

#55: The Quality of Your Ideas  
Hailey Thomas

Hailey Thomas:

Hi and welcome to this episode of One Year From Now. So this is going to be a pretty short episode. I just wanted to ask a question that has been on my mind lately, because I can see the difference in the revenue of my business, the difference in when I'm bringing on new clients and not has everything to do with the quality of the solutions I provide and the time I spend in my business. So the life things that are happening are just corona fatigue, quarantine fatigue, husband working very often, he has a little bit of a strange schedule so all of the home things fall on me and when things like busted pipes happen or things like just the things happening at our son's school, all of those things typically fall on me and to be completely candid, I'm a very productive person, but I also have a fairly low capacity for the number of things I can take on at once.

Hailey Thomas:

How I got good at saying no is from being exhausted all of the time, so I keep the capacity for the number of things I do fairly small. And so what I have noticed is that when I am doing too many things or feeling stressed at home, or any number of things that are happening, the quality of my work can suffer, if I don't pay attention to it and focus on keeping the quality high, even if it means that I need to do less things and uncommon to some things, to keep quality higher. I think this is important, or this works, because revenue is a result of the value that you provide others. So again, just to be clear, I'm not talking about your value as a human. I think I've talked about that in the past. It's not about your value as a human, because that is not on the table for discussion. The quality of that, that's not on the table.

Hailey Thomas:

But the value that your business provides to other people in your niche or who you serve, that can be measured by revenue. So I think you can see it in a couple ways, right? In a business model, if you have something that costs very little and solves a smaller problem, and you work on solving that problem for more people or you work with fewer people and solve very important problems for them, then the revenue is higher per client. But it's always a reflection on the value of the solution, the quality of the solution, how well you solve that problem, even if it's a small problem. I think often of elastic rubber bands that we put on our hair. Considering all of the world's problems, keeping my hair out of my face is a small, small problem, but it solves that problem so effectively. Elastics are everywhere and multiple brands make them and the quality, it's a high quality solution.

Hailey Thomas:

So what I want you to think about this week is simply what is the quality of the solutions that I create? What is the quality of the time that I spend in my business? So just to give you a couple of examples, these are the ways in which I can see my quality. The times I've noticed the quality of my work lower and the quality of my work higher, the tasks themselves don't really change, but what I can tell is when revenue changes or when I'm regularly having clients come in versus not, it's about the quality. So having a podcast is not what's valuable. Posting on social media is not what's valuable. Going to networking events is not what's valuable. None of those things are valuable to your customers or to your clients.

Hailey Thomas:

What is valuable is the solutions that those vehicles carry. So my podcast, in and of itself, is not valuable. There are, I think, at this point, 1.5 million podcasts, right? So there are lots of podcasts and there are lots of business podcasts, but I work very hard on making sure the quality of the solution that each episode provides is as high as I can make it. Same thing with posting on social media, same thing with showing up to networking events. Really what is valuable is the connections that are being forged, the small solutions that are being created and a solution isn't solving all of their life's hopes and dreams. A solution can be, you show up at a networking event and you meet someone and in conversation, they also mention that they need a dog sitter and you happen to live in the same town as them and know one, that you think is great, and make a recommendation.

Hailey Thomas:

That's a quality solve for them. It could be with a social media post you know that in certain times and in certain places, that your audience is feeling very vulnerable and afraid and so you share some of your story to help bolster their creativity and give them energy and confidence that maybe they can do it too. Those are thoughtful quality solutions that you can provide and create that are small, but they are high quality because they actually solve a problem. They actually do something for your clients or customers, the people that you serve. So remember, it's the quality inside of these different vehicles that matters. So I can tell, and I have the wherewithal at this point, to be able to ask myself, "Wow, am I going through the motions of getting my podcast produced, of just getting online and sharing just because I'm supposed to or am I taking the time to think about the quality of what I'm putting out there?"

Hailey Thomas:

And another note, when I say quality, I don't mean production value. I don't mean is this the best photo I've ever taken? Mainly because I'm not a photographer, right? So that's not an important part of the solutions that I provide to my clients. They're a part, production is

a part of it, but it's not about having the perfect Instagram grid or amazing, picture-perfect photos, or even having the words right. Having the copy just so, does this solve a problem for them in a high quality way, in a complete way, in a way that serves them, that is for them? Does it create a connection between me and them? That's high quality versus low quality is, "Well, I need clients and so I'm going to post this thing," and focusing on yourself, or just going through the motions. And again, just like everything else I've talked about in the podcast, the last several weeks, sometimes you will just be going through the motions.

Hailey Thomas:

Sometimes it is just about working and building up your consistency and building your voice and working on building your marketing arm, your marketing muscles. That is a part of it, but I want you to notice the times in which you're focusing on yourself and then the times in which you're focusing on your customers or your clients, the people that you serve. So it's not really about the task. It truly is about the quality. The other thing to note of quality is how are you spending your time thinking about your business? Are you having quality thoughts, high quality thoughts about your business? So it's taking the time to do self-examination, it's devoting time to thinking, what do I think is true about me as a service provider? What do I think is true about my clients right now? What are the things that are going to stop me from being successful and providing them with solutions?

