**FYS-166-Why Launch an Online Course imperfectly Julie Duffy**

Hi, it's Tap Hornor thanks for tuning into the For Your Success Podcast an inspirational program about creating the lifestyle and legacy impact you want to have. Your host today is a Christian author speaker business coach, and program development expert who will help you design grow, and delight in doing business as worship because that is true success and now here's my lovely wife Katie Hornor.

Katie: Welcome in my friends I'm excited to have you meet our guest today Julie Duffy is an author and a coach for writers over at Story A Day. Org. And she's got some exciting stuff to share with us about how she does her launches in the next part of this special series on launching your course or high ticket offer. So, Julie welcome to the show I’m so excited to have you here.

Julie: Thanks for having me Katie it’s great to be here.

Katie: Tell us a little bit we already said you work with writers you work with authors and so when we think of launching, we think of email copy, we think of sales copy. We think of things like that it surely it comes easy to you.

Julie: No, it doesn't come easy to anyone, in fact, it's almost harder I think when you pride yourself on being a writer because then you want to get it right. But the best thing that I've learned in my journey as a writer is that doesn't have to be right on the first attempt it so rarely is. And it's funny because the work I do with authors is very similar to what we do, you know, as entrepreneurs, just working through that mindset and permitting yourself to write the imperfect version first, and just whatever comes out, comes out.

So yeah, it can be paralyzing to think about all the things you have to do it's the same with writing a novel like it's like a mammoth task and there are all these moving parts. This thing's got to support the next thing got to support the next thing and it can be overwhelming. And that's the point where you just either freeze or run away and a lot of writers have very sharp pencils have very clear desks and very empty refrigerators.

So because we're all doing the fight or flight thing.

Katie: Right, right and that's part of your why, right? The why behind what you do. Tell us more about those empty refrigerators the transformation you get for your writers.

Julie: Yeah if you've got the urge to do something a desire to do something it's part of you and it's part of being the person you're meant to be. And if we're constantly avoiding it because it's hard which it is you know, whatever you're trying to do that is bringing you to a better version of yourself it's always hard. And so we have that fight or flight response and we avoid it I thought my work with authors I don't quite know what I thought it was going to be. I was just a writer and I wanted to encourage myself to write more, but it's turned out to be a lot of reminding people that this is something they love and that they're better when they're doing the thing that they know they're meant to be doing. When they're being honest with themselves, when they're tackling the difficult stuff and just coaching them through those moments of discomfort which is probably very much like what you do.

Katie: Yes, yes very much.

Julie: Because you know, I mean, there's nothing, there's nothing worse than knowing you have something to give and then like tamping it down and being less than you could be.

Katie: Yes it reminded me of something that my dad said quite frequently growing up is that anything worth doing is worth doing poorly until you can do it well.

Julie: I see

Katie: Right and it's that idea of mastery like we don't ever start as masters we all start as students and we have to work towards the mastery, which is over and over and over again.

Julie: I think you were lucky to have a father who said that.

Katie: I think I was too so tell us about one of your launches that stands out the most in your mind as like the one you struggled through what was the biggest struggle with that particular launch? And how did you overcome it? We're looking for nuggets here that we can take away and, say, oh, if she tried that, I wonder if I could try that as well?

 Julie: It was probably the first one I did when I decided to get serious after we probably met at an event and the one after that when I really realized there was a way to do this and that I could be professional and charge real money and get real help. And that was the tough part for me that was the biggest one I think one of the best things I did is I surround myself with other people who were doing it and people who were much further ahead of me and people who were on the same page as me. People who haven't done anything yet and within that community, and also within my group of people who I was already helping in a little way. And, when I would talk to people about what I want to do and see them get excited. And there was one person in particular who I met I was talking to her about what I wanted to do and she was just like yes, please let me join this. And I was like, but I'm going to raise my prices and I mean she was like I don't care let me join this.

