

You're listening to the Called to Both podcast, and I am so honored that you clicked on today's episode and that we get to spend just a couple of minutes here together. If you have been listening to the show for a long time, thank you so much for coming back, and if you're new, welcome. I wanna talk about ambition and why I think the traditional idea of being an ambitious woman is actually a trap that has kept you stuck, giving you just enough success, just enough clients, just enough income to keep you chasing more, but doesn't give you a complete playbook of how to actually be successful.

So let's unpack that, because this is something that I think is so important. I think we need to be talking about it more, and I'm gonna do that now on today's episode. You're listening to Called 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 PhotoBoss. 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 Called to Both journey.

What I really wanna share here is that I work with ambitious women. I work with women who have absolutely no problem putting in the work, putting in the hours, uh, developing their talents, and being somebody who shows up and shows a lot of grit, dedication, and tenacity. And I think that's because that's naturally the person that I am in my business and in my life, so that's who I attract.

I am the type of person who, when I started a YouTube channel, I said, "I'm gonna start... I'm gonna commit to a year. A year of doing long form video content on YouTube before I decide if it's a success, because that's the level of ambitious that I am. And it paid off greatly, and it might even be why you're literally listening to this podcast right now, is because of that choice to put in that work.

But what happens is we get these, like, random rewards of our hard work, and then we start to reach a, a ceiling. There is a certain amount of success that comes with the grit, with just putting in the work, grinding it out, showing up,

and that has probably gotten you pretty far in your business. You've spent years developing your talent and building a website and, um, figuring out how to send invoices and slowly climbing, like clawing your way to these higher prices and getting five-star reviews and better clients.

And yet you still find yourself in this point where there's this both-ness to it, right? Like you know you're really, really good at what you do. You know that you are probably overqualified for how much money you charge. But then you're like, "Okay, but then how am I not on the other side?" And that, I think, is where there's an ambition trap.

Ambition alone is not enough to carry your business to the height that you want, that you know that you can achieve, and neither is wanting it enough. That is something that drives me crazy. It's like if you just want it more, like you just need to hold that belief and hold that idea, and sometimes gurus talk about like how bad you want it, and I think it-- this goes like hand in hand with like manifesting it.

Like if you just want it and you hold the idea, like then it will be yours. This isn't true. Like one does not equal the other. It-- just being ambitious does not get you automatically where you wanna go. It can get you pretty far though, and it probably actually has served you well in a lot of ways. This isn't a bad thing.

It's just not the only thing. And when I work with ambitious women, I see them fall into a couple of different camps when I come on board and I'm like, "All right, let's look. Let's, like pop the hood, get under this business hood and see what's going on with the systems of how they're getting in their, their clients.

How are they converting sales? How are they retaining those clients and making sure that people come back again or give them great referrals? Like, what is this business system, and is it actually working?" And what I find is that typically creatives are falling into two camps. The first is that they're doing way too much.

And because of that, because they're doing so many great things, like they have all these incredible marketing platforms and ideas and offers. Like they're all over the place, spread so dang thin That they don't actually get to see any payoff in any one category. The thing that they're most known for, that they're most likely to become a six-figure, a multi-six-figure business owner in, it just never happens because they're so spread thin, but with, like, really good things.

And I think that's very common for ambitious women because we're ambitious women. Like, why would we not have all the different platforms? Why would we not be serving lots of different genres of clients and trying to do all the things with very little help in the business? And it's like, of course we bite off more than we can chew, and then figure out how to chew it.

And we do it pretty dang well, but then we do come up to this point where your frustration is probably mounting. You're, you're frustrated with how, like, the, the actual money in the business looks compared to how freaking good you are at what you do. Like, there becomes a total mismatch in talent versus profit.

We've talked about profit here a lot on the podcast, and I'll make sure, like, if that's something that you're like, "Yeah, let's talk about that. Let's get into the profit. Like, I'm making good money, but where the heck is it?" I have some episodes for you on that, but I, I wanna try to, like, stick with the ambition topic.

The second camp that the ambitious creative falls into is doing what used to work, but isn't actually working anymore. Like, it used to bring you all the clients, it used to bring you great leads, it used to convert super well, and at one point, you actually made really good money. And then something shifted.

Like, you don't know what. It shifted. It's, it's changed. The winds have changed, and now you're s- you're left doing-- going through the motions, doing the same things you were doing before because you don't know what else to do. It's like, "Well, this generated leads in the past. This gave me clients in the past.

