believed too little in myself and that showed up in other ways as well. In 2017 I was working for a business coach. She was teaching a big high end, expensive course and several people I knew took this course and would say to me afterwards, you should be teaching this. There is nothing in here that you can't teach. And I didn't believe them.

I knew in my heart that I knew everything that was being taught, but I didn't have the confidence in myself i didn't believe in myself. In 2018 after I had released most of my VA clients and decided that I did want to create courses, I still played too small i remember attending a business retreat, a mastermind retreat with Kelly Mccawsey and Nicole Dean down in Pensacola, florida and I went there with the intention of starting a course based business for other virtual assistants and they both sat me down and said you are aiming too small.

Virtual assistants are not your market. You need to be marketing yourself to other business owners, other people who are growing course and coaching based businesses. And again, I didn't have that belief. I did not believe in myself. I luckily listened to them and I let them believe in me until I could believe in myself. But that lack of confidence, that lack of belief in myself, call it imposter syndrome if you will. I let that hold me back for years. So this was 2018 i came online in 2011 so for seven years I let that lack of belief in myself hold me back from creating the courses

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that I could have been creating that whole time.

It took me 7 years to get past that imposter syndrome or to start to get past it it still shows up from time to time, but it took me that long to even begin to work past it. It took me that long to realize that I didn't have to worry that other people were going to call me out or that I was going to embarrass myself in public it took me that long to realize that none of that mattered, that all that mattered were the people that I could help and who did need me and I hear from those people now every week, people email me and say thank you for this.

I struggled to understand this and you've really helped me the podcast is really helping me this course that you created is amazing and I was able to do something i was able to start my email list i was able to create my first course i was able to write my first blog post with your help. Think about what I could have been doing in those seven years, in those seven years that I was holding myself back because I didn't believe in myself.

If that's you, then I have 3 pieces of advice for you. The first one is from Eleanor Roosevelt who said what other people think of me is none of my business. I want you to remember that. That's what I try to remember every day every day. If someone criticizes me or I worry that what I'm putting out there is going to draw criticism, that is my go to quote what other people think of me is none of my business.

The second bit of advice is if you wouldn't trade places with the person who is criticizing you, then don't pay attention to them. In other words, if someone criticizes you and they are not living a life or running a business that you would want to have, then their criticism holds no weight. Don't worry about what they say. And the third thing is just a reminder that the people who are successful in doing what you want to do do not have the time or the energy or the spirit to criticize you. They're not going to call you out on social media and say how dare you because they are busy running their own lives and their own businesses.

The people who do have the time and the energy and the spirit to be mean online, and I know there's a lot of them, those people are not worth listening to because

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their lives are so small and so painful that the only pleasure they get is from criticizing other people and they are not worth listening to. So if you are holding yourself back, if you are not believing in yourself, if you are a victim of imposter syndrome, please keep those three things in mind and go put your knowledge and expertise out into the world because I guarantee there are people out there who need to hear from you.

And by you holding yourself back, by you not believing in yourself, by you playing small, you are denying them the knowledge, the expertise, the support they need to be successful. Ok, so these first two were really mindset focused. Playing too small, not believing in myself, not aiming high enough. Those were all about my mindset. The other two ways that the other two dumb ways that I tried to kill my business were more practical. The first one was treating my business like a hobby. I felt like I had to be inspired to go to work i had to be inspired to write A blog post i had to feel like creating a course i had to feel like recording a podcast episode i had to feel inspired to record a video.

And that is treating my business like a hobby. And that is no way to get ahead. I have said many, many times that the real key to business success is consistent action consistently publishing content, consistently creating new courses, consistently showing up in the world. And you cannot do that if you are treating your business like a hobby. And the way that you don't treat your business like a hobby is to ask yourself, if I had a boss and my boss assigned a project to me, whether that project is to write A blog post, create a course, set up a new website, record a podcast, whatever that project is.

If I had a boss and my boss assigned this project to me, would I wait to be inspired? Would I schedule other things in place in in the times when I was supposed to be working? Would I decide that it was OK to go to the grocery store at 10:00 in the morning in the middle of my work day? Would I decide that it was OK to just take the day off because I didn't feel like working today? No, of course not, because you have a boss who is waiting for that project.

So the way that you do not treat your business like a hobby is by acting as if you have a boss because you do. Your boss is you, but that boss is expecting that project to be done. So instead of waiting for inspiration or waiting to feel like you want to

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record a podcast, just do it. Put it on your calendar and do it as if someone else was waiting for it. And the final way, the final dumb way that I tried to kill my business before it even got off the ground, was by not marketing myself enough.

And I will tell you, this is huge. Somehow I just expected people to find me and I mean, to be fair, in the beginning, they kind of did. My early clients found me on LinkedIn and through my blog or through referrals. Not that I was putting any effort into LinkedIn or my blog or referrals for that matter, but clients came to me and it was kind of unfortunate because it gave me a false sense of what I needed to do or not do to grow my business so I wasn't really forced to market my virtual assistant business early on.

And I even said, I said to many people that I don't know how to market my business because I don't market my business and that wasn't true. I did know how to market my business that's like saying I don't know how to get in shape i don't know how to lose weight. I don't know how to keep my house clean. We all know how to do these things. We may not do them, but that's different from not knowing I knew how to market my business.

I wasn't doing the things that I knew I should be doing in large part because I didn't have to because I had a steady flow of clients. But when I pivoted my business from client work into course creation and membership sites, I needed to have that marketing piece in lace. And I didn't. And that was a huge, huge mistake. O today I'm doing things differently. I have this podcast, we're on episode 142 and that is a big marketing channel for me.

We added YouTube, that's another big marketing channel for us. We have an email list of seven thousand subscribers. That is huge. And we are working to grow that every single day. I have an affiliate Army who promotes [my courses and my membership](#) and who I happily pay every single month to bring me new customers and new clients. Now, is there more I can do? Absolutely there are hundreds and hundreds of things that I could be doing to market the business every single day.

But as a solo creator, I have to be careful where I spend my time and my energy. So the question I ask myself and the question I'm going to invite you to ask yourself is,

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am I doing everything that I am capable of doing to market my business? Did I do everything I was capable of doing today? And if the answer is no, then it's time to look at what else you could add to the mix.

I'm pretty sure there's more you could add to the mix, just like I am certain there are more things that I could add to my marketing mix. So those are the four big dumb ways I tried to kill my business before it even got off the ground. I aimed far too low, far lower than I was capable of aiming. I held myself back by not believing in myself enough. Even when I did believe in myself, I continued to treat my business like a hobby and wait to be inspired or to feel like working, which is never a good plan.

And I failed to market myself as much as I could, as much as I was capable of in the ways that I knew would work. And I would love to hear from you as well which ones of these four things, Or maybe there's something else, but which ones? What are the dumb ways that you are preventing your business from growing right now what are the dumb mistakes that you are making? Are you brave enough to tell me i hope you will share in the comments below what is holding you back from growing the business that you truly want to grow. That's it for me this week i will be back next week with my best tips to get more done as a solo creator, so I will see you there.

Have a terrific day.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

**I'll teach you the simple
systems that lead to
BIG RESULTS
even if you're brand new
to online business.**

START TODAY

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