

Called to Both Episode 72

Before we dive into today's episode I want to share about business babes collective podcast hosted by my friend Danielle weep. This podcast is for women entrepreneurs wanting to scale a profitable business. You can even hear me on Episode 110, where we discuss pursuing both motherhood and entrepreneurship. Make sure you find Danielle's podcast on your favorite podcast player by searching the business babes collective. Now, here is today's episode.

Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host, join 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.

Okay, friends, so this episode is going to be my June sabbatical recap. So I decided to take the month of June off from my business. And this is something that I have never done before. So I am here to share with you how it went. And if I will ever do it again and my major takeaways from this time away from my business. Now the only thing I did keep going in my business was my Voxer coaching clients. So those clients are on a monthly coaching retainer plan. And honestly, I didn't want to stop this both because I really enjoy the work. But also because I still wanted to have some income coming into the business in a way that was super predictable. But I will talk about some other income that I made in my business in June. But we'll break that down later.

So I'll be honest with you, I did not go into 2023 thinking that I was going to take the month of June off or that I would be taking a sabbatical at all. And what happened is our nanny is my sister in law, and she was going to be taking a trip and would be out for the month of June. And I essentially had a decision to make as to whether I was going to replace her temporarily with get some help at home, or just take a break. And to be honest, when she first told me that she would be out for the month of June, I had this piece about potentially just pausing everything. Because it was April or May when I decided that I wasn't going to be finding new childcare. And I felt like the business had just been moving really quickly, almost like faster than I was in a lot of ways. And I think I was experiencing a lot of symptoms of burnout. Like One really good example of this was on Sundays, I would constantly have that feeling of like, oh my gosh, tomorrow, it all starts over again, I have to get up, I have five calls, I have brand deals that I need to start, I have a VA I need to train, my team has been shifting a lot over the past couple of months. And it just felt like this never ending list.

And when I realized that I was getting the Sunday scaries a little bit in my own business that gave me pause because I'm really not trying to build a business that doesn't support my life and is something that I'm going to be dreading on Sunday. So between, you know, coming up on a 10 year anniversary of running my business, which is wild podcast on that coming up, and just the sheer exhaustion of what I was experiencing as a business owner, and then this childcare thing popping up, I kind of just took it as a sign to take the time, take the time that I needed. And I thought it would be so much fun to take June off and just go to the beach with my kids and just be home with them more and have more family time. And my hope was that I would take this time to rest and recharge and realign and that I would come back to my business with totally fresh eyes. So going into sabbatical, I will fully admit I had some romanticized ideas about what this was going to look like. I even got a new notebook I wrote like rest,

recharge, reflect like inside. And now when I looked at that, when I was preparing for this episode of this video, I kind of just smiled because some of it was that and some of it was not.

So I'll share like how I got ready for it. And then what it actually looked like to have a sabbatical from a business. And I know that because I shared that I was doing this and I had emails going out and I shared a little bit on social media during my time of just not working had a bunch of DMs of people saying like I want to hear more about this sabbatical because I feel like I'm on the verge of meeting one. And so that's why I'm kind of like just gonna pull back the curtain and share kind of like the good, the bad and the ugly of what this actually looked like to take the time off in my business. Okay, so because I did batch the recording of all of my content, including this podcast, I did get a rest from all content creation, all writing in general, like emails and blogs, and all of that, which was really, really needed. I have been a dedicated content creator in my business for a super long time. I've been a YouTuber for like five years and a podcaster for over a year, and have been blogging and had a newsletter since like, probably a year into my business.

So it has been a journey. And I needed to second to just not be on a zoom call, not be writing content, not be creating content, or proofing it from my team, all of that. And I think between all of like the different things that have been developing in my business, like brand deals and more influencer work and things like that, I was burnt out on the calls like the call part of my week, I feel like that has been getting out of hand. And so the idea of just like, pausing, everything sounded so good going into this break. And the other thing is what was kind of interesting about me personally for June is that like after being a wedding photographer for eight years, there was something extra indulgent about taking June off the month of June, like historically, for me, was a very busy month for weddings, I wouldn't be at the Naval Academy, I would be up in Baltimore, I would be all over the place. And if I wasn't shooting a wedding, I was shooting engagement, and I was editing. And I really wasn't able to take the time that I was for this sabbatical in the past during, especially during like a summer months. So that was one thing that like I was really excited and looking forward to. And I think like along that same vein, one other reason that I started leaning into this idea of a sabbatical, instead of trying to just power through was that it felt like I would just be powering through it felt like it needed to happen.

