

Called To Both 66

Joy Michelle

systems and workflows are something most of us know we need, but can be intimidating and honestly a little boring. I don't know if it's just me. But this is not always the first topic I like to click on when I'm looking for content to consume about my business. But do you know what I love? I love that systems can bring freedom and flexibility and an elevated client experience to your business. And that is why we need to talk about systems. Obviously, I'm not going to be the only one to talk to you about systems because that is not my forte. So today I am joined by the system's Queen herself, Dolly DeLong. Now dolly is a wife, a boy mom photographer, she hosts the system and workflow magic podcast where she teaches creatives about the power of systems. And I just knew she would be the best person to talk about this topic. And really just share candidly about what it has looked like to implement systems into her business so that she can have the call to both life that she feels called to lead. Dolly believes in making systems and SOPs strategic and fun and maybe even a little bit magical. Now when she is not working on systems and education, or her photography business, because yes, she is multi talented, she also enjoys just being outside in Tennessee or she lives with her boys and her husband. And during her free time, which she admits is extremely rare these days. She loves to listen to podcasts, read historical fiction, and is always up for a good Amazon Prime binge watching session. Now I know that you're gonna get a lot out of today's talk with Dolly and I absolutely cannot wait for you to hear her story, get to know her and really just fall in love with her and her content the way that I have in my business. So so before I dive into the interview, I just want to remind you, don't forget to check out the shownotes we are going to have lots of notes in there today, ways that you can get in touch with Dolly and a freebie that she shared with me that you guys don't want to miss out on. Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host Joy 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 to bow. Let's dive in.

Joy Michelle

Okay, friends, you are in for a treat here. Today I am joined by my friend Dolly. And like I said at the beginning of the episode, we're gonna be talking all about systems and workflows. So Hello, Dolly. Welcome to the show. Hello, Joy. This is so overdue. I've been a longtime listener of your podcast. And so I want to I want you to talk about that. But I also want you to share where you're at in life and business today and a little bit about yourself before I dive into the many, many questions I have for you.

Dolly DeLong

Thank you so much for having me. And likewise, I've been a longtime listener of your podcast. So I just love I'm so thrilled. Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. Okay, so my name is Dolly. And I am based in Nashville, Tennessee, Middle Tennessee, and I'm a wife, I am a boy Mom, I have two boys, Blaze and Jack. And I have a photography business and a systems in workflow business. So what that means is I primarily serve families and small businesses with family and branding photography. And then my other side of the business is I like to educate creative business owners and help them understand what systems and workflows are. So lots of things. I'm very multi passionate, I love

Joy Michelle

this. And as someone who is also multi passionate, I find it so refreshing to talk to other business owners who are doing lots of things and doing them really well. So I really want to get into all of this, right. I'm curious what your schedule looks like right now. Because you're running multiple businesses. And you have two little boys. So tell me like what is your schedule look like in this current season? Of course. I'm sure it's always changing.

Dolly DeLong

Yeah. So wow, my current season of work right now is I'm just laughing because I always think I don't have enough time to work. I really want to work more but currently I am working about 10 to 15 hours a week and they are very random hours. So I like I had shared that I have two two sons. So my oldest is in pre K. So he goes to school three days a week, and then my youngest is four months old currently. And so I work around naptime. So I do the naptime hustle. And then I also work on Saturdays where I do my sessions. And so usually when my husband is watching the sons I, that's when I'm doing the work. And Sundays, I'm going to be honest with you all Sundays, I take those days off to spend time with my family, and maybe work two hours during nap time. But mostly, it's the naptime hustle from one to 3pm. And then on days where blazes in school, Jack, thankfully, he naps from 10am to 12pm. That's why we're able to do this podcast interview. So that's when I get a lot of work done as well. So I I average, about three to four hours of work Monday through Friday.

Joy Michelle

Okay, this is so helpful. Just I think it's so cool to hear like how other moms are making this work. So when before you had Jack, were you working more? Mm hmm. Okay. Okay. So things are shifting and turning. What has really like made this possible for you in your business in the seasons, where it's just really not possible to do more than 10 or 15 hours a week? Are you do you have anything set up? That's different than what your business looked like? Maybe like three to four years ago?

