

## Episode 104: Lessons from a Zero Dollar Launch



### One Year from Now

With your host,  
[Hailey Thomas](#)

## Episode 104: Lessons from a Zero Dollar Launch

There's no right way for growing an online business and honestly, me and my guests are more than fine with that. I'm Hailey Thomas, and this is the podcast that lets you be a fly on the wall for candid conversations and mini lessons through a variety of online entrepreneurs who are growing their businesses based on their own visions. We are on a mission to normalize and laugh about the behind-the-scenes truth of achieving a new level of success in your business. This is One Year from Now.

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00:48

Hello, hello, welcome to this episode of the podcast. I have a nice, short episode for you. At least I think it'll be short on this end of recording, I might have more to say than I think I do. We'll see. But I have a short episode planned for you. This episode is about the \$0 launch that I had in March. Cue gasps, cue pearl clutches. An internet person, a business coach, talking about not just a low launch, a \$0 launch. So, a couple of weeks ago, I held a live session— You'll be listening to this probably middle or end of April. About two or three weeks ago, I held a live session and invited my email list and the audience have on Instagram to come and I basically held a masterclass on how I created the result of a \$0 launch.

01:50

And I did this, and I'm talking about this, for a couple reasons. One, I'm bringing this to you on the podcast because several of you wanted to come and couldn't get the time right or it just didn't work for your schedule, and because I wanted to keep the conversation open and candid for myself and for all that participated, I'm not making the recording of that public. So, this episode is a recap of the biggest learnings, my biggest takeaways, and some of the things that we shared in that conversation, but I'm not sharing that particular conversation publicly. I am sharing it with my Residents in cohort one, so they have that, but not publicly, I'm not publicly making that available.

02:34

The other reason I'm sharing this and having this conversation is for you and for me, personally. I experienced such significant transformation from this failure and I want to— I mean, I'll talk about how much I evaluated it and talked through it and cried through it and all the emotions that I feel, but I want to encapsulate this moment of my career. I want to capture this via the podcast, like I capture most things via the podcast, because I can see it so significantly as an inflection point to my growth and to the success that I know I'm going to have later. So, for me, part of this is just chronicling this experience, but also for you.

03:24

You are in business, right? You read variations of— I'll call it "success porn," where it's lots of stories about overnight successes and \$100k launches and varying levels of stories about people being very, very successful. I come across fewer stories— and to be fair, I love those stories. I love them. Sometimes, they really keep me pushing forward and are inspirational. And this is not to say like, "Those stories are BS," because like, I had \$100,000 launch my very first launch of this product. So, like, it happens, it absolutely does. People create that result, and I love those stories, but I want to also share the stories of \$0 launches, because they're just as important. And I think they end up being more

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profitable in terms of what is learned than successful launches. I truly believe that, so I'm sharing this to chronicle it for myself.

04:23

I'm also sharing it for you, for your growth, that you might take from it not, "How do I avoid the fate that Hailey succumbed to?" It's not that. It's that I want you to have what I have, which right now, on this side of it. zero doubt that I'll be making a million dollars sooner than later. And zero doubt that I am capable of transversing any amount of doubt, failure, chaos, failed plans, like, I can manage my emotions through all of that. I can manage my businesses through all of that. And it is a blow to my ego, perhaps, but certainly not a blow to my self-concept as a successful entrepreneur. And because all those things are so sturdy and so rooted in place, it doesn't feel good, that's for sure. But it also is not ruinous to my credibility, to me financially, to the business or that model. And we're gonna get into it, but I just want to be an example of what is also possible, not just \$100k launches, but also \$0 launches.

05:36

I think the thing that— and again, we'll get into this— that I want to hit home before we start, is responsibility. Very often, we use responsibility against ourselves. Like, the concept of being responsible, it usually means that you are in trouble. But I love responsibility, or agency might be a better way to say this. The biggest thing that this launch has done for me, is allowed me to truly be responsible for myself and for my business and for my own success in ways that— I'm pretty much about radical responsibility, and pretty much thinking, "How did I co-create this result? How did this happen?" But this just added so much depth. When I asked myself, "How did I create the result of a \$0 launch of a product that already has done 100k?" After five years of being in entrepreneurship, I've cashed in-hand over half a million dollars at this point. I've had, I think six business ventures at this point that I have started, sold, continued to run, closed down. Like, I am not new to entrepreneurship, I'm not new to online business. And so, the idea that this would happen to me, versus I created this result is like, that's just not how that works, right?

