I wanna talk about five really specific and tangible things I did to make my business more family-friendly without sacrificing income or losing my mind, because I didn't wanna sacrifice those. We wanna keep those. I'm pretty sure you wanna keep those too. But I know that when somebody says, "Hey, you don't have to choose between the business and the family," that it can be easy to say, "Well, you show me how that's possible, because there's only so many hours in the day, and I need to take these clients.

My family's relying on my income, and I'm still missing out on moments, and I wanna be more available. I wanna believe that I can grow this business and still have the family life and the time and the flexibility that I'm desiring, but I'm not quite seeing how." I've definitely been there, and my clients have been there, and I cannot wait to give you some insight into some things that have changed in my own business and things that I have helped my clients adjust in their businesses so that they truly can achieve a more family-friendly business and not have to sacrifice income in order to get there.

Because I truly am a believer on the other side of this, now living this out in my business, I can see where my mindset was so limited before, where I was not seeing the possibilities, and how I was really getting in my own way when it came to operating a business and also being the mom I wanted to be.

So we're gonna tackle that in 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.

All right, so before I dive into... I think I-- let's see, I have five big changes. Not big, but five strategic, let's use that word. Five strategic adjustments that I made in my own business that made a big difference in my ability to maintain and grow my income and profitability without making it cost me my family time.

Um, so I want to give you a little backup here a little bit and give you, like, the thirty-second overview of where I am now and where I am from. So I have been in business for thirteen years, and more importantly, I started my business before I had kids. So I realized that I had that base, right? Like, I had built a business.

I'd been a service provider and a wedding photographer for years before I welcomed my first child into the world. But I think that also means that I had some bad habits. I had some limited beliefs on what was possible for me to achieve in my business, while also, like, what was possible for me as a mom.

I just didn't see how they fit together because, to be fair to myself, I hadn't actually ever done that. So when I became a mom, I decided one thing. I was like, "I don't know how I'm going to do this, but I know that I'm ambitious and I've built this thing and I love the business I have, and I'm going to keep it.

I'm going to keep working. I'm going to keep building this thing, but I know I'm gonna need to do it a little bit differently." Now, fast-forward to today. I am over a decade into business, three kids deep, homeschooling mom, um, have relocated to Florida. I built my business in Maryland, and I now live in the beautiful sunny state of Florida.

And I am so grateful to say that I had to unlearn a lot of things, and there's so much on the other side of these adjustments that I made. There was so much for me to figure out and unlearn, and I hope that I can get you there a little bit faster. And that's really my hope in sharing this with you here today is, number one, to encourage you that this is absolutely possible.

You can have more family time, more consistent income, and less overwhelm while also building the successful business with impact that you are desiring. Financial impact, but also the impact on the people that you serve really, really well. This is absolutely possible, and I have just a few things that I want to share with you that really made the difference for me and that have made a big difference for the clients that I help in my coaching business as well.

Okay, so changes that I made to my own business. The first is I streamlined my services and my offers because I had too many. I'm just gonna be honest. I have done a lot of things over the years, and when you've been in business for a really long time, like I have, you try a lot of different things. You're going to have a lot of different lead magnets.

You're going to have different offers and things that you have tried over the many years of being in business. And what may have served me well in the past but was built in a very different season, I realized probably can't come into this next one with me. I'm in a season now where I have school-age kids, but I also have an eighteen-month-old.

So I have a toddler in diapers, and the needs of my family are so specific to this season, and yours are as well, that I realized the-- one of the big things that was costing me money, costing me my sanity even, was just having too many things going on, too many irons in the fire, so to speak, too many different offers, too many different pages on my website, too many different lead magnets and funnels and promotional things.

If you look at your calendar over the past year and just look at, you know, what did I sell? What did I promote? What did I launch? What, what am I doing? And if it's, if it's more than, like, three, you might fall into that category. It really depends on where you're at in your business and w-who are the clients that you're serving.