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, definitely. No pun intended, I have a lot of systems just set up that has helped me accomplish like where I am right now. And the only reason why I had established certain systems early on is because of my my firstborn plays. So he's turning five this year, and my business is also turning five this year. So I went full time into my business five years ago, I guess 2018 At the time of this recording, and I knew going into motherhood that I didn't know like, what motherhood would look like. I just knew that a lot of my time would be dedicated to spending time with Blaze. So I knew going into like before he was born, I had to establish some systems and patterns for myself and for my business so that I wouldn't be on the hamster wheel constantly. Now I just want everybody to know, I failed miserably at it blacked a maternity leave because I was always working I was like overbooking myself overextending myself, I did not enjoy anything, anything with like Blaise went in that's like one of my number one regrets, like, it makes me really sad. And so looking back on that time, I was more prepared in a way for Jack's birth. And so I knew everything I needed to have in place in order to have a quote unquote successful and restful maternity leave a successful and restful business and actually enjoy being a mother. And then being a business owner. So it was has been a lot of trial and error in the last five years, especially in especially the first two years of blazes life. Were like, like, it was, oh, it was awful. Because I was either really wanting just to work or feeling guilty and wanting to be with him. There was no balance, like no balance whatsoever is guilt

Joy Michelle

all the time. Thank you for sharing that because I think that is the case with a lot of us and nobody's saying it. And this is so relatable and so real. So I love that you shared this what how did you get out of that to kind of take that somewhat of almost this like disastrous experience and shape it into what I hope was really different for your second maternity leave.

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, well, honestly, it was my husband, like a large portion of it was my husband reminding me like, hey, like, when do you I mean, this sounds really dramatic. But sometimes you'd be like, do you like being a mom like do you like he would ask me these hard hitting questions that really cut to my heart and really not cut me down but would like kind of calibrate recalibrate me back to like my purpose in my purpose is not to work myself to death. My purpose is to be a wife to be a mom to like, own a business like I am. God created me to be multifaceted. All of us, all of us as humans are multifaceted, and he wants us to enjoy everything in life and the blessings in life. And so I was not truly enjoying the blessing of being a mother. And it was my husband to be completely honest, who is pointing this out to me on not just a one time basis on a weekly basis reminding me like hey, this is like this. You like, girl? Mom, like, I'm not asking you dolly to like, like sacrifice your business. But I'm asking you to put yourself aside and like, concentrate on your son, our son, and then we will you will find time for your business. I know you will. I'm not trying to keep you away from your business. I'm trying to help you be a mom, like fully.

Joy Michelle

Yeah,

Dolly DeLong

it was so hard.

Joy Michelle

i There were a lot of tears, lots of arguments, lots of fighting on my end, because I was I felt like I was being attacked. You know, like, I felt like he was trying to take something away from me. And so it was like two years of refining. Like, it wasn't just like one conversation. It was multiple conversations. Well, it's an identity shift for sure. Yeah. Be all these things. And we're we're all multifaceted as humans. And I love that you pointed this out. But there is something extra about stepping into that role of being a mom now. Yeah. And that is a huge identity shift. And it can feel like it's threatening the business we've built, especially if that business came first. Like you said that I was like, yes, yes. And it's so tricky. So I love that you mentioned that your husband was the one to speak in. And I think that we all need someone or even like multiple people that can actually point out like, Hey, you don't actually seem happy right now. But I know you want to be an intentional mom. So what changes can we make and really stepping into the like, ownership role and saying, like, I've got to sit here and make some changes. So in that, that really revealed that there were missing systems for you. It sounds like yeah, what are like, I think I would love to, I guess this is two questions. One is like, what were some of those systems for you personally? And for anyone listening? What would you say? Is like a great place to start in terms of auditing, like, do I actually have systems and workflows to support the business balance that I want in my life? Regardless of how many hours I truly have to be working?

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, I would say Okay, so the two systems that like instantly came into my mind, were the systems of finances one, and the systems of like, the client journey. I know this sounds weird, but stick with me on that. So let's start with finances. So when my firstborn when Blaze was born, I had just gotten into my

