

Every day in your business and in your life, you're making decisions. You might even have a really big decision to make right now about how you're gonna invest in your business, what platforms you're going all in on this year, if you're gonna grow your team, how you're gonna grow your team. I mean, I'm guessing you have a few things swirling in your mind right now.

But we also have lots of little decisions that we make on a daily basis. Even just sitting down at our desks to work can feel like there's a bunch of decisions that need to be made as to what you're gonna give attention to because you can't give attention to the whole list, that list of things that you really, really wanna get to.

There's podcasts, there's books, there's platforms you wanna create on, and things that you want to get better at, skills you wanna grow in. But like, you can't do it all. We know we can't do it all. So how do we actually make the best choice for where we are now and where we wanna go? Well, that's, that's really what I wanna talk to you about in today's episode.

So this is actually coming from a listener asked question. And this was a question that I received actually a few months ago, and I have just tucked it away until the right time, and now it is the right time to talk about it. So this is what she asked. This is what, um, I didn't get permission from this person to like share their name.

I should have asked for that and I should start doing that. So if you ever have a question, you wanna drop it in my inbox and you would be okay with me sharing your name. I would totally shout you out. Um, but just in case she doesn't want her name shared. I'll just say she, she asked, how do you know? What to focus on and what to say yes to when everything feels important.

Love this question because I feel it so deeply and I know that she's not the only one. I know this is a universal thing for ambitious women. This is an entrepreneur thing. This is a more ideas than time thing and I just, I really wanna give this my thoughtful response. So that is what? I will be doing here in this episode.

Today, you're listening to Call to both the podcast for ambitious women chasing both business dreams and little ones. I'm your host, joy Michelle. I'm a wedding photographer turned business coach and founder of Photo Bos. 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,

when I think about making decisions, especially when faced with lots of good choices. It immediately brings up a time for me personally when I was faced with a tricky choice. Now, this was years ago, probably about five or six years, actually, probably like six years ago. I was a new mom. I had just my daughter Clara, and I was offered the opportunity to co-host a podcast with another creative that I really, really admired.

I still do to this day, and it was an interesting offer because I had always wanted to have a podcast. You know, like when people. You know, you know how like you'll get a, you'll get an opportunity and it kind of stirs something in you because you've always wanted to do something like this. So I'd always wanted to, to do a podcast, but I didn't have the concept ironed, ironed out for what my show was gonna be, and I was really focused at the time on YouTube, and it just sounded like a really cool option.

Another really cool part about being a co-host would be like, I wouldn't have to script the whole show by myself. I wouldn't have to do solo episodes or talk to myself and, you know, I could just chat with this other person. And so part of this offer, the appeal was the ease of it. And so this, this, as I'm thinking about choices and good choices and when everything looks good and looks important, the story came up for me.

And I, I'm thinking through this story. I'm really thinking about like how it felt at the time and immediately I. I remembered another time when I was living in Maryland and I'm a mom to two at this point. I'm transitioning heavily into coaching and someone that I just adored asked me to speak on a stage about photography.

She actually was like, Hey, I need you to lead a workshop on marketing. And again, I was faced with a decision and with both of these instances, I actually ended up saying no. Thank you. I will tell you why. It's because each of these opportunities, these offers, as great as they sounded at the time, were not really fully aligned with where I knew I wanted to be down the road and who I wanted to be in the moment.

So for the first one, for the co-hosting a podcast with this incredible person, I knew that I saw myself. Hosting a show like my own show, having a brand where I was sitting in this seat of the expert and even though I had no idea what it was actually gonna look like, I knew that this probably wasn't it.

This probably wasn't it. It was gonna take up a lot of time. It was gonna be a yes. That took up a lot of space, even if it was something that was gonna be hopefully easier because I was by, not by myself. Even with that pro on one side of the paper versus the cons, I knew that it didn't actually fit the bill of where I wanted to be.

Eventually, I didn't wanna be a co-host. I wanted to be the host, period, just me. And so I had to say, no thank you, even though I didn't have. My own show figured out. I didn't have all the rest of it figured out and for a different reason, I had to say no, thank you to the speaking opportunity, because in this particular case, it was who I needed to be in that moment.

