

You're listening to called to both the podcast for ambitious women, chasing both business dreams and little ones. I'm your host. Join Michelle. I'm a wedding photographer turned business coach and founder of photo boss. I have helped thousands of photographers and creatives grow their businesses here on the show.

I teach about topics like visibility, marketing mindset. Productivity and going after your dream life. So if you're a photographer or an entrepreneur, there is something here for you. This is not another business and marketing podcast telling you to do more, but rather how you can build your business and your income in less time and with greater ease.

Join me here each week for bite sized and actionable episodes that will encourage you on your call to both journey.

Hey there, and welcome back to the call to both podcast. I am. Super pumped to share today's episode. We are talking all about growing your business sustainably and three essential practices that I have found that have really helped me in my own business. And I know we're going to help you as well. So if you take your business growth seriously, and you also like having a life and having margin very intentionally built into your life, then you are actually going to be a big fan of this episode because I see this episode.

Every single day I see a lot of successful creatives who have built successful businesses that are frankly being held together by blood sweat and tears and Would not fall into the category of a sustainable business in the long run It's just not a pace that they're going to be able to keep up with So there will come a time in your business and maybe you're in that transition boat right now where you've reached some financial goals, some success goals, some booking goals, but you're not happy with the balance that you have achieved, the time that it is taking to maintain this business.

And you realize that it's now costing you in other areas of your life to maintain this. So my question for you here today, as we kick off this topic and this episode that I want you to be thinking about. throughout this week is this, how long can you sustain the pace of business and the hours that you are working right now?

I think another way to ask this question would be if you could give me a score, how, how, how do you think you would do on a scale of one to 10? If you could give me Give your business a rating of 1 to 10 in terms of how sustainable this

is for you to continue in the future. Or maybe if you were to grow and expand your family, what number would you give yourself?

So I think that the topic of sustainability and building a business that can grow and expand Both grow in profitability, but can also maintain its work balance and maintain the momentum with stability in the future. I think a lot of this does come down to that work life balance and how much work we are putting into this business and how much of us is left over for the rest of the areas in our life.

Now, this, I feel like I can't even get into this topic without sharing a little bit of my own story, without talking a little bit about how my business has changed tremendously over the years. And I think the biggest catalyst of change in my business has been every time I've had a baby. So each time I've had a baby, there have been big shifts, almost forced in my business in a way.

And each time when I've had those shifts where I've, you know, completely downsized my hours in my business from a normal work week of around 40 hours to then 20 and now even less, I've realized that these shifts have often been the best thing in the long run for my business. And that is because it's forced me to build and go back and change things so that they are built in a more sustainable way.

So that's what I want for you. I want more sustainable growth in your business so that you have more balanced growth in your business and in your life so that your business is built around your life and not the other way around. So today I just want to share three of those practices, three things that I feel were the most impactful in creating sustainable growth in my own business and three things that I really think these could apply to any business.

any business, any creative practice, regardless of what you do in your business. So I'm going to share those three things with you now. Okay. So the first practice that I think is essential and kind of foundational, I think it like the rest of these things will build upon this is radical honesty and accountability with yourself in your business.

And there are so many things that we can be honest about with ourselves, but I want to lead with two big factors that I think None of us can get away without talking about these two big factors, and that is how we're spending our time and the money coming in and out of the business. We can't really refine or change what we don't fully understand or know in our own business.

And that is why I think it's absolutely essential that we are being honest with ourselves about the time that we're spending in our business and the money that's going on in the business. So I really think this is going to change the game for you is getting It's almost like getting out of your creative space and coming into the objective data at least once a month.

So just sitting down once a month and being really, really truly honest with yourself about how your time is being spent in your business and where the money is coming and where the money is going. And I just think that that is like a starting point. It's a foundational piece for everything else that I'm going to share with you here today.

I have found that the more Transparent almost that I am with myself the more honest and accountable that I am to Keeping track of these types of things the more i'm able to make really just aligned and objectively good decisions in my own business because i'm looking at this information and i'm being Real with myself about what is actually working.

What is not how much time am I spending on Instagram? How much time am I spending on my email marketing? Can we draw a line from email marketing to money? And if so, how much like those are the conversations we need to be having and it really starts with just honesty and transparency with yourself. So really, really helpful to sit down once a month and get this information out and really finding like objectivity in that data.

So really, when you look at everything in front of you, you can start to see where there's areas that need help, where you're spending way too much time or where, you know, there might even be some tasks in your business that aren't getting enough time. And it just really allows you to objectively look at things from a different perspective.