business full time. It was not by choice full time it was it was because my my boss at the time, when I had announced I was pregnant, he said he just like made an announcement to everyone in the department, Dali's leaving us permanently stop. Now I'm serious. It was still like, very sore for me, because I'm like, I cannot believe that would happen. So yes, I was, like, phased out of my job. And even though I wanted to do, like, I love working joy. So much. I loved my job. And I was working with college students, I was working with international students. Yes, it was stressful. But I was willing to, I wanted to do both. I wanted to, like, be a mom and also do that part time. And also, like, I just wanted to do all the things and help out Yeah, and have the finances like that security and safety because it was a pretty cushy for me. But I was phased out like without really realizing and so that is what forced me to go into business full time. So I started my business in absolute fear, like I need to make money and I need to make it today like I need to go go go go. So I went in into business with that mentality, which is not the best fit, just fear base, like constantly I need to make money. And so I did not know what my enough factor was. It was just fear. Just I had I need to make it and I need to make it now to add to my family and I had that mentality of like, my only worth is if I'm bringing something to this family financially. And when my husband started having these conversations with me like why are you overworking and extending yourself so much like your role is now being a mom like yes, you own this business? That yes, your role is mom when we got down to it, it was my fear of not providing enough not being valuable enough now. And it was just like when I started voicing all of that my husband will would be like you are enough like you are enough like you are like blazes mom like that's all he needs right now. It's not he doesn't need like, like an X amount of dollars like in the bank account. He needs you and so that's when I started seeing Okay, well then what what do I need to start bringing in financially from this business to make it viable? Call it to make it worth it. And we settled on a number. And it was like less than, like, if it makes us I realized I was hustling too much. And I was stressing out too much. And I could easily make that amount and still be a present mom and still have a sustainable business. So long answer short, no, what, like, amount is enough for you and your business? Don't go online? Don't be like, oh, I need to make a 10k a month. Oh, I need to make a 15k a month. Oh, I need to make 25k Because that's the the trap I was falling into. I was like, Oh, I I haven't made 10k I need to do that. Or I haven't made 50k I needed like

Joy Michelle

and then it's a moving target. It's more more and more. Yeah. And I love that you call it the enough factor. So you and your husband sat down together arrived a number of enough NIS for for business finances? And then how did that connect to a system? Yes.

Dolly DeLong

So I then I started like, actually, because another thing with my finances was, I was like generating a lot of income, but then spending it without really tracking it, if that makes sense. It was like it because like there with the creative industry, especially with photography, there's like feast or famine, feast or famine. And like, my busy season traditionally starts now. Like, right now, while we're recording, it's May, and it goes until November. Like it's feast time for dolly right now. But then famine would hit by the end of November. And I just like it would anything I would like get inquiries for I would take because I was afraid like, Oh, I'm not going to make enough money. And so I really had to like face my finances develop some sort of system that worked for me and my husband and our family unit and my business to make it sustainable. And so it was like really digging into the numbers digging into my overhead budget and digging, like it took me it took me like two solid years to truly like, comb through the numbers. And finally, like I could have done this in a month. You all it took me two years because I was scared like I did it fighting and screaming, kicking and screaming, every single month it felt like and now

I look back and like I could have easily just like sat down had a logical conversation. And like figured this all out instead of like kicking and screaming like a toddler.

Joy Michelle

Yes. Oh, this I love what you said, though, about how you had a mindset that was scarcity based and fear based. And that that mindset of feast or famine needed to shift because if you knew every year, these are the seasons and we have such seasonality in business, then you can account for that literally account in your accounting for that. And that is empowering. And then you come at this with like a totally different mindset. So it sounds like this was a journey it took a while. didn't necessarily need to but was the the kicker for this was facing the numbers. Do you feel like that was the big catalyst for saying like, I know now what I can spend I know my enough goal, what are I guess I'm thinking what our listeners going to be able to do like after this podcast, what can they do to get out of that fear based mentality and build a financial system that supports the life that they want?

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, well, this is like, Okay, this is something that a lot of listeners probably won't want to do. But I'm saying if like, I'm not saying this to be successful, I'm saying if you want to have peace with your finances, I would say listeners should really dig into like, okay, what are all of their streams of income coming in to their business, because it might be multiple, they unknowingly might be Oh, you do a lot of maternity or you do a lot of branding, or you do a lot of graphic design like you do like, like odds and ends and like, it adds up into different categories. So I would say please categorize, create a system for where your income is coming from. And once I started categorizing things, again, creating a system I started seeing, Oh, like 75% of my income was family photography. And then I could like streamline that process in my mind like okay, then I need to market this like, I just like it just like was a domino effect from there. I started categorizing things. And then I started categorizing. Okay, where's my spending then going out if I'm making all this money, because my husband was seeing, okay, you're making all this money but then you have nothing to show for a deli that you You're like, my husband has to have these heart to hearts with me. And he does it in a way that's very kind. So I don't want a listener to be like, Oh, he sounds like a jerk. Like, yeah, he's not a jerk. Like he's very he even like, has to, like, approach me and be like, Dolly, I'm trying to ask you a question in a way that still very kind, but this is going to come across as very unkind. But where does this money go? Like, I love this. And this.