But the chances are that because of that overcomplicated offer suite, it's going to be so much more difficult for you to get to a point in your business where you have these repeatable systems. You know what you can, you know, levers that you can pull to repeatably create that demand for your services and then be able to have the time with your family that you're desiring.

It's a lot harder to do when you just have a lot of offers. I know. Groundbreaking concept, but this is something that I did need to learn and that I constantly have to evaluate. You know, as we're ending out the year here, this is something that I am reflecting on and thinking, you know, there are some things that I could retire.

There are some offers maybe or, um, some things that I was pushing towards at the beginning of the year or at the middle of the year even that might not deserve the same measure of attention next year. So really simplifying and streamlining, not just the, the way that you're operating in your business. I mean, you could approach simplifying and streamlining in a broader context, but specifically for me, it was in the what I'm selling.

What am I offering? What are those services that I know I can do really well that could support my financial goals? And then what is just a distraction? Because I tend to get distracted, and I know you do too The second thing that I changed was I actually adjusted my work hours to my family's rhythms.

This can be really scary to do because there is this moment where you're going to have to start making those adjustments before it even really makes sense. So specifically, this means I know there's certain times of day where I wanted to work. So if I look back at the years of my business, the way that I used to work, the hours that I used to shoot as a photographer, um, the times that I used to edit, when I would take consultations, there were so many things that I did simply out of default or because it was when my clients wanted things to happen, and I really had to start getting clear, even just with myself.

Before I even brought this to a public-facing calendar or, you know, w- how I actually interacted with my clients, I needed to sit down and start to dream about my own business and my calendar in this... kind of flip the question of, like, when do I want to work? When does this actually make sense for me to sit down and put in some deep work in the business?

Because there are gonna be seasons where I am okay with working some weekends. There are gonna be seasons where I actually love doing, like, one night a week of the kids are going to bed, or the kids go out and do something with my husband, and I can get in some work hours in the evening. There were times, though, where, like, that did not sound life-giving to me.

That did not sound like success. Having, you know, service-based clients on the weekends and in the evenings didn't sound like success. And I don't think there's a right or wrong here. I think it's really about you being aware, like, what is your season calling for, and getting quiet enough to pause and say, like, "I need to build out a calendar that actually makes sense for me."

And that feels really stretchy sometimes. Like, that can really challenge how you are working right down to, like, what are the tools? How are you interacting with your team? What needs to change in order for you to have hours that are in harmony with where your current family season is? And that was a big change for me and something that made a huge impact in me feeling like I'm actually present at the times that I want to be present.

It's not about being home all day long or being with my kids nonstop. It's about me being present for the moments that I feel called to be present for The third thing is just simplified marketing so that it did not consume every single day of the week. Because I'm working so many less hours than I was before, specifically I have 20 hours of childcare and probably only 15 of those on a good week actually goes to me working.

So about 15 or so hours are actually moving the needle. I'm actually, you know, meeting with clients and selling and delivering and ideating in my business, doing everything that needs to happen in my business to pay me every two weeks. Uh, and my family relies on this income. That all has to happen in 15 hours a week.

So absolutely it was a, a necessity for me to simplify my marketing. And there's so many things... I mean, we've talked about this here on the podcast, but there are so many things that go into you being able to confidently simplify what you're doing. And I say confidently because simplifying, I mean, it's stopping doing something is actually not that hard, right?

It's like, okay, now we're not, now we're not publishing on threads. Now I'm not blogging every week. Okay, now what? I think it's the confidently simplifying piece that's actually more nuanced because that needs to be data led. That needs to be strategic. And a lot of times when we are doing a lot of things in our marketing, we are making it a lot of activity, it's coming from a place of uncertainty and fear.

We're not sure, like, what can I afford to stop doing? W- can I stop publishing YouTube videos and still get clients? Like, can I stop posting in these Facebook groups to get leads? What do I need to do to replace them? And that has been a huge shift for me to actually know with certainty what the heck is actually working in my marketing so that I can repeat it.

