

Called to Both Episode 22

Hello, and Happy Monday, we are kicking off the week with a conversation about boundaries and having boundaries in your business. I think this is key not only to avoiding burnout, like we talked about in episode 20. But also to avoid feeling like your clients are overreaching in terms of asking too much, or creeping into that personal time, personal life, that kind of thing. So especially after having kids, I want my family time and my personal time to be protected and to be sacred. And I've noticed that having clear boundaries in my business has become even more important, had been in business for many years. But now I'm realizing how much more I am honoring those boundaries. And we're gonna get into that and the importance of you honoring those boundaries first, and why that really plays into your clients than honoring the boundaries because you honor them first, a good business boundary will teach your clients how to treat you and how to communicate with you. And this is so that both sides feel that they received what they expected from the exchange in business, and so that they're happier at the end of it. All right. So this isn't about how little can we email and how you know far can we keep our clients removed from us, but rather making sure that everybody feels well communicated with and like they understand what they're going to get from you, and you understand what their expectations are in return. Right. So this is all about just better communication overall. Because I think that when both parties are happy, there's a greater likelihood of repeat business. And there's a greater likelihood of them leaving you a five star review, and telling their friends and family about you and getting that word of mouth marketing. So this is this is Yes, first and foremost about protecting your time and your family and making sure that your business has a bit of a line between those clients and you. But I also think this is just good business. So I want to get into this, I want to unpack this a little bit today. And primarily focus on the boundaries in the business. But stay tuned for an episode coming up about boundaries from your business and how we can protect ourselves from our own business and make sure it doesn't take over our lives. So let's talk about client boundaries, how to build them, how to communicate them, and how to maintain them.

Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast, I'm your host Joy Michelle, and you're in the right place. If you're ready to grow your business, while also being the intentional and present mom, you want to be this show will leave you feeling inspired, equipped with tangible tips and encouraged to go after your own version of being called spoke. Let's dive in.

A lot of what makes up boundaries in your business is going to be knowing where you stand. Oftentimes, when you feel pressured by a client to get a faster response, or generally you just are left feeling uncomfortable with maybe it was the timing of the request, maybe it was the style of the request might have been a DM or you just felt it was unprofessional. That is a signal that your boundaries may have been crossed. Unfortunately, a lot of times this happens because we as the business owner have not sat down and really thought through how we want things to look ideally. So we're going to do that today. So don't worry, it is not too late. If you have had some sticky situations with clients, that can be the biggest learning opportunity and a great place to sit down and ask, okay, what would have made this better? How can I communicate this in the future to avoid this, and so on.

So really basic, but I think the first thing you need to start out with is to set your work hours. So having office hours, or at least an estimated response time that you can share with clients, I think is number

one, this is important not only for you to be able to run your business effectively, but for you to have times to give to your clients so that they know when they can expect to hear from you.

So you also need to know your preferred communication channel or platform or format, I guess I should say where like Where would you like the majority of that communication to take place? Maybe this is email, maybe this is a client portal inside of a CRM just for the sake of keeping all these projects organized. Or maybe you're not picky about where this happens. I don't think there's a right or wrong answer here. The important thing is that you fought about it, and you know those preferences, decide how you would like your clients to communicate with you. And for example, you can kind of ask different questions like Do you want your clients to have your phone number? Did you are you okay with text messages?

What time do you feel is appropriate for a client to reach out to you if they do have your phone number at a certain point, you know, would you feel that it's bit too late, or we can still okay. So a great option if you would like to provide a phone number, but you'd still like to have a bit of a divide and keep that business and personal separate is to use a Google Voice number, which is totally free to set up and allows you to call and actually text without providing your personal phone number. And I know that there are some vendor listings that require phone numbers or allow you to have phone numbers. And that can be really helpful to have that on. But sometimes I know that I didn't want my actual personal phone number floating around on the internet, especially once I started making YouTube videos. And so I switched over to a Google Voice number for some of those more public platforms. And that was just a personal choice in in my business.

So next, once you have established those work hours, or maybe some office hours for email response time, and you have decided when you're going to be talking with your clients communicating with your clients, and then of course, you've picked your preferred communication, like format, then it is your job to set the expectations for the experience. So to me, the experience is going to be the back and forth the question and the deliverables for whatever it is that you're providing. I know for me, as a photographer, there's a considerable amount of back and forth and picking locations, maybe the time of the shoot outfits, recommendations for hair and makeup, if they want those vendors. And then of course, there's the gallery itself and tangible goods like prints and albums, there can just be a lot of back and forth. So depending on your business, you really need to sit down and think about that entire client journey, and how you're going to show up for them and how you're going to preemptively communicate what is next in the process.

And you really set the tone for this. So you get to set the expectation. And I think having an experience guide when you onboard your clients is going to help a lot with this. It's not only it's going to guide them in the experience and give them just an A level up experience to what they were expecting. But this is a great opportunity for you to be sharing what client communication is going to look like when they can expect response times and how they can go about asking you questions. But remember, you're going to have to repeat yourself, people, they don't remember every single thing you say they are not going to read every single thing you write, and you will have to remind them and that is okay.