Joy Michelle

I mean, this is a fair conversation, though. Marriage, and it is not easy. And I it's not so personal. It's so personal, because it's your business. And emotional business is like this baby that you like, has nurtured and we see our businesses differently than our spouses do. And so, I love this, that it's like, Hey, I see you're making a lot of money, but we are not seeing that money. Like we on the personal side. So powerful. So the first system is categorizing those streams of income. The second system is categorizing the spending. So like really starting to see what are you spending on? I love that. What else? Yes.

Dolly DeLong

Okay, and the third thing, like there's so many things, but then another thing was like categorizing the spending and weighing it with like, what was the income and then also like, as silly as this was, like, making sure I had multiple bank accounts for like the different goals I had. So making sure that I wasn't just being paid in my personal bank account, like actually create like, I had already done this. Like I knew I had to open up a business bank account and I did, but I wasn't being intentional with like, what

buckets to put what in like, yeah, I of course, I had a tax account. So I would like guess my way through that and of course, have a heart attack every tax season because I wasn't really like tracking everything correctly. And so like I really had to develop, like, sit down like talk with my spouse talk with my husband about okay, like what categories am I going to need to put this income to also my husband who is not very familiar with creative business because he works for a company so he's not familiar with like owning your own business, but he is really good with money. And so that kind of pushed me towards working with a financial expert. So they helped set me down and they like helped me strategize a profit first system for myself. So actually paying myself so joy I will be completely honest, I did not pay myself for three years.

Joy Michelle

And you know what, I appreciate how candid you're being about this because this is so common. It because did you have like a specific reason why you weren't paying yourself?

Dolly DeLong

I just was like, oh, I need to, like have enough money for overhead and I need to have this money for this one thing I really want to buy like I wasn't really I was like treating my full time business like a glorified hobby. Sometimes, like I just wanted to like purchase, purchase, purchase, keep up with everything that people were doing online. Yeah, that myself in a way like, oh, like I have a successful photography business. Because, like, I need to attract clients like you all I am being like, I'm laying my heart out. Yeah. And for you all to see like, do not make these mistakes. And of course, we all will make these mistakes. But I meeting with the profit first coach was, was so helpful, like really getting my systems in place, getting my financial house in order for my business was essential. Because like before this, my husband and I, like had paid off over 100 \$150,000 in like student loans and like all of our loans, we had a lot of student loans. And so like having that taken care of really helped me see like the power of having a plan and the system for finances, but then I didn't know how to like, transfer that skill into my business. And so I needed to get help with a profit first coach. So yeah, working with a financial expert really helped solidify those systems. And then that kind of like, I've been paying myself consistently for two years now. And my husband like, he's so excited not because he's like rolling. We're rolling in the dough. He's just like, proud of me. He's, he's he always tells me how proud he is of me. And it makes it me leaving for my like sessions worth it because he was getting, I don't want to say annoyed because he loves hanging out with his sons. Obviously he loves our kids, but I was leaving for hours. And then coming back and not having anything to show for it financially. In the previous years,

Joy Michelle

paying yourself is a big piece of like you the way that you view your business, the way you feel about your business. And I think for anyone who lives with you how they feel about that business, and it is so huge. I've talked about this a couple of times on the podcast about how to deal with unsupportive people in your life and in your business. And especially in you know, if you're in a marriage with someone who doesn't quite support the business, and we've talked about this dynamic of what it does if you're not paying yourself. And I did want to mention one other episode here, because you mentioned Profit First, the allocating of money into buckets. And Val do Vic talked about this here on the podcast in Episode 24. So I'll have that linked up in the show notes for anybody who's like, I need the specifics. I need the percentages, I need you to tell me. But like you said, just looking at profit first read the book, consume the content, higher profit first professional. But I did the same thing in like, I don't know, three ish years ago. And I just have a different sense of confidence around my money mindset. And yeah, there's just nothing like knowing every two weeks, that is my paycheck. And it just changes your

dynamic with your own business, which I love. Okay, so finances was one of the areas that you built systems around us, did you have anything else in the finance categories, I definitely want to jump.

Dolly DeLong

Okay, this well, this is like a really hard, like, heavy topic, for sure. It's very emotional for people's very sensitive for people. So start off, like, really like dig into your numbers of your business. If I can leave you with anything, you can create a system that works for you. And if you don't need to bring in like, like, again, like you don't have to have the 10k month or the 15k month or the 20k month to be successful. Like sometimes even making 1k Or like \$500 might be your enough factor. And that's great. So please like dig into your enough factor and then create systems around that, or finances around that. And like it will surprise you like you won't, you won't have to like, I don't know, be on the hamster wheel all the time.