Now, it perfectly aligned with the people that I speak to. It was like, okay, this is photographers. It's about marketing. This is my jam. I would love this. But the season of my life that I was in, it just didn't support me. Being able to give it like a full body. Yes. Without me feeling like. I was going to sacrifice what was, you know, a very special and precious time with my second baby with Louis, because he was still so little and I was breastfeeding and we weren't even sleeping through the night.

I just knew that that was gonna be biting off more than I could chew, and it just wasn't gonna be the right time to say yes. So for separate reasons, I said no. Thank you. Sometimes it's not gonna be the right thing. Sometimes it's not gonna be the right time, but it's not always these big examples like the standout ones that I just shared with you sometimes.

It really is the subtle and the small and the daily decisions of your business that are so heavy. And here's, here's what I believe and here's what I wanna share with you. You need to know where you are going. So clearly that even a really cool idea or an opportunity looks wrong because it is not completely aligned with it, or I should say it looks wrong when it's not completely aligned with it.

So I think. Knowing exactly where you're going is the key to this question. So the original question, like what do you say yes to when everything feels important? Well. The truth is, it's not actually all important. I think that's the first part, but it can start to feel that way when we're not fully anchored, like

100% both feet on the ground, knowing where we are going and why, and you know, all the in between, right?

So I think that just immediately starts to beg the question like, well, how can you know where you're going? How can you get so rooted and clear in what you're. Working towards so that things start to become very obvious whether or not. They're for you. Okay, so first and foremost, we first need to know what is important to you, and no one else can tell you what is important to you.

Now, I personally know that having a business that first and foremost supports my life is an absolute necessity. So immediately having that lens of a life first business is going to help me to hold that up to. Almost any decision that I have. When you have your values and you know what's valuable to you and what's important, that really becomes a lens.

And as photographers, it's like, you know, like. A lens will change the picture in front of you. If you have a really long telephoto lens. The background is so compressed, it's so creamy. It got the boca, it's like you can't even see that part, right? Because the lens is distorting in a way, the picture of what's in front of you.

The object of like the way that the light is coming through it, it changes it completely. So your priorities really do become that lens to help you to see what. Is truly for you and what's just a really cool option, but not necessarily the option for you. So first, knowing your priorities comes down to the things that you value.

But I also feel like we need to list out all the different parts of life in order to fully be able to know what's a priority to us. And I was, I was following another creator, and I can't remember who this was years and years ago, but she did a whole workshop on just goal setting and just talking about the areas of life.

And this isn't like a super original concept, but I just loved how she laid this out. I love how she. Basically hide us list the categories of our life. So we have our family, our friendship, faith, health, your business, your marriage, your finances, really listing all of these things out. So that business and what you're doing in business is really just one of many categories.

You might even have like. Self-care, your own creativity. That could kind of go under health or like personal health or mental health, that kind of thing. But when you list all of these things out and then actually know in each of these

categories what's important to you, it will help you to make up a more complete picture of what you need to see in.

Your business, for example, to actually support the other categories. So I have personal finance goals, right? And the business is a big part of how I'm going to support those personal finance goals. But like a big one for me is like my marriage, my family, my children, because they're so little. I'm in a season where I am the primary parent and I want to be the primary parent.

I want to be the one that gets to drop everything if my kids are super sick and be the one to be there. That's a choice that I've made, and because of that. I've changed and shaped my business and my life to support that, but that started with a family value. So I think if you haven't re like visited this, 'cause probably you've done this before in your life.

I think so many of us have done so many of these different exercises. Like these are things, these are foundations that you have to come back to year over year because they will evolve. They should evolve. You are different than you were last year and the year before. Your family and your friendships and your faith and your health and your body, like it looks different than it did last year.

And I think that's the beauty of growth is that we're gonna come back to these foundations over and over and the answers are gonna look different because we're growing. Sometimes we want different things. So first and foremost, we're deciding what are the true priorities for us, not even just in our business, but in those other major life categories.