And I cannot tell you how many years I spent just doing a lot of things, and a lot of success was happening, but I wasn't even really sure, like, okay, but was it because I blogged? Was it because of my email newsletter? Was it because I was networking or because I was a preferred vendor over here? Like, what was actually working?

And then I had a system for actually tracking this and getting serious about being that CEO that I needed to be in my business so that I could simplify, um, because it was an absolute necessity. Like, if marketing is taking the majority of your time and you know that you need to, like, cut back on your hours, then the next step is going to be identifying what marketing is actually bringing you your clients.

Because all of your marketing activity is not bringing you all of your clients in equal measure Number four is setting those stronger client boundaries. And when I started thinking about this and how this has really changed and shifted in my own business, I was thinking back not just to, like, in this capacity of like,

oh, let me tell my clients, like, when I will, you know, get them their deliverables, or when am I gonna email them back?

Like, it was so much more about, like, me figuring out ahead of time, ahead of the season, what am I willing to book? What weekends are non-negotiable? Like, I had to get clear on where my line was in terms of bookings and not operate from this like, "Okay, we'll see how it goes." Like, you know, if I get a lot of past clients that are like, "Oh my gosh, we wanna work with you again," like, I have to know my capacity because that's a me boundary thing.

Like, I have to know at what point am I fully booked. At what point should I start maybe booking into the future or waitlisting or whatever needs to happen for me to support the family time that I want. So sometimes I think, you know, the takeaway from this is that your boundaries are really just going to start with you predetermining and predeciding how you are going to operate as a service provider in your business, period.

If you are waiting, you know, to have, like, see how the season goes or see how it feels or see how busy you are, you're being reactive and not proactive. So that's, that's a big moment there to be like, "Okay, no, I'm gonna basically decide what this business is gonna look like and then reverse engineer it."

And that was a big difference maker for me. That was feeling so much less like I was deciding on the spot whether or not to take a client, and more so I had just predecided for that quarter or that season that I was in, this is what busy looks like to me. This is what fully booked looks like to me. And then getting so, so, so clear so that I didn't end up in a situation like I had so many times where I was overextended, I was overbooked, I maybe agreed to a deadline that, like, I could not commit to or I shouldn't have committed to because if I had been a little slower, like slowed myself down and really thought through, like, what does the next month with my family actually look like?

Do I want to stay up late, you know, editing and figuring out how I'm gonna get these deliverables to my client? Or should I maybe engage those expectations a little bit differently with those clients? Because a lot of this is like you get to decide this. I think we need to be reminded as independent, like, entrepreneurs and creative service providers that, like, we are establishing what a timeline looks like.

So don't set yourself up for failure by saying, "Hey, yeah, I'm gonna get this to you in two weeks," when you know you're about to have the craziest two weeks on the personal side of things. You get to really, like, play with that and make

that make sense. The final change that I made that made an enormous difference was putting on blinders from who I consumed content from, especially those who were building businesses without kids or were building businesses in very different situations and with very different levels of support than I had You kind of know, like, where you're at emotionally or mentally on being able to consume this kind of content, so I think you know yourself best.

But if you find that after consuming some content on social media, reading some emails, scrolling, you know, you're just trying to, like, veg out. You know, you just wanna, like, wind down, you're scrolling, and then you feel so bad. Like, you feel behind, you feel stupid. You're like, "I can't believe that I haven't had the...

a launch that big. I can't believe my f- my calendar's not full for next year. I can't..." It's like, how did they do that? And it almost makes you feel worse about the situation you're in, then this applies to you in particular. What's happening here a lot of times is, like, your very limited capacity and creativity and hours is being flushed down the toilet because what you're feeding into your mind is so unhelpful.

It's like that person isn't wrong. You know? They, they may have... Who knows if it's true, right? But they may have had a great launch. They may have done an incredible job of filling their calendar for next year. But it's entirely irrelevant and unhelpful for you because their situation is different.