Joy Michelle

So good. I love that. Okay, moving to what you shared about client journey, and that being the other piece of this that felt like it freed up your time, and allows you to be more present when you're with your son or present in guilt free when you're in your business. What did that look like as far as creating a system?

Dolly DeLong

Yeah. Okay, so backing up from there, I knew going into like my second pregnancy, like with with Jack like, I was like, Okay, let me I actually want to have maternity leave. But let me reassess all of my different offers I have within my business and see how I can like refine them even not refine the offers, but refine the client journey at the very top. And so it could like be a little bit more automated at the top. So it gives me time to like, either respond back or it gives the the the new lead time to determine, hey, do I want to work with her or not? So what I mean by this, okay, so, again, honestly, I have three different facets to my business. So first facet, family photographer, second branding, photography, and third is systems and workflow educator and what that encompasses, yes, like I have free education, but I also help other creative business owners like with dubsado setups, or with like, strategizing a launch for like eight to 10 weeks, like how to plan that out strategically. So there's different phases. So systems and workflows around that. So let's say for the sake of example, like ease of example, of photography, so I knew that if somebody was going to inquire with me early on, I didn't not want to just be at my computer all the time and just like worrying, like what if somebody inquires like I need to be at my email to answer them right away. So I knew the very top of the icon list at the top of the funnel or to the top of the inquiry process. I knew that needed to be automated for me for some businesses, they like that like to answer right away, but for me, I'm like, no, like, what if somebody inquires at 6pm That's like dinner time for our family. I don't need to be on my phone or what if somebody inquires at 11pm Like I want to be asleep at that time. And so I created for myself, everything at the top to be automated. So when I say by that is I I for Okay, so let's say somebody inquires about family photography, then my form in dubsado, will automatically send them an email thanking them for sending me like inquiring for my services, but also includes a very specific video of me talking to them about whatever family photography service they self selected. So I do three different versions of family photography. So like milestone, maternity newborn, so that meant I needed to create three different videos of me talking about whatever they self select. Does that make sense? And so I obviously what did not like say their name in the video? That would be an amazing form of AI. I don't even know if that's crazy. Yeah. But I would just be like, Hey, thank you. I'm dolly, dolly Dylan photography, thank you so much for wanting to work with me for your maternity photos. This is what you can expect, in this email, has my packages

has my pricing has everything you need to know for now and just be expecting a response from me in the next two business days. And let me know how I can serve you. And so I had shared this with joy before we hit record that this has been like a game changer for me, in that I have like more of a booking rate for family photography, because of that video component. But also, like I thought strategically through like, Okay, if somebody like reaches, normally moms are reaching out, like in the off hours of their children's schedule. So that means like, I get a lot of inquiries at like, two in the morning at three in the morning. Like when I look at the time stamp because their moms and their

Joy Michelle

breastfeeding, we all are sitting there breastfeeding. Yeah, they're

Dolly DeLong

like, oh, yeah, I need to make a family maternity or a newborn session. And so I like I've thought that through. And that's helped me out tremendously, like step away from like, frantically answering them back to Okay, there is something set up on the front end. And then I can ease in and answer during my working hours, quote, unquote, working hours.

Joy Michelle

Yeah, I love the way that you're thinking about this, starting with the offers that you're gonna have, and then making it as much automated as possible, while still creating that connection, and high level of service, getting them the things they need. And you mentioned when they could expect to hear from you. You're managing expectations, you're just trying to hit all that communicating upfront and early. This is so powerful. So you built out these workflows that would elevate that client experience, but hopefully make it less hands on for you so that you can, you know, really honor the hours that you have built around your business?

Dolly DeLong

Yes, yeah, it's been so helpful for me and to like, I have shared this with so many people that it's every, every quarter, or every six months, I try to like reassess these workflows, and to see to like, make sure they're still in alignment with my seasons of life. And I did that recently, like, literally right before Jack was born. So in December, I reassessed several of my workflows, and waited against several of my offers. And I've refined them even more. So I just want the listener to hear this. You don't have to, like have it perfected the first time. Just go out and try and try to refine one part of your workflow and assess it after 90 days and see what's working for you. What's not working for you. And right now in this season. It's been really, really helpful, like, so helpful for me to I'm so glad I reassessed it.

Joy Michelle

Yeah, I'm so glad you mentioned checking back in with the systems that you've built. I'm curious if for someone listening, who wants to almost audit, their workflows, their systems, their business as a whole, and streamline and just do all the things that you're describing here? Do you have a way of identifying gaps? That would be like, hey, that is a perfect place to implement a system.