This kind of content worked, so I will just keep doing it." And that's where the ambition and the grit is no longer serving you, right? Like, wanting it bad enough is no longer serving you if it's keeping you doing what's no longer working. So those are kind of the two camps that I really see, honestly, like, way overqualified creatives falling into.

And if you look at both of these camps, they are absolutely evidence that you're willing to do the work. You've tried a lot of different things. You've probably taken trainings, watched the videos, listened to the podcasts, read the business books, gone to the conferences, worked with, you know, coaches or groups or memberships before.

And yet, you find yourself wondering why you haven't made it to that level. I, I bet you there's somebody, like, in your head if I'm like, hey, you know those, those people you look up to online when you open up Instagram, and it looks

like they're in their own little inner circle. They have figured this out, or at least it looks like they've figured it out.

Probably an account or two has, like, popped into your head, like that inner circle. You're like, "How do I get there?" You haven't given up. You're not gonna give up. I work with women that are pushing through some of the hardest seasons of their lives, transitions, life transitions, having babies, moving, spouses who have lost their jobs and they are now the breadwinner, all the hiccups in business, and still are coming out the other side with profit.

And the biggest difference maker when it comes to still being able to achieve continued growth, once that grit has exhausted it, uh, absolutely exhausted you, but also exhausted the results in your business, is getting outside eyes into your business. The ambition can't take you all the way. Wanting it can't take you all the way.

At a certain point, you have to pair that with strategy and support And I was right there at the beginning of this year. It was actually... Was it January or was it the very end? I wanna say it was actually Christmas week. So we're heading into this year, so we're in 2026. As I'm, like, I'm seeing 2026 before me, I found myself in this holding pattern in my business, exactly what I'm describing to you right now.

I'm making okay money. I'm feeling a little stuck. I'm not even really sure what's not working. What I was doing before is, like, not really-- like, the levers I'm pulling, I'm like, "Hmm, this doesn't seem to be giving me the results that I wanna get." And the biggest part here is I absolutely knew there's more for me.

I'm just not willing to settle to have the same year in business over and over again, and neither are you. Like, people who listen to podcasts instead of, I don't even know what other people do with their time, but you're over here, like, digging into your business because that is the type of person you are.

That is the... This is what you want. This is who you are, and this is what you want. I got to a point where I ne- I can't have that same year in business, and so I wasn't even thinking that this was gonna be a reality, but I ended up hiring a coach, like, another coach for a lot of money. This was a multi four-figure investment.

And I was reluctant because I've been doing this for a long time, and it is not easy to spend a lot of money on something, even when you know it's right, even when I fully believed that this was what I needed to do in my business. It's not

easy. Like, I'm just gonna say, like, th- I, I thought about, like, what else could I do with this money?

That... I mean, that's smart business decision-making. You have to think about, like, what are you gonna do with that money? What else could we do with this money? But pressing pay on that button was... It was so important for me because this was an optional investment in my business. This wasn't like, "I gotta go pay taxes."

Um, this is something you do because you just do. It was completely optional, and I knew that I needed the insight, I needed the strategy, and I needed just outside eyes on my business if I was going to get out of that holding pattern that I was in And that's been the lesson. Like time and time again in these past 13 years of business, the lesson for me in my entrepreneurship has been that by myself, my grit alone will get me those clients.

Like it will get me income. But when I pair it with the right strategy and the right support, I will get further faster, I will fl- fly even higher than what is possible just on my own ambition, just on my own wanting, right? Like I can only white-knuckle this so far. So if any of this spoke to you, if you're like, "Yep, that was me.

I resonate," I just wanna invite you to reach out about potentially working together. This is exactly what I do with my clients. Um, I have a variety of ways that I work together, and I do have a handful of available spots as of this recording in September. You can DM me on Instagram, send me an email, whatever's easy for you.

I look forward to connecting with you as a fellow ambitious woman. I have so much to share with you. I would love to connect and see how we can create a business structure and a marketing plan that makes your business the automatic best choice for your ideal client. If you haven't hit Subscribe, I just wanna say that you definitely should.

I don't want you to miss out on any future episodes, and I'm here every single Monday in your earbuds helping you to achieve a business you love and a life along with it. All right? I'll see you in the next one. Bye, guys. Thank you so much for listening to the show. If you enjoyed this episode, please help me get the word out about the Called 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