The other thing that was so big, and I think is gonna be so big as called to both women, is to know the season that you're in. This is where. You're, it's so important to know the season it, it's gonna be really, really helpful and I think that this is not only going to help you to make better decisions, but it's actually going to lead to more contentment and you not fighting the reality of the season that you're in.

So here are a few questions to run through. When you have a great opportunity, you have a choice, you have something that seems cool to work on. You're kind of wondering like, should this take up space? The first question is. Does this support my current capacity in my current season? Like is this something I can even say yes to?

Does this support my quarterly goals? So sometimes I would, I would get an opportunity that just didn't fit because it wasn't an something that I was gonna

focus on for that quarter. This could be, I've decided I'm gonna go all in and create a new offer. Right? Like maybe you've been meaning to create a digital course or something like that.

And you know, like in order to create the space to do that, you have to say no to like. All the travel or all the speaking on podcasts or all the mini session type stuff, it's like, you know, the thing that you're like, I've gotta say no to this, but it's only for this quarter. Well, that's where I come back to.

I'm like, does this support my quarterly goals? Another question that can help is, does this align with what I've said matters to me most in this area? And that was the kicker, I think, with the speaking opportunity that I did have to pass on because I knew. That what mattered to me the most wasn't just going and speaking for one day.

What mattered to me was continuing to like have that breastfeeding journey when I was so early in it with my son. Like that mattered to me and I stand by that. I feel like that was the most aligned choice for me. Okay. The other question that can be helpful is what is this going to cost me in the other areas I care about?

So, like I said, it just, it didn't align with the season I was in and when I considered all the logistics of the opportunity, it just became clear that it was a no. So sometimes I will play the thing out in my mind and think, okay, what's it gonna cost? 'cause sometimes it is worthy of the space it's gonna take up of the sacrifice that it's gonna be.

You might even have to expand your capacity to make space for the opportunity. So I've had opportunities to work with coaches or join a mastermind, and let's say that this mastermind meets every Wednesday at one o'clock Eastern. Well, if my childcare ends at one o'clock Eastern, then I might actually have to like rearrange my life in order to make this a possibility.

But when. It's a good opportunity that aligns with my goals and it fits in my current season. Then sometimes you're like, okay, I'm gonna make this happen. But you wanna make sure that it doesn't fully take away from something else that you've already said is the number one priority. Okay. The next part of this is you're, so let's recap really quick.

Okay. We know our priority, then we know our season. So we're, we're acknowledging the season. The next one is know who you are becoming. So you're always in a state of becoming, and I think this is such a important thing

to know because it's happening, like whether we realize we are in the state of becoming or not, it's happening.

And what I love is that this, you're not a fixed version of yourself. You are always becoming. The v next version of you. So whether you are intentional about this or not every, yes, every, not right now, every habit, every boundary, it is the choice that you're making that is a vote for the person that you're becoming.

So I, I think this is fascinating and actually helps to bring. More flexibility to this concept of like, we're not stagnant, like we're not staying like I am who I am. Really we are becoming. So instead of asking what do I need to get done today, you could ask, who am I becoming by doing this? And that can be very revealing as well, because you might realize you don't really want to be the person who specializes in that platform you've been obsessing on.

Or you don't wanna be the person who spends most of their time, you know, writing their email newsletter or obsessing in Photoshop, like retouching in Photoshop. Like that's not. The thing you're becoming. And so it shouldn't get so much of you. So most people are making decisions from the identity of who they've been in the past, who they have committed to what feels familiar or safe.

But when you're in this state of like addressing like who you are becoming and where you're growing towards. You really get to decide like who you're growing into, what, where's the business leading and in doing each of these little things, the life that you want to inhabit six months or three years from now, starts to become a thought, like a direction that you're going in.

When I think about becoming, I think about movement. I think about the direction I'm going in. So I mentioned the opportunity to to become a co-host of a podcast, and I think one of the big decision making factors behind that was the idea of who I was becoming. I wanted to become a standalone name. Not a co-host, and it's not a right or wrong, it's not like let's not moralize any of it.