Dolly DeLong

Yeah. Now this is something that like the way I'm going to phrase it is going to be like, a challenge is going to sound challenging, and it is, and this is why I don't think a lot of people are going to do it. And this is why I want your listeners to prove me wrong. Like that's why I'm crazy. So whenever I do like an audit with a photographer, for example, for their dubsado setup or whatever CRM tool you use, or

whatever project management tool you use, let's simulate, assess one service at a time, don't assess all of the things at a time, because then you will give up and you will be overwhelmed. And you'll just be like, well, whatever I'll just like do like, I'll just do whatever has been working for me, you'll be even more frustrated. So start off with one service that for sure is a moneymaker for you. And write every thing out, I'm talking every single little nitty gritty piece of that client journey that you would want to happen. Like, even if you don't, don't necessarily do it consistently. Write it out. And I'm talking like, top, like, where the people are finding you like, so that could be Facebook, that can be Instagram, that can be Google, that could be YouTube, whatever, all the way, like every single face. And for me, I divide this into like, four different phases. The first phase is very cold, like your social media platforms. Where are you presenting your? Where are you marketing yourself? The second phase is like the inquiry phase, like, okay, they've inquired with you now, what do you want to happen? Like, what are the emails? Or correspondence? Or videos? Are you needing to put in place to like, smooth this out? And the third phase, is the booking phase. They booked with you, okay, well, what happens after like, how can they book with you? Do you want to have a payment plan? What kind of emails do you want to send out? When do you send out the contract? Do you need to send out a questionnaire like literally look at every single step of this process, the fourth phase, you've done the service. And now this is like the final phase that a lot of people neglect as well. This is like, the phase that you are surprising and delighting and also reminding them like, hey, even though we're all done, can you leave me a review, or don't forget to tell people about me, this is like, you might have a referral credit like that you get for, like, whatever you do. So a lot of people have one phase very refined, and then then they neglect different phases, or they just like hurry through, I just want to make money, or I just want to book and I just want to like deliver and then that's it and then move on to the next client. But they're forgetting like a lot of people forget that fourth phase that fourth like, I don't know, like moving part of your workflow, like that's still essential. And that could get potentially you to market to new audience members to new clients from like, does that make sense? Oh,

Joy Michelle

this you're speaking my language right now. I love this so much. Because, like you said, this is something that I think once especially when someone is booked, a lot of times, we're immediately like, what's next, who else let me go back out into the openness of whoever is going to come in, that's new, completely forgetting that the people who've already bought the thing and are working with us, they are our most likely referral source they are our most likely repeat client. And that is where you're gonna get your your testimonials and just this is so good. And it's it's really connecting your client journey to your marketing and you know, if you need more Google reviews, if you need more referrals, if you haven't thinking about oh, I would love to create a referral program something more formal, so that I can get referrals on repeat. This is so this is a really cool way of looking at it and saying like start with the system, build it into your system so that you're freeing up your time but you're also checking some of those boxes of things we know we need to be asking for reviews. Or like you said maybe credits they earned and I think you know in the photography world is a great time to roll into prints, albums, heirlooms. What's next, like there's more besides just the digital but sometimes we're so busy saying alright, I gotta go post a new reel to Instagram to go get new clients. So it's really has my my gears turning a little bit like oh what where can I refine this in some of my own offers. So I love that you said pick one at a time and it was like take it completely full circle or take it completely to the end. Make sure you tie it up with a bow before you start looking at the next offer. So this is great I love this

Dolly DeLong

and something and this is why I think not a lot of people will actually like do this because you actually it forces you to slow down and to like like take apart that one service that one offer and this is not sexy work this is not fun. I mean for me it's fun but for the average person like who is like on the go on the move. It's no fun and I know it's very mind numbing have some people have told me it this is really mind numbing, and I'm like, but it will help you out tremendously because you're getting everything out of your brain. You're like slapping it down. You're putting like an You puzzle piece together, you might be infusing, like a new step you

Joy Michelle

never thought of, oh, like maybe like after they book me, I can like send a reminder to myself to send them a \$5 gift card to Starbucks. Yes. So you're kind of tapping into the like, get back into why you're doing it, like remind yourself of how good it's gonna feel to have all of this buttoned up, that it's actually going to increase that customer service factor. And for me, I have to reward myself, I have to almost like gamify it a little bit. Like if I can create these templates, or if I can set up these automations, then we're gonna go to Starbucks, or whatever it is. And it's, it truly is like, I have to treat myself like a toddler at times, because it's things that it's its processes, its systems, it's not the creative, you know, oh, the light is hitting your face in this way. And I feel like an artist like, I totally get that. And I think for the majority of us, we did not get into business for this particular thing. So I love that you are saying Do It Anyway, do anyway, because it really it's, it's about getting you to the next level and growth. And it's like we become stuck at the level that we're at. I'm almost picturing this like plant that's in too small of a pot, and it's getting all root bound. Yeah, you know, you have room to expand and like put down those strong roots, you're not going to grow as big as you could. Yes. So I love this. I love this. Anything else? Before we move on to the next question about just auditing, identifying weak points in our businesses, I guess like,