There's not a piece of this that you can glean and say, "Oh, let me, let me replicate some of this," because their situation is simply so different that it's unhelpful. So really being able to discern between who I'm going to learn from, who I'm going to sit down and listen to and let influence how I show up in my business, oh my goodness, I can't overstate this enough.

This changed the, the course of my business. There are people that I can look to and be like, "I'm so in- inspired by you. I'm cheering you on. You're amazing. But I can't take a thing from what you're doing, because I have three tiny humans that are relying on me for literally everything most of my week."

Right? Like, we're in different worlds, we're living different lives. Love that for you. Go, do your thing, but that's unhelpful for me. I have had to figure out how to differentiate that information. But if you're in a place where, like, it all just makes you feel kind of bad about yourself, unfollow, mute, get them out of your head, because it's so unhelpful, and your mindset has to be protected.

Your energy and, like, how you are showing up is one of your most valuable resources. If you had 20 hours in your week of undivided time, or you had five hours of week of undivided time, it won't even matter if your mindset is garbage. Like, it won't even matter if all you can see is lack, all you can see is that you're behind, all you can see is that everybody else seems to have this figured out and you're just feeling so down on yourself, then it's no longer a time issue.

It is y- where we're at mentally. Like, we've gotta, like, figure that part out, and then the rest of it will be... You, you know, you'll sort out the time stuff later, whether it's five hours or 50. You probably have found this to be true, where it's like if you don't have a plan, and you don't really feel, like, certain about the clarity and the, the direction of your business, you're kind of feeling down on yourself, it doesn't matter.

Like, we're not getting anywhere. And so those blinders are absolutely crucial. As a result of these changes that I've made, I have carved out, like quite literally intentionally created more consistent income, more family time, and as a result, it has actually been a less overwhelming business to run, because I have had to literally simplify, just make it less complicated.

You know, if you're gonna have less capacity, which let's face it, as moms, we do. We do, and it... like, it doesn't do us any good to say, like, we're running the same race as somebody else when we're not. So we do have less capacity. You need to have less going on in the business realm, right? Like, if we have a bucket for business, and a bucket for motherhood, and a bucket for friendships, and a bucket for the home, it's like I need that business bucket to just be simple, and firing on all cylinders.

When I'm sitting down, we are streamlined, right? Like, we are excited. We have clarity. We have vision for what's happening in the business so that when you're sitting down to market, it doesn't feel random. So that when you're serving your clients, you do have those boundaries and that clarity. And like I said before, when you don't have these things, regardless of how much time you have to work in your business, it becomes obsolete because you don't have those pieces in place.

I think it was two episodes ago that I did a case study with a recent client of mine, Amanda Gargano. You'll see the episode if you just scroll back. And this is a great case study episode to listen to of just hearing, you know, where she was at when she came to me, and then what we did, what we changed in her business, and how her business was transformed in a matter of weeks.

Really cool episode, but really it takes a lot of what I've talked about here in this, this episode and makes it even more granular outside of my own business. So it's a really good listen if you are looking for another episode to listen to. If you are looking for more personalized help and help really like creating a family first business strategy, one that will still pay you and have clients coming to you, seeing you as the authority that you are without having to sacrifice the family side of things and the time freedom that you're desiring, I want to invite you to reach out to work together.

This is something that I do. This is literally what I do for a living now, and I want to invite you to work together. If you're interested in working together, you have two options. You can go to my website. I actually have just recently made some changes on my website, so if you're curious like I am when other people change their websites, I'm like, "Yes, let me go look at what you did."

My website is joymichelle.co. You can take a look at that, and that has tons of information about my coaching and working together one-to-one. Or you can send me a message on Instagram. Let me know that you listened to this. Let me know that you're interested in what it would look like to work together, and I'll ask you a few questions.

We'll get on a call, and if it's a good fit, I will extend a couple of options for ways for us to work together. But thank you so much for listening all the way to the end of this episode. I hope it was an encouragement to you. I hope it reached you right in the moment that you needed it. And as usual, I will be back in your earbuds next Monday.

See you then. 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