Hailey Thomas:

What are the thoughts that I'm thinking currently about them, about me, about my offer? What are those and how is it going to either help or not help me? What are my thoughts about sales? What are my thoughts about marketing? What are my thoughts about my craft? What are my thoughts about the way I deliver it? What do I actually think? Not examining those creates lower quality solutions. Examining those and giving yourself space and time to do so and thinking that's an important part of my work creates higher quality solutions, higher quality connections, higher quality content when you create it. Same thing about asking questions about your clients and about your customers.

Hailey Thomas:

So this is something that I don't think enough business owners spend enough time thinking deeply about, especially early on when you're just trying to get yourself situated and get your messaging out the door and starting the practice of connecting with people and being able to get the confidence to say, "Hey, I can help you. I can serve you." The next step of that is asking questions about your clients. Where are they getting stuck? If you don't know, find out. What don't they see or understand about their transformation? You don't know, find out. There are small solves. There are big solves there. And you

don't have to have all the answers. They're not going to come in one, five minute thinking session between clients. It's your job to create time for yourself, to create high quality solutions for your clients. Even if again, the solve is small. So I remember in a coaching community that I'm a part of, one of the women noticed, she's a postpartum coach, a pregnancy and postpartum life coach, and she had noticed that right after women gave birth, there was this drop in their commitment to showing up for coaching.

Hailey Thomas:

And she went to town in her mind to think about why is that? What's going on? What are they most nervous about? And it was part asking, but also just thinking, really thinking, and part of the solution, as simple as it was, was just, it needs to be in the setup of their coaching agreement that first of all, we don't meet the first week after you give birth. And then after that, the three meetings after that are just via phone call because moms are having a really hard time getting situated on Zoom when they're brand new mothers, which is who she coached. So it's solutions like that that make the quality of what you offer and the quality of solutions you provide, better, higher quality. The last thing I want to talk about is the quality of the battery that runs the business.

Hailey Thomas:

Hint, hint, that's you. So I want you to think about how you, not as a human, but as the battery of your business, the quality of the battery matters too, which means are you taking care of yourself to the best of your current ability in your circumstances? Are you hydrated? Are you feeding yourself? Are you sleeping the best that you can? Are you getting whatever social interaction that you can based off of what you need? Are you resting? Are you finding pleasure and enjoyment in your life outside of work? The quality of the battery matters too. Okay, so the last thing that I want to say is probably what you're thinking right now, which is, "Hailey, this sounds great and I'm so glad that you brought this to my attention, but what the fuck am I supposed to do now?" And my answer to that would be, "This starts a question."

Hailey Thomas:

So what I want you to do, you literally can just list on a piece of paper, the pieces of your business. And by that, I mean, if you have a podcast, write podcast, if you're on Instagram, write Instagram, if you're on LinkedIn, write LinkedIn, if you have a blog, if you do networking events, and those are all mainly marketing activities, but also your one-on-one coaching, if you're a one-on-one coach, any projects that you manage. Put yourself as the battery. List the pieces of your business and for each of them, I just want you to ask the question, "On a scale of one to 10, how would I rate the quality of this piece?" 10 being it's amazing and nothing needs to change. One being it's a dumpster fire. Quality's not very good at all. I wouldn't buy this. I would not engage with this.

Hailey Thomas:

So the first thing you need to remember is that when you're doing a scaled response, just write down whatever your brain's first thought is because it's going to have a first number and then it's going to be like, "Well, it should actually be this." Just write down the first number. Do not judge your answers. And the second thing is once your brain supplies you with an answer, just ask, "Why? Why this number?" And write it down, just see what thoughts are there. You might think, "Well, this and this are good, but actually I can do this better." That's going to create a higher quality solution. The last question of that... So the questions are, "On a scale of one to 10, how would I rate the quality of this piece?" The second question is, "Why?" The third question is just, "What would it take to make it a 10?" and see what your brain comes up with?

Hailey Thomas:

Take the time to do this and see truly what the quality of your work is right now, and be willing to move it up. And again, you don't need to swing it all the way to a 10, but what is it going to take for you just to move it up one number? What's that going to look like? And then focus your time and attention on those things and it makes everything better and then all the lagging indicators like revenue, getting more referrals, all of those things come when you are focused on the quality of the solution that you provide. So my last note here is that this episode, and even asking yourself the scale of one to 10 questions, are not so that you can beat yourself up and your quality is going to fluctuate often, just because your quality fluctuates based off of life happenings, based off of you pivoting in your business and you're learning the answers to these questions.

Hailey Thomas:

You are not to use this as a weapon against yourself, as a thing to say, "Well, two months ago, I was a seven, but now I think it's a four and oh no, I must be not a good coach anymore or not a good designer anymore," or whatever. All it is is a tool to help you see what is right now and a way for you to help your brain walk forward one step. What does it take to increase it to one more point forward? One number higher? The quality, as you measure it, is going to fluctuate and that's okay. The goal is just to continue to focus on the quality of time you spend in your business and the quality of solutions that you provide. Okay, have a wonderful week. I will see you on next week's episode.

Hailey Thomas:

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