Dolly DeLong

this is kind of like a bonus point like that I want to add to when you're like auditing your, like, specific workflow for your service or whatever. See, if you can infuse places to grow your email list. Like I know, like, this is something that we will talk about later on. But another really important thing about your business is, you need to also reach consistently reach your audience all the time on platforms you own. And that means like having an email list. And so how can you infuse your lead magnets into your workflows naturally, because just because somebody reaches out to you to inquire to work with you, they may decide to go a different route. Or they may decide, hey, right now is not the best time. Like I guess I need to save a certain X amount of money before I say yes. But what if that you somehow got them on your email list, and you continue to nurture that relationship? So the phrase I'm looking for is how can you nurture your like new leads that are coming in on different platforms, such as your email service provider?

Joy Michelle

Ooh, this is so good. Do you have any ways that you like to sprinkle in your lead magnets to these these systems that you built up? So you don't have to keep remembering this all the time? You just set it and forget it, but it's growing your email list? It's helping you to get those those clients or potential even future clients on your email list? Do you have any ideas that you can share?

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, definitely. So two that come to mind are so when I have an inquiry that like fills out my contact form for again, I keep on using family photography, but we're just going to go with the family photography example. So when they hit submit on the contact form, they automatically will get I had

mentioned that first email that includes the video of me, but then they're also redirected with the redirect page. And the thank you page in that thank you page has confirmation to check their email one. And second thing is I invite them to like yes, like be expecting an email for me. But here are some good ways to prepare for your family session. And that leads to my specific family photography portrait guide, like how to style your session, and that is actually a lead magnet. And so that funnels them into a specific email sequence. So yes, like they will be emailed like, like I have this set up through flow desk, so they'll be getting emails from me there. But it's like keeping me top of mind while they're talking to me about a potential family session.

Joy Michelle

Yeah, they're sitting there being like dollies everywhere.

Dolly DeLong

Yes. No, I'm like, No, really. But yes, I

Joy Michelle

am hanging out with your boys. Yes. Oh, good. So smart and something that listeners can literally do this. This week. Yes. No, just Yeah. Here is that thank you page going and can you put a freebie of some kind? Yeah. I love that. This is so good. Okay, you now that we're talking about email, can you share about your summit because I know you have your Summit coming up? Just tell me where you're coming from when you even decided to create this summit because this is your second summit, right?

Dolly DeLong

This is actually my third event. Yes, yes.

Joy Michelle

Yeah. You're taking I am

Dolly DeLong

Oh, man. So this is actually my first summit I'm leading like but I'm normally leave Eating a bundle every year. So for those of you are listening, you're like what is a bundle? So I run the systems and workflow magic brand. So what it means is I like to make sure that systems and workflows are magical for people to understand to experience those aha moments as they see the different puzzle pieces of the backend of their business, it should be magical. And so I make a lot of Harry Potter references, all the systems or workflow stuff. So. So I have been doing a bundle of some sort since for the past three years. And every the first bundle was very broad. It brought in like, I just reached out to contributors to business owners, and I was like, if you have a system that could help a creative business owner, do you mind contributing? Can you be a contributor, and so it kind of took off from there. And so from my second iteration, I decided to do a more niche theme, like a system and workflow of digital funnels. And that was very wildly popular. And I assessed and analyzed after doing that bundle, I was like, okay, to things, people really like learning about systems and workflows have specific things like just so it won't be so broad, and they like meeting like different contributors and collaborators, they just don't need to like, I'm not, it's not the dolly DeLonge show, I wanted to make sure like, they knew who to connect with about specific topics. And so this time around, I decided, Okay, I'm going to go big and take it from a bundle to a summit. So that way, there's that video component, and people need to show up live to like, actually consume the education, it's, it's going to be a free Summit. And so this time, the it's going to be about the systems and workflows of email marketing, because email marketing is very vast and broad,

it scares people tremendously. So if we just like take it a step back, people can see that it's just a puzzle piece, like there are different puzzle pieces of email marketing. And yes, it takes time to like, get used to email marketing. But if, if you lay it out in a way of like, Hey, these are the foundational pieces that you you can start taking now. It will set you up for better success in the long run to be more consistent with email marketing, and to actually take advantage of email marketing, because email marketing, it's not it's not dead, it's not going anywhere. It's been around like one of the like, the main types of marketing that's been around for decades, you guys decades, and I want to show creative business owners that they don't have to, like have a list size, like, I don't know, like Amy port. I love Amy Porterfield, but like people, like sometimes look at her. And they're like, Well, I don't have a million subscribers. So what's the point? Yeah, you should start, just start because you just never know. Like, even like having a segmented list of 50 people, those 50 People might be driving the majority of your income without you even knowing it.