06:59

On the same, kind of the same side of that coin, if I am to take responsibility for my failures, then I had better also take responsibility for my successes. So, this failure has also allowed me to see, "Oh, I also created all of the results that I had, they did not magically happen to me. I didn't, as a fluke, create half a million dollars over the last five years. I didn't, as a fluke, successfully sell these businesses." None of this was an accident. And again, all of this, the responsibility, adds so much richness and so much agency to my entrepreneurial experience, because I'm not like, "I don't know how that happened. I don't know if I can do it again." No, I know how I failed. And I know how I've succeeded, which means I can do it again. And this is the level that sounds good, but like if you truly believe that, the whole world is yours truly. When you really believe that you create all of your results, the ones you want and the ones you don't want, and you have the tools to be able to comb through those results and figure out how you created them, so you can make more, you have the building blocks to every entrepreneurial venture you ever want to create, ever.

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08:21

Because I know you're listening to this podcast, the one you're working on now is not the only one you're gonna want to build, whatever you're working on now. You have ideas and visions, and all of those things. And the sooner you get truly, deeply grounded in, "I can create whatever I want. I have the emotional resilience to withstand any amount of failure publicly, personally, large, small. I have the tools that I need to learn how to replicate success, and I know how to evaluate failure." Like, you have everything you need to build whatever you want for the rest of your life. And this failure for me only further proved that.

09:07

So, this is why I'm recording this episode. I guess before I get into my big three things, big three learnings, I want to say the reasons that were not associated with this failure. My marketing was off. It was not the price. This is a \$20,000 offering. It was not the marketing. It was not the price. It was not my email copy. It wasn't any of those things. And I know that because (A.) again, this is a product that has already sold. So, I know that the marketing, because it was similar to the first round of marketing first of all, looked great. It sounded great. I know it works because it has worked in the past and again, I'm not new to entrepreneurship. So, I might question my marketing, the effectiveness of my marketing, if this was like, the first thing I've ever sold, except I've been spending the last five years selling things, making lots of money, and living off that money for five years. So, I know that's not it.

10:05

I have sold, in terms of pricing, everything from a— I think the least expensive thing that I currently sell amongst my portfolio of businesses is a \$50 offering, a \$500 offering, a \$5,000 offering. The Residency is \$20,000. And I sell \$30,000 one-off coaching. So, I know that I can sell anything, at any price point. So, it also wasn't the price. And the reason I'm going over this is because it came up a little bit in the group, the live session, like, I think the way the person, they worded it much better or more clearly than what I was going to say, but they asked like, "How much time did you spend thinking the offering was out of alignment? Thinking that maybe the product or the offer wasn't something people wanted? The pricing was off or the way you marketed it was off?" And my answer to her was, "Very little, very little time. I'm quite good at this," right? I'm quite good at positioning and packaging and selling, and so I didn't spend a lot of time. Obviously— not maybe it's not obvious, but time reviewing it, absolutely, always look at those things. But in terms of like, freaking myself out and trying to psych myself out, like those were the problems. The data that I have suggests that none of that was the actual issue because if it was, then I wouldn't have sold as much of this product, sold as much of other products at varying price points for that to be true.

11:37

So, if it wasn't all of those things, what was it? There's kind of a two-part answer here. One was the belief that I had that, at the time, again, I'd already sold round one, we'd kicked off the first round of The Residency, the first cohort, but I was having thoughts about it being a fluke and, "No one's gonna buy this again. Or maybe they will, I hope they do. It's so good. The residents are learning so much. Kickoff is already worth what they've invested. This is so good. I hope other people see it too." Hope is not a good business strategy. There was a lot of hoping happening, and not me grounding in what I know to be true now; who this is for, why it's for them, exactly why they should start now, and a lot of hoping.

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So, I had, let's say one hand on the business trying to like, shove it forward with like, hope and like, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe this happened." Because like, successfully launching a group program, like, that part is a new experience for me. And so, part of my brain didn't believe that we actually did it at that time.

12:50

And so, one hand on the business, hoping and kind of shoving it forward. And then, I have all these other things happening in my personal life that I'm sorted and being supported with and getting help with. Changes in our large-scale family dynamic, changes in my faith community, changes in my health that I'm addressing, but I was resisting that those needed space for me to explore them. I guess the best analogy, like you all can't see me obviously, but I've got one hand kind of facing forward, like that as the hope and kind of like pushing on my business. And then, I had one hand facing backwards behind me, trying to be like, "No, no, life stuff, just be cool. You can handle it, Hailey, just be cool." And resisting the space that that needed in my calendar, the brain space that I needed, right? And like, these are things I talk to my clients about. So, I guess one thing for you all is, there is no version of like, "And yes, I am the coach that knows every single thing and I never do anything wrong," like no, I still have a very human brain, which means I'm constantly needing to like, evaluate my own shit. I'm constantly needing to continue to grow in managing my own mind. And so, I had the split resources where it was just a lot of resistance on all sides, and not groundedness.