And I needed to take a break. And truthfully, I also wanted to know like if I could step away from my business, because I mean, for a lot of different reasons, because I have clients and I have bills, and I have a team. And I wanted to see like do have I built a freedom filled business the way that I've wanted to. And so part of me wanted to just prove to myself that I could like I could take this time, and not have to sit down for any formal work for like the entire month, a couple of other things aligned really nicely for this to happen for me to be able to leave. And that was that I had some shifts in my team. And instead of replacing those team members, I just paused. So now we're here in July, and I'm going to be onboarding some new team members next month. And the rest of the year is going to be really busy. But it felt like this kind of like beautiful opportunity and almost like a God thing that the team had shifted. And my business was shifting, and I was feeling this like restlessness to take a step back and enjoy summer and just like unplug and be with my kids all at the same time. So I was really able to pause in a lot of areas of my business that I don't think if things had been progressing the way that they had for the past couple of years, I would have even been able to step away.

So it was a really cool timing thing. So a couple of other things that I did to prepare for this time was to talk to my team that I still have. So talk to them, explain what I need from them batch content. And I also paused and like changed some of my subscriptions for things that I wouldn't be needing. So if I

had like streaming software's or subscriptions, even like how I record for this podcast, if I could pause or downgrade any of those I did. So I wanted to prepare my business to be as lean as possible since I wasn't going to be creating content for at least six weeks. And I didn't want to feel like the burden of all of those bills. So that was something that I did that I really don't regret. And I'm happy that I did. Okay, so I want to share about like the actual sabbatical itself.

So I prepared my team, I dwindled things down to like as lean as they could go and continue to promote for like my shop sales and different things. And then of course, I had my Voxer private coaching clients that were still on retainer. So I entered into sabbatical, I think with the idea that like, not only was this going to be restful, but that I was going to have so much clarity when I got back. And in retrospect, I think that was like too much pressure to put on such a short amount of time that I didn't have a lot of margin and that I didn't have a lot of help with with childcare. So while it was a total brain break for me from the business and from content creation and from having to make decisions about my own business, really the only time I was thinking about business was for my clients, which I love. And I feel like that's a totally different part of my brain. What I didn't get was as much rest as I was expecting because, you know, spoiler alert, like having a two year old and a four year old and absolutely no help is not it easy. And so this time frame, my parents were out of the state, I only have one sibling living close in the area. And because everyone's like on trips or doing things or experiencing their own hardships and things in life, it was really hard. And it was almost confronting, to have to just be. And I feel like that was powerful.

There were many, many moments where I had to just sit with the fact that like, I wasn't going to rush into the office, and then I wasn't going to rush back out. And I wanted to just be and that was something that my coach had said to me, as I was entering into this time. And she said, joy, this is, this is such a powerful time to just see the grass and the ocean, and the, you know, feel the breeze and, and when she was describing that I was like, I mean, when was the last time I just sat down and like felt truly super present in the moment and didn't feel like okay, I have to go like I have to get to the next thing because I'm trying to balance it all. And so while it wasn't as restful, in the sense of like, being able to go on lots of walks, and read all the books, I wanted to read and journal as much as I possibly wanted to, it was such a reprieve from the same routine that I had felt like I was almost doing on autopilot, but like wasn't even sure I wanted to still be doing. So during my time during the sabbatical during the weeks with the kids, I introduced them to disposable cameras, and we have sent those off to be developed. And each of the kids just thought this was so fun. We had my parents anniversary party, we went to parks, I pulled out like watercolor paints for the first time in over a year, and just really tried to not fill the gaps in my day, like naptime.

Or when Felipe would take the kids, which he did often, like take them and try to do stuff with them. So I would have a minute, I had to resist so hard the feeling of just scrolling or jumping back into the inbox or just numbing out in some way. Because it was so confronting to just do nothing, you know, and even that to say do nothing, I had to correct it in my head and say like, we're resting, we're taking a break, we're exploring different books or reading about things that are not business based, right. And that was hard at first, I feel like it was like, kind of this uneasy feeling of just what am I going to do during naptime? Like what am I going to do when the kids go down tonight, because I guess I shouldn't work on the website, or I guess I shouldn't talk to like this person or this brand deal. It's like, I was truly like getting out of the ruts of how I was spending my time.