Like one of them is not better than the other. It was an idea of just becoming, so sometimes I think we look at our list of things that we could do or options or whatever it is that you're deciding on in your business or in your life, and we're trying to figure out like what is the right one, right?

Like what we, what is right. Especially if you lean. Into like the perfectionist category. You might lean, you might find yourself more, more often thinking what is the right choice? And that's probably not a super helpful word because

there might not be a right and wrong in that choice. It is more or less aligned with who you are becoming or just you being aware.

That both of these choices take you to a different becoming can be very, very helpful. It's not right or wrong, it's which version do you want to become. Ultimately, the decisions are yours in your business. You are the one who makes that final call. You are the one who lives in the result, so. Really, it only needs to be you.

That is sure in the end. So I have a few practical steps for a decision making journey in your business. So to find a little more clarity in this, because I know this can feel a little bit nebulous, I wanna give you three very, very grounded and rooted steps, like just practical steps that I take when I'm making choices.

And honestly that I like to kind of come back to whether I'm making choices or not, because I think they're so important to be rooted in. The first is when I'm making a decision, I'm gonna journal about it. This is where I can freely express my thoughts, my fears, my concerns. I can just let the words flow out on the page and I'm not going to censor it.

Even sometimes when I'm explaining a decision to my husband or my friends, or my family, my mom, whatever it is, you can start to censor, right? Like I can, I can try to. Pose it in a certain way or I start like it can be easy to start to like pose things in a way that sound really good to that person, or you almost start like talking yourself in or out of it.

Whereas when you're journaling that it's a sense of free zone for me, this, it feels like you can just be completely. Uncertain and it's okay. Like you're not explaining it to anyone, it's just the page. So journaling has been a really powerful practice for me. The second thing is I am going to pray about it.

I invite God into my business because I know at the end of the day, everything that I have built is his. All the clients that I have have come to me through him. And so I'm gonna, I'm gonna pray about these decisions, and I think that that can be just a really helpful. Reminder is that we do not have to be alone in all of these choices.

We can pray, we can invite God into these choices and ask for wisdom and ask for guidance. Most of my journals, I will tell you, are literally just God I need. I need your help. I need you to tell me. If this is not for me, please make it clear, like all of all of that kind of stuff, because that is so important to me and I, I invite you to pray about it.

If you've never prayed about your business, I invite you to try. It is truly, truly so helpful. Number three, I'm gonna sleep on it. So especially if it's a bigger decision, if there's money behind it, a team member, it affects other people's lives. I am going to sleep on it. I'm going to decide. When I have to make the decision, so decide when I'm gonna decide.

It's funny how that works, but sometimes if we leave a decision open for a very long time, it doesn't actually get any clearer. So sometimes I'll say, okay, Friday morning, I'm gonna make a decision on this. In the meantime, what do I need to have happen? I need to think about it. I need to pray about it. I need to sleep on it.

So we need sleep to think clearly, and I think that that is just something we should. Tack onto this because if you're making big decisions, but you're low on sleep, it's not a recipe for success. One reminder that I wanna give you though is that almost no decision is actually right or wrong, like.

Besides the obvious immoral decisions that you could make, I'm talking about business decisions. Even if you were to make the wrong hire in your business, that can be made right? You can learn from it. You can grow from it. You will become a better leader and a better communicator because of it. So it can still be made right and you'll do better the next time.

You'll grow with more. Wisdom and experience with each decision that you make. And I think that's like a really, really important reframe. And that's something that I am learning and growing from as well. It's, it's a theme that I'm coming back to over and over is that a lot of times we want the decision to be perfect and then we don't make one at all, or we get stuck in indecision and I just don't think it's actually possible to make perfect decisions all the time.

So who are you becoming? I think that is a great question to end this episode on because when you think about who you're becoming, that's going to give you direction. In your life, and then that will inform all the tiny decisions along the way. If you enjoyed this episode, I would love it if you sent it to your business bestie and had a chat about what each of you took away from this episode.

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Thanks again and I'll see you in the next episode.