I went okay that was a huge boost just talking to people as a writer, writers tend to be pretty comfortable in our own company. I won't say we're all antisocial introverts, but we're pretty comfortable by ourselves. And it has been a huge revelation to me to realize the importance of community in everything we do from, you know, business to even writing, you know, nobody publishes a book alone, nobody writes a book alone, really so for this, and for launching, just being able to reach out and asking for help was the biggest thing.

Katie: Yeah, and the community seems to be coming up again and again, we just did a recent interview with Erin Harrington and I'll put that episode link in the show notes for you guys, but Erin was talking about the importance of community as well needing those people to surround you, who believe in you, who understand what you're talking about and don't look at you like you got four heads when you're talking through business numbers or something like that. Right, and it's so important both to like you said, to have the people that are further ahead, as well as those that are coming along because we're meant to be a channel. One of my clients cracks me up every time she says it, but she says we're meant to be the red sea, not the dead sea.

 Right. We're meant to have it flow in and flow out, not just keep accumulating and receiving, but also to be receiving and to be giving, and in community, you have that opportunity and it grows you on both sides. Right? That’s so, so important.

Julie: And I think it's sometimes a hard lesson for people who are striving to be good at what they do to allow yourself the humility to say, it's okay to ask for help. You know, it's okay to say, I don't know what I'm doing in this aspect of this thing that I'm doing and I bet somebody at, you know, you don't have to be the smartest person in the room it's such a relief.

Katie: Yeah. I was just reading a book recently talking about how in schools so often we're taught that we need to, we need to get the A in the level of every subject, we need to get 100% we gotta be at the top of our class in every area. But in real life, that's not the way it is in real life you embrace the thing you're good at and you hire out or get help with the other things that you're not good at.

Julie: That’s such a difficult lesson to learn.

Katie: And it's, I think it's so important to you know, to, to be, to be teaching our kids, our communities, our students, our clients, everyone, like it's okay to not be good at something, and in the community you can find the person who is, and you can help each other.

Julie: Yeah. I mean, you look at anyone who excels in their field they're probably not that well-rounded a person, you know, they're probably not good at the thing you do thinking about who is the swimmer guy who won all those medals? Michael Phelps. And you know I don't think that he is going to be writing any stories he had a rough transition when he stopped being extremely focused on the one thing that he was good at because that was like at Olympic level. We don't have to go that far, but if you want to, if you want to be good at something, some things have to, you have to say no to some other things. Yeah.

Katie: What are some of the things you feel like you're good at in launching?

Julie: That's an uncomfortable question for someone who was brought up in Britain what are you good at? However, I have lived in America for a while. So let me channel that. I think what surprised me is I'm good at putting people at their ease. I'm good at creating community and bringing together nice people, you know, supportive people. I think setting that tone and saying, this is what you're coming into.

So although it was very weird for me as a writer to be doing video at first, I discovered that by doing video and by doing appearances like this, or calls directly with people or group coaching calls, people could see, they could see themselves in this group and they could see themselves in me and it made them much more comfortable and it seems to attract the right kind of people to my group. So I think putting, putting together a cool group and setting an example of we are here to be supportive of each other and, you know, just sort of gently setting the example that there's no room for meanness in my group. Honesty sure meanness not so much so, I think that works, and I think my personality comes through in my writing and in my videos and stuff.

So I think that's the thing that people want I sometimes read people's copy when they're asking for help with launches and it's very clinical. And again, I think this goes back to education as well we're taught to strip out all the personality from everything we do to fit into the mold of traditional schooling. And I don't think it serves us ever especially not in the real world.

Katie: We are taught to be transactional and I think people these days want to work with a person not a company.

Julie: Yeah we also had to be very polished and professional and no I think they want to work with people they like, and it's okay for your 5th grade English teacher to go and rest in your memory now. It doesn't matter if your grammar is perfect if you spell a word wrong I do stuff like that. And I always prided myself you know I've sent out emails with typos in them and you know, sometimes someone will call me up on it and I just send an email back going, oh yeah great thanks. The more human you are I think the better.