So the biggest thing I would do differently is I would absolutely first and foremost, I'll say I would absolutely do a sabbatical again. And I really think that going forward, I'm going to actually plan for it instead of almost like stumble into it like this happened for me this time, I'm gonna plan for it. And one thing that I would do differently is I would probably get some consistent childcare, like two mornings a week or two days a week so that I can do more self development type of stuff, because it was more of a break from the business instead of a business development sabbatical where I could go take all the courses that I've bought and not finished, right, like we all have a course graveyard somewhere in our inbox, and I have a few programs that I would really love to look back on and website updates I would love to make and maybe even you know, meet with a coach like in real life or take a weekend away somewhere. And I think that's really what I would do differently is carve out just a little bit more self development time even so that I could go get like a mani pedi or something like that, because it was more of a break and less of a time to actually process through things about the business. So I did mention that Felipe did help me quite a bit and a couple of times he when we were at the beach, so we spent two weeks of June at the beach.

So half of my sabbatical, I was at the beach with like my whole family. And a couple of mornings he was like just go to the coffee shop and go through your book because I had this book. So I have this journal that goes along with the book that goes with it. And so it's it all starts with a dream 101 Dreams journal, and the book that accompanies it is it all starts with a dream. I believe that's the title. I'll link it up in the show notes. But I really wanted to cultivate dreaming and inspiration and goals into the time that I had. So even though I didn't have a ton of time for self development when I did have time, that's what I was doing. I was really thinking about like, why am I still doing this? 10 years later? Why am I going to go back to my business when this sabbatical is done? Like what parts of this do I love and what parts of this are not awesome? Like what can we get rid of it? Can we outsource it? Can we change something because like the truth of the matter is, I was so burnt out and so tired.

And it falls pretty directly on me because I'm an entrepreneur. I have I'm a creative business owner, I have built my team, I've chosen the people that I'm going to work with. I've chosen my offers, I've chosen how I'm going to create content. So it's pretty confronting when you sit there, and you're burnt out with the business you built. And so to me, the only answer is like, well, then I have to figure out like, what do I truly want? And how am I going to change this. And so that was one of the best things that I did. And I came away from that time when I was journaling, when it was nap time when Felipe gave me time when the kids went to sleep when my parents watch the kids when we were at the beach. And that was I came away from that time with two lists. And I think that was probably like the best thing that this sabbatical offered me besides the time with my family, obviously like you, that is like there's nothing that can top that. But in a business sense, I think the best thing that happened was the two lists. And that was one list of actual important projects that I've chosen to work on for the rest of 2023 actual needle moving, getting me closer to the business I want to have five years from now, that list of things is like right in front of me now.

And then I have a list of things that I'm not doing until those projects are complete. And I think there was like there was such an interesting moment where I was sitting in church on a Sunday during sabbatical. And I felt like I wasn't feeling the anticipation of the week that I described at the beginning of this episode. I wasn't feeling like, Okay, what time is it we have to get home, when the kids go down, I'm going to prep for the week and like this, like, we're about to jump back on the train, that train is flying, I have these calls, I have these things like it's all going to go like Ready, set, go whether you feel good or not whether you were tired or not whether the kids wake up five times tonight or not. And when

I sat there, and I felt really piece filled and grounded. I was like, This is why we're doing this, like, this is why we're doing this because now I know I've got to carve out more time on Mondays for my business, my work my creativity, and start the week a little bit slower.

So that I don't have that like, okay, the train is flying at 100 miles an hour, we have five back to back calls. So I've made some changes in like how I'm building out my schedule. And I've talked about my schedule in so many different episodes here on the podcast and on my YouTube channel. But I think that like that's something we have to return to a lot. And a lot of times, if we're not taking a minute to rest and get some distance from what we're doing as business owners, we can't get clear enough to even identify what the problem is like, is it the offer? Is it the people? Is it? What's going on? Right? Like, is it my schedule and my burning the candle at both ends? It's like, yes, 100% I am. But it's really hard to get clear on what actually needs to change in order for you to build the business in the life that you want, when you don't take breaks. And that is so hard for me because I want to continue to make progress. And I don't want to be left behind.

