

[00:00:00] So today I wanna give you the final credits. This is that, where are they now? Portion of the episode, after all the credits have rolled and you're just like, what's been going on?

Creating a life that is authentic, bold, and purposeful takes audacity and truth telling. It takes disruption. That is what it means to be a professional troublemaker. Professional Troublemaker is a best selling book, this podcast, and frankly, a life habit. And I'm your host, I'm here to bring you perspectives, deep dives, and conversations about culture, business, life, and leadership.

And welcome to Season 5, which I'm really excited about. This season is dedicated to the glory and grit of entrepreneurship. 2023 was my toughest year as a business owner. And there was a point where I was three months away from being bankrupt. So, let's talk about it. Let's get really real about running your own business.

The good, the bad, and the ugly. Because while [00:01:00] people love to glorify entrepreneurship, they often leave out the tough lessons, the failures, and the pivots that have had to happen. My hope after this series of episodes is that you feel more informed about what it truly takes to run a purpose driven business.

You feel less alone about all the times you messed up, and you walk away knowing what to avoid. So you don't make some of the same mistakes I've made. Let's get into it.

I fired myself. Like for real? For real. But more on that in a minute. So let's rewind y'all. When we last left off, 2023 had hands. I was telling y'all about that. You know, I told y'all how life came swinging and how I was able to rebuild my company from near bankruptcy in 2023 to back up to seven figures in 2024 and how I was making a lot of audits, I was making a lot of shifts and I was reflecting on the lessons that I was supposed to hold on to knowing that whatever my [00:02:00] next season is is gonna require that of me. And lemme tell you, God and me, we partnered up, okay?

We partnered up for this rebuild, and it's been nothing short of epic. So today I wanna give you the final credits. This is that, where are they now? Portion of the episode, after all the credits have rolled and you're just like, what's been going on?

I have a lot of updates for y'all, and I'll talk about this podcast and give you more closure. So I've told you more about the comeback, right?

So remember how I had fired everybody on my team in 2023 minus one person remaining? Well, 2024, mid 2024, I started the rebuild for real, like of my team. So mid 20, 24, I really started the team rebuild. I had already kicked off the company rebuild at the end of 2023, but 2024 was the team rebuild. So I hired the team at River Financial to be my CFO [00:03:00] team, manage the company's money. You know, we would meet weekly. That started midyear. They had to clean up some of the stuff my old team had done. They still had to clean up old team shenanigans. Suzie Barbour became my chief strategy officer, and when she came on, it was with the expertise that she's had in helping manage businesses like mine of thought leaders of people who have built businesses based on their ideas and their persona. So Suzie comes on board as my chief strategy officer, and she actually starts looking at the whole company, including the Book Academy, which has been a critical part of the company's rebuild and is a critical part of the company's future.

Now, Suzie didn't just show up with spreadsheets. She showed up with strategy and confidence and said, I can help you rebuild this business in the way it should be rebuilt. And let's start with the Book Academy. So at the end of last year, we decided to test out a launch for the Book Academy, um, around [00:04:00] December.

And it was during the holidays, noisy people do not care, and we decided to test it out. Me and Suzie took a trip to a mastermind. We planned out the launch and we decided that we actually weren't gonna play by anybody's rules, not the industries, not the calendars. And we launched the book Academy right in the middle of the holidays.

We did two launches. The first launch was right during the holidays, like I'm talking like a week before Christmas. And then we did the second half of the launch during the inauguration of Cheeto Satan, because apparently we just love chaos.

Okay. And Suzie brought together a team that I called the Launch Avengers, and I watched this launch closely and she said, I got it. You don't gotta worry about it.

And man, by the end of January when we finished the TBA launch, it was the biggest launch that we've ever had. It tripled anything that we've ever done.

Hundreds of new TBA students got in the game and started working on their books. Because our stories, they deserve to be told by US. History is written ink [00:05:00] and we're out here making sure we've got the pens. So we also gave

away \$75,000 in scholarships and supportive victims of the LA wildfires as part of our launch.

Purpose and profit has always been the goal, and since then we've leveled up. I brought in a whole new leadership team at the book Academy, including some of the best book coaches in the game. Shout out to Mandy and Macy. We launched our own book Academy app in the app store for our students, and Book Academy now is almost its own separate business in that it doesn't require me to be looking at the day-to-day of it all.

We're doing weekly coworking sessions for our students. We're doing still monthly master classes. All of this has been happening since January, and because of how big of a launch we had. It actually gave us space to pause and do an even deeper audit on where the future of the company needs to go. I'll tell you more about that, but another [00:06:00] few updates that blew my mind and continue to affirm, to me to listen, to be obedient and to simply just receive instead of Chase.