Katie: I love that be human to help humans right?

Julie: Yeah, and admit when you make mistakes I think that's something I'm pretty good at now. I think I had to learn that. I don't think I was good at it when I was a kid, but now I'm very quick to admit if I make a mistake and, you know, joke about it or ask for help or apologize. And ask for help fixing it you know, I think just honesty and being human to help human I love that I may steal that.

Katie: So how long do you ramp up to your next launch? Like I know a little bit about your background, so that, that may be where this question is coming from, but I know most of us to launch bigger things a few times a year. What’s the sort of runway or the ramp-up to your launches? What does that look like for you in terms of what you're doing how far in advance?

Julie: I'm getting better I'm very much the kind of person who sorts of leaps and throws the parachute on the way down. So it used to be very sketchy and very last minute, but I'm realizing that the energy I get from the chaos is not necessarily good energy. And it doesn't mean that it's not a long-term solution so I'm getting better I'm you know following the plan these days I send out my shot across the bow. I mean I've got an I've got a challenge that's a fixture on the rating community in me so people know that's coming, but there are other things that I launch and people don't necessarily know that along with the challenge I'm going to be opening up my membership. And, there's a course 6-week course that I open up two or three times a year so for those things, in particular, I follow the plan.

You know, I get the shot across the bow probably about a month in advance I have my emails queued up before open cart which is usually a week (1) long because I feel like my people need a little longer to get used to the idea of some people can do like a three (3) day open cart. My people, it's not a field where people are used to spending money like this you know like they need a minute to get comfortable with it. So, I have my cart open for about a week so I'll usually do an email every other day for the week before that. And now that I'm using, I've kind of got into a groove so for the past two or three launches, I've taken the emails from the launch before and just tweak them a little.

So I’m not constantly reinventing which is lovely because even you know, for a writer I do love to write, but like that creative process of putting all that emotion and getting everything in the right place is exhausting. So it's kind of nice to have the base message and flow and then I just get to tweak the intros or, you know, and I'll, I'll see how it's going and out when I do my if I resend to people who haven't opened the emails. I'll kind of judge the mood of the weekend I might change that intro paragraph on the day so a lot of it's in place now ahead of time.

Katie: And how many launches have you done to get there?

Julie: Well, I launched an email course back in 2011 when I first, discovered this world I did that twice and then nothing seriously again until about 2018. Then I did my membership launch has been twice a year since then my course I've launched four times I think and I launched a 3-day challenge which was the paid product which I gave a big splashy launch and then I sort of quickly put on the evergreen on the end of my welcome sequence. So I launched a lot and in the last 3 years, I've launched a lot not as much as you.

Katie: Yeah, that’s like sixteen (16) times, and I want our listeners to pick up on this right? We're not talking about someone who's done this once. Like if you're going to be a master at something it takes doing it again this is how she has the email copy to be able to go back and retool and tweak for the next time is because she wrote it and then she tweaked it and then she tweaked it and now she's tweaking it again right. And so I think that's super important.

Julie: Oh to be honest I wrote it and then I rewrote it the next year I didn't keep track of anything that I'd sent out. I couldn't find the copy I would say, please keep track of everything, just name things carefully or after the launch, take some time to gather all your supplies.

Katie: And all the data

Julie: And put them all somewhere so that you can find it again.

Katie: Yeah

Julie: You're not going to want to think about it after the launch, but just scoop it all up and put it in a folder somewhere that makes sense. So that next time you don't have to do what I did, which was rewrite it all from scratch and like discover the story what's this year’s story? It doesn't need to be a different story every year. So this spring when I launched was probably my calmest launch ever, but it was what I had two years of intensively launching, including launching this product four times before that. So yeah it’s okay if it doesn’t go perfectly the first time.

Katie: I love that it's okay if it doesn't go perfectly and keep launching keep doing it.