And I don't want to take that time and feel like when I get back, everyone's going to have made 100 reels and sold their courses and done their thing and I'll feel left behind. And so that was a big mental game for me to overcome and really process through that. I'm not being left behind. I am on my own journey with my own trajectory and my own pacing. And that was a huge learning thing for me was just to really put on blockers. I'm almost thinking of like a horse with like the little blockers like I don't really need to see like what everybody else is doing because the horse is just gonna get distracted or spooked, or whatever. No, no good things happen from the horse seeing what's happening to the left or to the right. And so that is something I took into the sabbatical time of like just not taking in so much information about what everybody else is doing to so hard because I love social media and I love checking in on all of my friends. But that was huge for me to like clear my head was really allowing myself to have a lot more time without a podcast playing without a YouTube video going without a webinar going. None of it. Like none of it.

I just sat in a lot of silence more than I normally do. Even though I did read books and journal and I did listen to one book I listened to the joy of missing out which felt like an appropriate listen with everything that I've been talking about here with a sabbatical. And I you know, while I was like donating clothes and cleaning out my closet and doing all these things in my house that I felt like I had never had time To touch before it's like, I was able to think through things and just like listen to music, instead of taking in more content, more information. And I think that was hugely had clearing for me, huge. Another big takeaway from my sabbatical was like, I have been noticing how depleted I am physically. So I've had two kids in the past four years, I have breastfed for four years. And no breaks, like between kids, like I had a very brief break between my kids, but it's like I was either pregnant breastfeeding, or postpartum for forever. And I know that that has, like, intellectually, I knew that that had taken a huge toll on me. But it wasn't until this time of just like pausing, and really thinking about like, what does my body need, that I don't think I gave it the credit that it deserves.

So I have been really focusing on like nutrition and supplementation like taking my supplements and taking my vitamins and getting my walks in. I have a walking pad and like a standing desk here in my office, and I love it. Like when I am like doing those few but like meaningful things of just drinking water or taking my supplements, like doing my ice roller on my face and getting active, I have really sensed a difference. And then sleep is huge. Like, I always get frustrated when people talk about sleep, because I don't get great sleep in this season of life as a mom. But I also shoot myself in the foot because I stay

up late, or I'm reading books, or I'm scrolling. And I don't always use their naptime to take a rest. And that is something that I started doing in June. I probably took like eight naps in the month of June, which isn't even like every single day or anything, but it's way more than I had ever taken. In previous months, I would say like when the kids are going down, I'm laying down, like if I fall asleep, great. If I don't, that's fine. But like, I'm not going to scroll, I'm not going to do any of that. I'm going to like set an alarm on my phone, and just get into the covers and see what happens. And like nine times out of 10 I fell asleep. And I think I'm at a huge sleep deficit as I think most moms are most parents, honestly. But that like I think was part of the burnout was like part of the burnout is just physical exhaustion. So if you got anything out of this episode, if you have any questions, please send me a DM on Instagram or shoot me just a comment. If you're watching on the video side on YouTube.

Leave a comment below and let me know if you have ever taken a sabbatical. If you plan to take a sabbatical. I know this was like a little bit all over the place. But it was a little bit of a mixed bag for me as you can tell, but I would 100% Do it again. And I do recommend it to creatives, I think especially if you can take the time take the time. Next time if I do a sabbatical, I think it's going to be a little bit longer. I think it's going to have childcare. And I think I'm going to include just more self care, that's intentional, like massages, and I don't know like maybe some headshots or something so that I feel like I'm doing some things for myself and for my business, and not just tuning out completely from the business. But this was a really powerful and confronting month. For me, I feel like I learned a lot more about myself in the business that I want to run and the team that I want to cultivate. And so I'm so thankful to have built a business that I can step away in the month of June, and go to the beach with my kids and experience the same beach that I went to as a kid and see them experience it too.

So it's it was just hugely, hugely rewarding and wonderful and tiring, but wonderful, right, which is motherhood and business in general. Okay, if you're interested in working together, I am currently accepting coaching clients both with and without the video components. So as you may have heard here on the podcast, I talk about my Voxer coaching. I also have monthly coaching with video calls and all kinds of other vaults of things for you to develop your business and tools and resources for you inside of my coaching program. So I will link those in the description below. So if you're listening to this in real time, I have a few spaces left here in the month of July. And if you're not, you can still reach out you can still get on the waitlist. But if you're interested in launching and refining your offers, especially when it comes to getting greater visibility for your business and building a strategic business that doesn't take over your entire life. I would love to come alongside of you and support you in that. So I will leave all the information down below and you can find more information there.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. I hope you enjoyed this episode and I will 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