So we actually didn't submit. Season five of Professional troublemaker podcasts. For awards. We missed some of the deadlines. I was like head down with the book Academy launch and just trying to get through the holidays, so I missed a lot of those deadlines. There was one that we submitted for, and that is the Webby Awards.

The Webby Awards is one of the biggest, most prestigious, awards for digital media and digital art. So we submitted it season five of this podcast, and one of our episodes, we submitted it for the Webby Award. Now I basically almost forgotten about it.

I put it outta my mind and then I get an email that's like, Hey, congrats. You are a finalist in the Webby Awards. Over 13,000 podcasts were nominated, and you're a finalist in [00:07:00] two categories in the business category under limited series and under individual episode. So the podcast end up becoming a finalist, and I was blown away because that is such.

An incredible affirmation like how many other business podcasts exist? There's so many. So again, head down, doing my thing, planning the future of this company, getting tired because I realized all these years of carrying the company have kinda worn me down a little bit, even in the recovery of burnout, right?

And the thing about the Webby Awards is the Webby Awards asks of you to get people to vote for you. So you're supposed to like really campaign to win. I didn't have capacity, so I posted on social media once that the podcast is a finalist and I sent out an email to my mailing list. And I kept it moving. Not because I didn't wanna win, not because I didn't care, but because I just didn't have the capacity to do [00:08:00] a full campaign because I was also launching my latest book, little Troublemaker Defends, her name, which came out May 6th, and between that running my business, trying to stay grounded, I just couldn't go hard for the Webby Award

then a few days before the results were announced, someone DMed me and said, Hey, I just voted for you in the Webby Awards, but you must not care about it much. You haven't really been posting, and I had to tell them the truth. I've been busy. I haven't had the bandwidth. I've been launching a book, handling life, working on something major for the business.

And they replied, well, I voted for you anyway. And I thanked them deeply because yes, I did wanna win, but I just didn't have it in me to run full speed towards it. So then I woke up towards the end of April and I found out I had won the Webby Award in the category of best limited edition series in the business category, which is huge. And I didn't just win one of those awards, I won two [00:09:00] because. I won the popular award, which means publicly I got the most votes in that category.

And then I also won the judges award, which means the internal panel itself also voted for the podcast. It blew my mind and I sat with what that win really meant, and it hit me that this was a divine lesson in expansion and ease. Most times when I want something, I go after it hard. I map the strategy, I do the work, I push the plan. But this time I didn't chase, I didn't strive.

I let it be, and I won. I still won, and it just reminded me of the season in general. And why I made a decision that I'll tell you more about very shortly, but sitting more in the lesson of the Webby, it was a reminder for me that you don't always have to grind for what is already yours. It reminded me that you don't always have to exhaust yourself to be rewarded, and you don't always have to force a door open [00:10:00] some doors swing wide when you simply stand in your assignment like our book Academy Launch, which is the launch that actually was least stressful ever because when I handed it to Suzie and she was like, I got it, we're gonna kill it. I also surrendered and had faith that whatever would come would come and all that switched. At one point, I remember talking to Suzie, one of those days when we were about to do I think our webinar.

I said, we just simply have to believe that what is bigger than what we can come up with is possible. We have to believe that the plans for us are bigger than what we can even see. So we just need to be open to receiving whatever those plans are. So just like the success of the Book Academy's launch.

I have been really trying to train myself to stay open to possibilities, to stay open to expansion and to know that it doesn't always have to come with the grind. Sometimes it is in the stillness, sometimes it's in the [00:11:00] obedience. Often it's in the stillness and in the obedience.

So taking all of that into account. I also was launching this book, little Troublemaker Defends her name, and the book is dedicated to everyone whose names were never on the key chains growing up. You know, it's dedicated to those of us who never saw our names in the mugs. Those of us who spent a lifetime correcting people and pronouncing our names over and over again so they know can they can get it right.

So that launch was also happening as I wine'd the webby. What's interesting about that launch is little troublemaker defends her name. That book is the first book that I have written and published that did not hit the Times List.

And I remember feeling disappointed at first, but then I had to sit with the lesson of, Hey, hey, hey, hey. Maybe it's God telling me how you won in the past is not how I need you to win now because your wins now will be deeper, not basing the validation of white gaze, so that's why I'm actually really excited to tell you about my biggest [00:12:00] update.

The thing that I have done in this last year and a half of rebuild that makes me prouder than anything else I've done.

It is a big deal for me as a type A control freak who always wants to feel like she has her hands on the wheel. Who has been hurt in the moments when she has not, who has been surrounded for far too long with people who made promises who overpromised and under-delivered for me. I decided to move in faith and see the trust that has been earned.

So Suzie, my chief strategy officer, is officially, has been promoted to CEO of Awe Luv media. As of June 1st, she's officially running the show, and I'm stepping down as CEO of this company. I have fired myself in a real way. I am not the boss anymore in that way, and I could not be more excited, [00:13:00] could not be more excited.