Julie: You learn so much by actually doing it I mean, it's hard to do the first one because you think it's got to be perfect or it's just nerve-wracking and there's so much, and you don't know what you're doing. And then you know, as you're doing it, you're like, oh, okay, well, that was interesting oh, now I understand what they mean when they say to tell this part of the story like you don't understand that until you're doing. In fact, I say this to people with writing stories as well a lot of people in the writing world are fine with starting stories, but they don't finish them my whole challenge is to finish a story every day because there's such power in finishing something.

You don't really know what a thing is until you've got to the end of it and it's as true with a launch as it is with a story it's when you get to the end. And when you're like two weeks out after the launch and you've got people in your group and you're like now I can see the whole story. I understand the whole journey I see what I was doing and, you're never going to get that unless you have done the thing and see it through at some point you're going to not want to, and you're going to reach out to your community and you're going to say I open cart tomorrow and I don't want to, and they're going to say do it anyway.

Katie: Yep, yep.

Julie: Have you ever cried during a launch, Katie?

Katie: When have I not cried during a launch? I tell my mastermind clients I think I quit about once a month sometimes more frequently. And then I have a good cry and sleep it off and come back and start again tomorrow. Right? You just….

Julie: And then someone sends you a lovely email out of nowhere saying how much, you know, what you do means to them and how much, you know, how much better their life is and how their kids, you know, are so happy to see them doing whatever and, it's all worth it.

Katie: Yeah, yeah it totally is thank you so much for being here any parting advice for our listeners and their next launch?

Julie: I think I mean the mindset stuff is key don't forget about the part that comes after the launch like the moment that your customer hits the buy button is the moment when they are most freaked out. And if you can step in and make them feel super comfortable do it like you think if you're in Katie's world, you know you're used to people sending out swag packets and saying, thank you and being nice because that's the people who are around you, but not everyone does that. I mean how many businesses do you interact with where they actually contact you and say thank you for your business? Sincerely. So send them a little video message I’ve started doing that sending out little video messages just to say are you joining great if you have any questions let me know.

Even people who've known me for years love it because it makes them feel so special and it takes 40 seconds. So don't forget to make your customer feel happy to surprise them I send postcards occasionally out of nowhere and just make people feel special because they are, and your content going to be good because you’re going to work hard to make your content good. You’re going to work hard to make your content good, but if you can make them love you and make them comfortable, it gives you a little more wiggle room you know. You don't have to be world-class you just have to be their person and it gives you a little more room to make mistakes. I think if you can do those little human things to make people feel comfortable, so you're going to be tired and it's hard to find the energy to do that.

So I tend to write the postcards beforehand, in fact, oh, I had one sitting here, but there's a postcard. I'll just write the message on the postcards before I even get any extra open cart saying thanks for joining looking forward to spending the year with you. And I leave a space for their name at the top I don't know whose name is going to go on it and then as the orders come in, I can write the name on it and I can stick it in an envelope with a little sticker and a pin and, you know, and then send them all out.

So it's just doing things that make it easy for yourself to be your best self, you know, to make people feel as special as you want them to feel and you'd be surprised how few people do that.

Katie: That's an amazing trip

Julie: Save some energy for that, or plan ahead of time.

Katie: Yeah and now I love that we have a whole module in our successful online courses program about the experience, right? And about making your people feel loved because as a teacher, I know you're not going to learn if you don't feel safe and loved right? And there's something psychological that just won't allow that learning to happen. So the experience is just as important as whatever it is that you're teaching them. And I love that.

Julie: And you know they're going to feel so good about you they're going to recommend you to people and it's, you know, it's just, it's a circle of awesome.

Katie and Julie cross-talking (20:11)

Katie: Awesome well Julie thank you so much for being here Story A Day. Org guys, if you want to connect with Julie and we'll have all of those links in the show notes as well. Thank you again for being with us.

Julie: Thanks, and thanks for everything you do.

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