Joy Michelle

Yeah. And I love that you're sharing about this. i It's so important. And it's something that it's almost like this system side of things where it's not the most alluring topic, but boy, is it important and it is just so powerful. And like you said, it is not going anywhere. I love that. So we're gonna have the link for your summit in the description so people can enroll, it is free, you can tune in, there's going to be four days of speakers from everything of what do I talk about? How do I set this up? What should the lead magnet be to how do I get people to even get in my list and subscribe? This is a huge, huge value. And I don't want you guys to miss it. So definitely go to the description, put your name and make sure that you get on the reminders list for this because it's going to be so action packed and it is now open for anybody who wants to be a part of it.

Dolly DeLong

And Joy your speaker I am

Joy Michelle

I am so I am going to be on day four. And can I talk a little bit about what role oh my gosh, I'm so excited about this because I have so much to say on this topic. And I haven't really talked about this topic in depth anywhere public before and I'm going to be talking about leveraging YouTube, the platform of YouTube creating video content to grow your email list what that is going to look like and some strategies tips and just step by steps to demystify this platform of YouTube because I know it can be overwhelming but it is so powerful in growing your email list in growing your business so that's what I'm going to be talking about so you definitely don't want to miss this guys. It's gonna be really really good exclusive content and I I saw the lineup of speakers and it's been antastic so definitely join that on the link in the description. Gosh, we I'm gonna have to have you back here dolly because we are running out of time. But in closing, we're gonna have to come back for like a part two for sure. In closing, where, uh, tell me about your podcast? Where can people follow you online, grab your resources and freebies, because I know you have so much to take people further in this topic of systems, automations and workflows and ways to just set up your business so that you're not tied to your computer, which I love. I love that mission. And of course, you do other things because you're multi passionate, so share where we can find you more.

Dolly DeLong

Yeah, definitely, if you guys are on Instagram, I'm on Instagram at dolly DeLong education. And that's where I share all things, systems and workflows for creative business owners. And then if you're like, I

just want to check out her photography, you can follow me at dolly DeLong photo. And then I also have a podcast called the systems and workflow magic podcast. And if you follow along, you will, you can find me on pretty much any podcast player wherever you like to listen. And you'll know that joy was also a featured guest on my podcast. So look for her episode for sure. And I have a freebie to share with your audience. It's my top five recommended SOPs, standard operating procedures to really dig into for your own creative business. So I'm excited to share that with you. And like part of that is the financial aspect that we spoke about earlier in this episode. So I'm really excited for you guys to dig into that. And just a really says get started with like some sort of system for your business. Yes. Oh, I

Joy Michelle

love this. Okay, my very last question for you is What does called to both mean to you?

Dolly DeLong

Oh, man, this is so Oh, I've been like thinking on this because I know you sent me this question. I'm like, oh, what does this mean to me? Well, I got to like, get all spiritual or religious sounding, but just to be completely honest, and transparent Joy, I am a believer, I'm a Christian. And I try my very best to submit my life to God. And when I am, when I do that, I find a lot of peace in my life. I don't know how to explain it. But I have peace in that way I can be fully present as a wife fully present as a mom and fully present as a business owner because I believe that God has created us all as humans, even if you don't believe in God, I believe he has created us as humans to be more like he's given us all our own strengths are our own unique personalities, our own unique strengths. And I want to lean into those strengths and glorify him as much as possible. So just like call to vote like I am. I'm leaning into God, as I'm called to be a business owner and called to be a mom and a wife. Because these are rules that are blessings to me. And I want to honor God and all that I do. So I don't even know if that answer your question.

Joy Michelle

Oh, it does. Thank you so much for sharing that I just I love that and all that you've shared today, you've given us so much to think about. I was taking my own notes here. And you're definitely going to come back if you're willing. We're gonna have your wonderful everybody go follow dolly online, you are going to be uplifted and educated at the same time. And I will see you all next week. 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.