I'm so geeked, y'all. Yes. Okay, so what does this mean for me? What it means for me is my new title is No longer CEO. Of all of media. I am founder and chief visionary officer of Awe Luv media.

My role as founder and CVO is to set the mission and the vision of this company. It is to dream big. It's to do the things that only I can do. The writing, the speaking, the press, the impactful messages that come from my brain. I can sit in my creativity because now I will no longer be managing operations.

I'm no longer in charge of revenue. I'm no longer in charge of the. Foundational wellbeing of the company. My job is to sit in my zones of genius, of creativity, of writing, of giving people the tools, the courage, and the words to take transformative action. My role is to double down on the gifts that I was given by God [00:14:00] to move in purpose and let that be my assignment, Suzie, as our CEO.

Her job is to manage the company, our operations, our revenue. She's hiring new team members and with my guidance, and I'm sitting right next to her, we are partners in this, but that's my boss now, and I'm so excited because I need supervision, y'all. I'm so tired of making all these decisions and I'm excited because where my superpowers end hers begin.

And the thing about Suzie is she's also a Swiss Army knife where she's. Very pragmatic, but she can tap in and write also if, if I need her to. Suzie has proven that she can help build and scale powerful brands with intention and after everything I've been through with my teams after. This last couple of years, sustainability is the assignment, and over the [00:15:00] last year, she's been earning my trust and my community's trust and my partner's trust.

I often talk about the prayer, let my helpers find me. It is a prayer that I say, especially if I'm walking into a new season or if I'm walking into a new room and I just wanna make sure that whatever's mine finds me. I said that prayer heavy last year, and I feel like Suzie's an answer to that prayer. Since she has started with the company as Chief Strategy Officer last year, she's increasingly shown me that I can entrust this thing that I built from \$0 up past seven figures. I can it in her hands. Whether I'm looking or not, I can trust her with it.

Her experience and how she's even showed up for me in this season. How I can literally tell Suzie, Hey, we need this thing. And she goes, say less, I got it. I'll take it from here and I gotta tell you, I. Did not think I would be in the position to have a CEO for this company for like maybe 2, [00:16:00] 3, 5 years.

I didn't think it was possible 'cause it just felt unreachable. It felt like a goal that, oh my gosh, for me to have a CEO, how am I gonna do that? When the company just almost went bankrupt two years ago. And let me tell you something right now, when I decided to make Suzie. The CEO of the company, it was almost exactly two years to the week where my CFOs back then told me that the company was three months away from being bankrupt.

You wanna talk about divine timing? I brought on a new CEO almost exactly two years to the week, maybe even the day where I had been told that my company would go under if we did not bring in one more dollar in three months. Divine order is what I'm sitting with. I was so humbled by it because what a beautiful full circle.[00:17:00]

What a difference two years can make story. 'cause I'm telling y'all, in 2023, I was on the verge of launching my first ever children's book. And I was freaking out because I didn't know what was about to happen with my company. I didn't know whether I'd be able to make payroll in three months.

And then two years later, I'm launching my second children's book, and I had just hired a new CEO and I'd seen a dollar amount in our company's bank account that I had never seen before. I asked our CFO to send me a screenshot.

Man, all of it has blown my mind, y'all. All of it has been just mind boggling and so heartening. And I'm reveling in the gratitude because what this means for me, number one, the first thing I'm doing now, that we have a proper CEO in place that is not me for the first time in the history of all love media.

I am not the CEO of the company. The first thing I'm [00:18:00] doing is I am resting. I am finally gonna get a chance to take a break. So for the first time ever this summer, I'm taking a two month sabbatical, a two month sabbatical. No business calls, no launches from me. I'm not writing no emails. Just rest and writing and frolicking.

Well, if I write it's because I'm working on my next book. But like writing, when I have nothing else happening around me that's taking my attention is not work to me it feels like joy, fulfillment, right? And I'm writing my next book Legit, like, which is gonna become that fall 2026. But yes, like resting looks like only insisting on doing the things that bring me joy.

I will not be sitting on zooms all day. I'm not meeting with my team while I'm gone unless something is on fire for real. Like me and Suzie are actually sabbatical planning right now. The book Academy's not slowing down while

I'm gone. Our students are still gonna be served. Mandy and [00:19:00] Macy gonna be holding it down over there.

They already had a have a full plan and this summer, Suzie has set it up with where the team is gonna be focusing on helping people get their book proposals done using my proprietary method. The same one that gets people six figure book deals, the same one that has made me millions of dollars. Most folks think you write the whole book first, but not, and nonfiction.

It starts with a book proposal. That's the foundation. So this summer, the team is gonna hold people down and do that program without me.