So now that you have some boundaries, maybe you sit down and you think through some of this stuff, you think through maybe some sticky client situations you've been in in the past or ask yourself whether or not you're okay with text messages and DMS as like the primary way that people are asking you questions, and then you can go forward and write those down. So let's say that you have those you've

formed some of these boundaries. You've thought about this in the context of, you know, just thinking, okay, in an ideal world, what would communication look like? Now? Where do you actually put these boundaries, right, so things like your response time, your office hours, I think these should all be listed in the following locations. I think your email footer, great place for this your contact page itself. So right next to that inquiry form where someone would reach out to you about your services inside of your initial client response itself. So if you have an auto responder that says, hey, I'm so excited about potentially working with you, this is a great place for you to share some of these communication boundaries.

And even response times, I think your out of office inbox responder, I've seen people do this as a great way to communicate and reiterate what's happening in their lives, what they're up to what they're doing. This is great for if you're taking a vacation leave of absence, or even if you just don't touch Email, on the weekends, I've seen people use email auto responders at all times, during the weekend hours. Another place you can put this and should put this is your Google Business Listing your Facebook business page, and inside your client welcome Guide, which we mentioned before. So these are just a couple of places. But you know, get creative with this. If you decide that you are definitely going to be fine with text messaging, or DMS or things like that, you get to decide and set the tone for this in your business. But wherever things seem to kind of go arrive, that can sometimes be a great breadcrumb for you to sit and kind of backtrack and say, okay, where could I have reiterated this? So I think it's it's really important to communicate this wall to your clients and also to communicate it in a way that poses the benefit to them. So for example, you might say, hey, to get the fastest response time on any questions, go ahead and email me at this specific address. This is for my paying clients only. And they're going to be encouraged to use that email address. Instead of shooting you a text or sending you a DM on you know, any number of social media platforms.

They know that's the fastest way to get the response. So think it's all about how you pose it to your clients as well. So remember that people get the two own of your business off of you, and what you actually do. So if your email footer says that you do not reply outside of the office hours during, you know, Monday through Friday, for example, but you frequently are answering your clients on Saturday morning, this signals to them that they can go ahead and just ignore that footer. So schedule your replies with an app like Boomerang, that's a plugin for Gmail, or you can do a scheduled send inside of honey book, that's my favorite CRM, so that you can work during nap time, or early morning hours or really whenever you want, without communicating those client boundaries that you want to be sending. So I've had times where clients will send me a text message on a Sunday, for example, and they're asking something that's totally not an emergency, you know, and they're expecting an answer right away. And this is going to happen, I think that we have to remember a lot of times that when depending on your business, when people are working with you, they're doing this during their fringe hours of time, right? Like, this isn't their job job, it's your job. And they're trying to fit in the communication with you on the weekends or the evenings or whenever they possibly can.

So I think that's totally normal. And I've either waited until business hours to respond when this happens, or I've moved the response over to email, if I felt like the platform that they chose just wasn't the best platform, and I knew that I was going to lose the message or not have that record right in front of me at some point, I will just move it over to email, or I'll just shoot them a quick text and say, Hey, this is great question, I'm gonna go ahead and shoot you a message on Monday, and just reiterate, when they can hear back from me. And I think people truly do appreciate when you can communicate your boundaries well, and uphold them to and just stand behind them. And I know I do, too, when I reach out

to people, or if I send someone to DM, and they say, here's a better way to get in touch with me. Here's my enquiry form, or here's an email address, or here's a team member you can reach out to that can actually better answer this question. I appreciate it because they're directing me closer to my answer, even if that answer is a gentle No. And sometimes I'll even see how other people instill their boundaries in their business. And it will give me an idea for what I could add to mind. Like, maybe I see someone's out of inbox responder, and I'm like, Oh, that is such a good way of redirecting some of these questions to an FAQ page, or I really love the way that that person just right away uses an auto responder and says, Hey, I don't answer DMS, go ahead and go over here. You know, I personally do answer my DMs. But I love to see how other business owners are doing this and incorporating this in their businesses, especially moms who are balancing both of these worlds. And I think we need this so much this conversation needs to happen more. And I was so glad to see this conversation happening over in the call to both Facebook community. So I want to invite you guys to join the call to both Facebook communities that we can continue conversations like these and talk about what's working and what's not in our own businesses on a very practical level.

So definitely check that out. I will have that linked up in the show notes. Alright, so there you have it. That's client boundaries. 101 I can't wait to hear what you guys think of this episode. And I'll see you in the next one.

Thank you so much for listening to the show. If you enjoyed this episode, please help me get the word out about the call to both podcast by taking a screenshot of this episode right now and sharing it on your social media. I would also appreciate it if you would subscribe and leave me a five star review. Thanks again and I'll see you in the next episode.