14:18

And I think even as pragmatic as I am, like people feel that. They experience the resistance that we are experiencing, or the hesitation that we are experiencing. People don't respond when we're waiting for them to validate us, right? It's a little bit like, I got on a friend, because one of her things is: people in the world, society, doesn't take her work seriously. Her partner doesn't take her work seriously. And I was like, "My love, the call is coming from inside the house. Here are the ways in which you're not really taking your work seriously. You're not really validating yourself." The world just reflects to us what we think about our work and how grounded we are in what the offer is, and especially as it comes to coaching. You, really— I won't say you can't, but it is really challenging, actually, to sell at a high level of coaching when you are not in integrity with yourself and your work. So, like, if you're asking your clients to believe in themselves and to challenge themselves, and to give themselves the resources they need, but you are with one arm, stiff-arming your own needs and not believing yourself when you say you need this space and like, not showing up for yourself like, that's out of integrity. Or you are questioning your offer and then asking people to validate your offer by buying it like, that's out of integrity, not of lockstep, if you will. So, that was more of the challenge.

15:51

And yes, are there better Instagram strategies and better marketing strategies and better emails I could have sent? Probably. I'm not going to be like, "Yes, everything was perfect." No, probably, but when you are launching a product or selling anything, you don't need complete perfection, what you need is presence. And my presence was so divided, that that was evident, and energetically, is what people were engaging with. So, even if people were like, "This is so cool, and this is so amazing." And I really want that. One of the pieces of feedback, I will just be super candidate that I got was like, "Yes, this is on my bucket list," right? So, there's a distance to bucket list items than there are things of, "I'm ready

to start now." And it's a little bit like the distance in which I was holding my own needs at, right? It was out of integrity in that way.

16:41

So, here's some things that I found after the \$0 launch. One that I'm very proud of is: seeing how far my own emotional resilience had come. So, towards the end of the launch, just filled with like, disappointment and embarrassment and feeling shameful and impatient and panicky. But that didn't last very long. Meaning, I didn't keep like, spiraling on it, I didn't make it mean that I was not going to be successful ever again. I was able to identify and experience those emotions in a way that, again, took me a week, week and a half. It wasn't like, "I just feel better now." Like, it took some time. And I cried and asked for support from my peers and support from my mentors. But the resilience there that was built up was part of the reason why, once I was through kind of the bigger parts of those emotions, I was like, "Oh, this is ripe with learnings, ripe with takeaways for me." So, I was really excited about the resilience, really excited about seeing that resistance that I shared. Those were the two like, first big boulders that were on Earth.

17:58

I also realized, this kind of goes in lockstep with this idea of radical responsibility, I really saw how strong my resource management skills are. So, when I say resource management skills, what I mean is my ability as a CEO, that I've developed over time, or as an entrepreneur, truly as an entrepreneur that I've developed over time, to look at all of the things I have in my backpack, everything available to me, and from that create whatever I want. So, my biggest asset, my coaching businesses, of my portfolio, my largest asset just had a \$0 month where we thought it was going to be a six-figure, multi-six-figure month, what do we do? Because we still have to run the business and that costs money, right? So, my ability to tap into—and it piggybacks off the emotional resilience— but like, because I wasn't shut down in shame for very long I could get to work to like, solve the problems. Or if there are any cashflow issues, or, "Oh, right, we have savings for that." Like, re-evaluating what spending needs to happen or not, changing...

19:13

You know, when I say resources, I mean time, money, like vendors, contracts, like all sorts of things. All of it is a resource to create what I want. And what I wanted was to like, have my business be continuing to run, right? It wasn't like, "I didn't do this launch, so now we just panic because there was no money." Like, no, radical responsibility would have me look at all the resources. What needs to happen now? What do you need next? What's just the next thing? And so, seeing myself like, again, have a really challenging emotional experience, allowing myself to pass through it without rushing, and I didn't try to solve for that first maybe two and a half weeks. Definitely a week and a half, probably closer to two weeks, maybe two and a half weeks, where I was not making myself responsible for solving business problems. I do not solve business problems when I am feeling like, deep senses of like, misery or shame or disappointment or embarrassment, because at that point, my decisions are just to alleviate those emotions. They're not actually sound business decisions, they're just decisions to alleviate feeling badly. And so, I wasn't able to— I don't want to say I wasn't able to think clearly, but I am able to think more clearly when I'm not feeling deep shame and disappointment and embarrassment and impatience. I make better business decisions when I allow myself to pass through those emotions. And

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I can pretty effectively pass through those emotions now, it doesn't take that long. So, I was able to, like, trust myself, give myself the space that, even if it was a week and a half, two weeks, two and a half weeks of not making major business decisions after a failed launch, I could trust myself to just be where I was in the process, knowing that my skills and resource management were strong enough that like, "Yeah, and when we're done with this, we'll get to work." And I did, right? Went unsolved for all the needs that my business had, decided what we were going to do next, right?