So, yeah, it's been an amazing six months since y'all last heard from me. With Suzie at the helm of the company, it's empowering for me to finally be able to take a deep breath, like not the, you know how sometimes you go on break and you're worrying about stuff? Are the bills paid? I won't have to worry about that.

So what does all of this mean? Ultimately, it means I'm literally stepping into the next season of my life by stepping back. Instead of [00:20:00] the charging forward that I usually do, I'm stepping back to take a breath and create room and space for me to prioritize self above all for the first time ever in my life, to not be in survival mode is such a underrated gift, and I'm clear about how underrated it is this season's arc has blown my mind. 'cause when I started the season in mid 2024, we had a whole plan.

It'll be eight episodes, it'll be this, but we actually deviated from the plan by episode three. 'cause I said, you know what? Let's have this just unfold as it needs to. And what a beautiful, graceful, divinely ordered arc to be able to come back to tell y'all like I literally was on the verge of bankruptcy.

And then now I get to say, Hey, I have a CEO. I have a boss now on purpose for my company, and my goal is to 10 x our [00:21:00] impact, our reach, our revenue.

Because one of the things that I recognize and that my team helped me recognize is that my creativity's embedded in my joy, they go hand in hand. I am more creative, the more joyful I am. So that's why this summer, the frolicking will be epic. Well, I still be on social probably just because, eh, but like anything that you see me do this summer, July and August especially.

Just know it is deeply embedded in joy.



If there's somebody listening to this who is in a valley moment, who is fighting for their lives, who is in the dumps, who's having a hard time getting outta bed, I feel you. I know exactly where you are, and I just wanted to let you know that the Valley is not the only place that you're gonna be in.

If you are in a valley moment, I just wanna offer you hope, I wanna offer you that some of these moments are simply a stepping stone for the next version of you that you gotta hold on. The valley is temporary because the rise is [00:22:00] next. If you are in the valley right now, look, it's nothing but up from here.

And I know exactly how you're feeling. I know how hard it is to get outta bed.

I even know what it looks like when you're like, I don't even know what I'm supposed to do next. Maybe you're not supposed to do anything. Maybe you just need to surrender and say, you know what? You got it. God. Like take it. You have it 'cause I ain't got it. I hope you're taking this episode and this series as proof that every failure is truly a stepping stone to the best version of yourself.

So this moment is hard. This moment is tough. It might have hands, I know what that feels like. But don't quit. Don't, don't. Because this moment is supposed to teach you something. It's supposed to equip you with something. 'cause what is for you next is bigger than what you could even think about. So just hold on to that.

If you're in a tough season in the grind, feeling like the vision is cloudy or the money's funny, or you're just tired, don't quit. [00:23:00] Pivot. If you need to burn it down and rebuild if that's what's required. But don't quit. Complete your purpose work. Pray that prayer. Let my helpers find me because they will, they did for me.

So this is the last episode of the Professional Troublemaker Podcast. It feels right. It feels like a good movie wrapped up after the end credits. It feels right to move on to the next franchise. Not that I'll stop being a professional troublemaker, that's a lifelong assignment for me 'cause I'm gonna always disrupt for the greater good.

Amen. But as I even embark on the work that I'm doing for my next book, which is really exciting to me 'cause I don't think a book like this exists in the way it should. I'm gonna be pivoting my attention more to that. Is this the last podcast that I'll ever create? No. I've highly doubted. I might decide to start a brand new podcast in a couple of months.

I don't know. But as for this podcast, we're done. What it is finished [00:24:00] Must finish strong, yeah, I think it's the right time to lay professional troublemaker down. It's a new day, it's a new dawn, and what my assignment is in this season is different, and that's always good to also know. Remember that your assignment doesn't always have to stay the same.

You just have to recognize when it's done as opposed to forcing it or staying in seasons that have expired. So yeah. But before I go to make sure you stay connected with me. Make sure you subscribe to my Love letter. That's my newsletter that I send out weekly. That's how I stay connected with my audience.

'cause this, these algorithms are raggedy. Okay? How you sign up for that, you go to love letter.com. L-U-V-V-L-E-T-T-E-R. You know I'd be on social. I'm @Luvvie everywhere. And if you are not already on the Book Academy wait list and you wanna write a book one day, what are you even doing?

Come on, go on it. It's the [00:25:00] book academy.com. But yeah, this is the final episode of Professional Troublemaker, the podcast after seven years. Thank you all for writing with me. Thank you for listening to this podcast. Thank you for showing it. Love. Seven years has been incredible. I have had some great conversations on this platform. I have really enjoyed. This leg of my work, it has been a pleasure to hold this space and for y'all to join me.

So let's continue to do better, be better, and thrive. Stay disruptive. Peace, y'all.