But I will say if you I think for a lot of us it's it can be really hard to be objective with our own You know schedules with our own workload with everything that we have on our plate and then say okay But I don't know what to change and I think that is where the accountability piece comes in. That is where You really do need to bring in those fresh eyes and say to your coach, say to your mentor, say to, um, maybe you're in like a group mastermind, say to them, yes, these are my goals.

This is where I want to be. Can you help me get there? Can you hold me accountable? Because I know I've said I don't want to do, you know, this particular thing anymore, be on Instagram so much, or spend so much time on

Pinterest, or I really need to get back to blogging, whatever the thing is, that accountability piece is huge, huge, huge, huge.

And I'm going to be talking about this more on the podcast in the future about just the different ways that I've invested in education and how Accountability through a coach has skyrocketed my business, but I will say that like, there's just the leaps in my business have happened when I've had way greater accountability in my business.

And the biggest amount of accountability I've gotten is through a coach or a mentor. So huge. Okay. So the first essential practice is really building in that honesty and that accountability into your business and doing so on a regular basis. The second thing is that if sustainability for you means working less hours in your business, establish a schedule that you want now.

So establish that dream schedule now and don't wait for it to happen on its own. Because it actually won't like you're it really really won't and I've lived this I have been in business for like what 12 years now And I've seen this to be true in so many of my coaching clients businesses and in my own and that is that like Your business if you want it to fit around your life and not the other way around you want your business to Have to fall in line behind your life because your life and your family and everything else that comes after it is more important than the business that has to be intentionally put in place.

The only way that's going to happen is if it is intentionally put in place. And I just keep coming back to Parkinson's Law, like, when, when you know that Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time allotted for its completion. So, you know that if you give yourself, you know, 10 hours to work on that new launch, or you give yourself five hours to batch content, it's gonna take the amount of time that you gave it.

And that's just how the expansion of time and tasks work. And I, like, we did this when we have deadlines in school, we would wait until the 11th hour to write the paper, we would be submitting it at the last possible second, and suddenly, you We got it done. We got it done just before that deadline. And it makes you wonder, like, wow, if they would have made that deadline a little bit sooner, I guess I would have gotten it done sooner.

So maybe you didn't actually need all that time, right? So that's, that's Parkinson's law. And that's what's so important to keep coming back to. Now, every time personally, when I have had to cut my work hours, when I have just

been forced to like, Say, okay, we're not doing this anymore. We're not even going to work every single day in the business anymore.

We're not going to work eight hour days in the business anymore. Every time it's happened, I've experienced these moments of like initial panic. I'm asking like, okay, how am I going to get everything done? What am I going to do? Am I going to have to like cancel softwares and like fire team members? Like, how am I going to make this money?

Am I going to make less money? But then slowly my brain starts to begin to solve the problem. Instead, it starts to ask questions like, okay, well, what, what are we going to work on first? What's, what's really essential? Is there anything that all my to do list that could wait? Or what about things that could delegate?

Or maybe there's like us.

And those are the questions that I would never have asked if I wouldn't have first cut my work hours and limited my schedule and said, drew the line in the sand and said, this is where work is going to exist. And we just have to make it work. It's weird, but it's like by the very essential, like I had to figure it out.

And when you have to figure it out. Your brain comes up with all kinds of creative solutions as to how you're going to. maintain or grow your profit in less time. So if you're wondering how it's all going to get done in this mystical schedule, right? You're like, okay, joy, this sounds really fun. Like, how is it all going to get done?

It's not by drawing a boundary around your schedule. You're actually going to force yourself to step into the most profitable, the most essential roles and activities. And there's going to be a list of things that you actually won't be doing. And that was hard for me at first, like realizing that. If I was going to limit my schedule, and I had to, like I just, by necessity of like what I wanted as a mom and what I wanted in my life and the life I wanted to design, but also like didn't want to pay for full time childcare, like, you know, multi faceted decision there, but out of necessity, I had to figure out What was going to be truly most important and I realized like there were a lot of things I was doing that I didn't need to be doing just plain and simple that I didn't need to be or that I really shouldn't have been doing because they weren't leading to revenue.

They weren't leading to visibility. They weren't building my brand and the only way I figured this out. was by forcibly drawing a line around the schedule that I wanted. Okay, the third element that you're going to need in this equation as

you're building your sustainable business is to create systems and use software to automate and support your work.

Now, this is like, there is a whole world of tools and there's so much out there in terms of ways you can automate and support your business. So it's a little bit of a rabbit hole that you can fall down. But I really want to encourage you to start with the client experience and your most time consuming tasks.

And then. build a series of steps, build a flow for yourself, and then eventually someone else could do for you that you get to follow every single time in your business. So by creating a process, you are going to remove so much of the friction and really start saving a tremendous amount of time. So everything in your business starts to become a process and a flow and a series of steps.

And there are just So many different tools and software that I have mentioned here on the podcast. And I'll, I'll link some below from past episodes of things that I use in my business that have helped me in my business. But I think the most important thing is that you realize the. true like unavoidable essential nature of building this out.

I was just watching a training the other day by Jasmine Starr, love her, and she was doing this training and she said, and I think this was just so accurate, she said, it's gonna feel Like you're slowing down and like you're wasting time when you build these systems and when you build a process for yourself and someone else to follow, but it is essential for you to grow it.

You do have to slow down in a lot of ways in order to be able to grow with that sustainability and even to make leaps in your business. And I, when she said, it's going to feel like you're slowing down. I, I probably out loud to my computer. I was like, I know it really does. It's so true. I know that when I did this for my own business inside of HoneyBook, I had to set aside a few hours to just really map this out.

And it had to pause, you know, I could have been working on other things. It could have been creating content. There was a lot of thoughts in my mind of like, Oh, is this going to be worth the time? Like, I don't have time for this, like things like that. By sitting down, writing out the templates so I didn't have to write those emails, and designing a smart file flow inside of HoneyBook that would support my booking process, I am so thankful that I did this.

I have things set up in a way where I can spend probably like one minute on a proposal. And it allows my clients to sign, pick their payment plan, and then

pay. Because you can do that now in HoneyBook, it's amazing. Choose a date, get on my calendar, complete their questionnaire, and then pay. All in one flow, that I don't, like there's no back and forth, it is all one flow.

It is beautiful, it is chef's kiss, and it, but it took some time. It took some time for me to create that system, instead of going back and forth, and piecing this down, and sending the questionnaire separately, or having my calendar be separate. I have it all together in one place. It's HoneyBook. It's amazing.

If you are not familiar with HoneyBook or you don't have a system like this currently set up for yourself in your business, I highly recommend that you take a look at HoneyBook. You can get 50 percent off your first year if you go through my code. I'll have it in the description section or you can go to [joinmichelle](#).

co forward slash HoneyBook and do a free trial, get 50 percent off. It's amazing. I highly recommend it. The other part of this, of building systems and having. All of this built out is that hiring a team and working with other people is more possible for you when you have these things in place. And honestly, it is a natural next step as you start to build your business and as you start to gather support around yourself in your business so that it feels sustainable so that you don't have to be in the business as much to get the things done.

And I do talk about this more, um, if you go back to episode 102 here on the podcast, I talk about hiring, delegating, creating these flows and onboarding a new team member, things like that. So if you're in that space where you're thinking that's what you need, you actually need some more people, some more support in your business.

Definitely go back and check out episode 102. Okay. So the last thing I'll say about this is that I know that sometimes when I would get frustrated when I would hear things like this, like people saying like, you need to create a system, you need to have softwares and you have this stuff. And I would still feel like I'm left with a question of like, okay, but like, how do I know what I need to implement next because I have the CRM or I have, you know, some basic templates.

I have some basic things and I've achieved some success, but it's still taking me too long. This is when I would tell you to go back to step one and get that honesty and accountability piece out and look at your time. Look at the time spent because nothing is going to paint a clearer picture for you.

of what needs to be addressed, a potential area of like, Ooh, this is taking way too long. Or that, why is this taking so long than a time log? So logging your time. Um, even if you just do this for a couple of days, and then you get to look at that and like have a little CEO meeting and say, okay, how much time are we actually truthfully spending on these marketing efforts?

How much are we spending on editing? How much are we spending on client communication and admin? Are these systems as dialed in as you think they are? Because a lot of times the answer is no, like I'm just going to, but at least for me, like the, the answer is there's always something that we can refine and that, There is a lot of freedom and automation on the other side of simply slowing down and putting the work.

Just like Jasmine Star says, it's going to feel like you're slowing down, but it's one of the best things you can do in order to scale, in order to scale, because that's the goal. It's not to slow you down, but to, to give you freedom to, to build these things that truly make it possible for you to continue.

along the path that you're on. So you don't burn out and that you feel like you can keep doing this. If building a more sustainable business without sacrificing profit is a goal that you have for the remainder of this year or moving into 2025, I would love to talk with you more. This is exactly what I do with my students inside of the coaching accelerator.

My one to one private coaching for creatives to get more information about coaching together or to just see if it might be a good fit for you. You can grab a free discovery call with me at [joy.michelle.co](https://joy.michelle.co) forward slash call. Thank you so much for listening with me here all the way to the end, and I will see you next week for another episode.

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.