21:20

So, I decided to continue on. And this is when I did the evaluations, a lot of the evaluations of the selling process, the offer itself, my business. And I asked myself, not from a— like, there's a very certain way to ask, and then there's a really insecure way to ask: Is this what you want to be selling? Is this the offer? Is this what needs to be alive in the world? And my answer for The Residency was yes. And in fact, my failed launch and how I was doing after it is part of the reason why I knew this needs to be out in the world. It's part of how I knew that my work, and all the concepts I come up with, the way that I coach, how I coach, because I do it to myself first and I was able to weather the storm fairly well and pretty quickly, I know that high level business strategy skills and emotional resilience skills side-by-side works. And so, I was actually surer about this offer and The Residency being alive in the world after I failed.

22:29

I think one of the fun things, again, that I'm going to be excited to look back on is, as I continue to sell cohorts of The Residency and put together these groups of entrepreneurs. I'm keeping Cohort Two as Cohort Two, right? So, I'm not like, going back to sell Cohort Two. Cohort Two is done. And it's like, a brick, a very special moment in the history of The Residency, because I've learned as much from Cohort Two as I have from Cohort One. So, the next cohort that will be enrolling will be Cohort Three.

23:00

So, I saw the resilience and the resistance, I saw my resource management skills for what they were. And then, I want to talk about the aftermath, which for me was big, big clarity. So, and I think it was only clarity because of how I allowed myself to process and the skills that I had to do this. So, like I said, I evaluated the crap out of this launch. And it wasn't all at once. It was like, every couple of days, every week, I was— I guess it was every couple of days, but evaluating a different part of this. So, evaluating how I showed up as a CEO, as an entrepreneur, evaluating our marketing for it, evaluating the offer itself, evaluating, "What did I learn about a change in business models?" Evaluating just the month of March and my basic business evaluation, evaluating the first quarter of the year, like, a lot of it was going, "What did I create?" And again, create not like, "What happened?" What did I create? What did I create? What were my expectations? What worked? What did not work? What do I want to do differently? What have I learned? And I didn't do all of those questions all of the time. Sometimes, the evaluations were just literally there's a couple pages in my notebook that I kind of just put sticky notes around, and anytime I thought of a new concept or a new understanding that I could share with my Residents about selling their own offers, changing business models, whatever, I've just written a little note in there.

**Hailey** 24:33

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So, I had one thing that was ongoing and then like, every couple days, I was evaluating another couple of things until I got to, kind of like I said, this new level of trueness about my work and about my ability to carry out my mission, which is to help entrepreneurs play this game for the rest of their lives, building high impact and high profit products and offers and businesses and projects, forever. I also kind of reworked, or had more clarity, around who it was I wanted in Cohort Three, how I'm going about selling it, and why. So, Cohort Three is enrolling on a rolling basis. So, instead of like in Cohort One and Two, where it was like, "You can enroll from this time to this time," I'm essentially going to enroll Cohort Three, as I meet the best fit entrepreneurs. That profile has shifted just a little bit, just slightly. And so, there's some things I'm playing with in the marketing and playing with in terms of how and where I'm meeting folks and attracting clients. But we'll be enrolling as I collect the 12 best entrepreneurs for Cohort Three, that is when Cohort Three will start. So again, this is very different than rounds one and two, where we had a very set start date, I knew exactly when the three-day kickoff was going to be, I knew when the mid-session event would be. This is on a rolling basis, there's a level of kind of trust and back and forth I'm doing with clients.

26:07

And so, as a kind of win for them, which again, I think it's wildly valuable if your coach is willing to be like, yeah, we'll go when we have the 12 best, like when you'll have the 11 best peers ever, we'll go when we have those people. But on top of that, between when Cohort Three residents sign and when we start, there'll be doing one-on-one coaching with me. So, Cohort Three is going to have the added benefit of their round starting and like, there'll be plenty of notice of exactly when they're one year will start, but they might have a couple weeks, several weeks, maybe even a couple months, of one-on-one coaching, and then they get the Cohort, and we're ready to start in a group coaching container and kick ass in there. So, this is a, I think, incredibly valuable offer. It's really different than how I sold the other two, and I'm really excited about how it is different. So, here's my plug here, if you know you want to be in The Residency, this is a really great round to sign up for. Because you'll be getting one-on-one coaching and group coaching once your cohort has the 12 best entrepreneurs in it. So, it's actually a very good time to get started.

27:28

The other thing that I found in this kind of aftermath, the big clarity. I've said it, I think three times in this episode again, but I'm gonna say it again, more responsibility for my results and more willingness to do whatever it takes. So, I think when we think, "I'll do whatever it takes," first of all, it sounds good, but very often we make decisions, trying to avoid things like \$0 launches, trying to avoid failure. But the failure is how you learn what needs to happen. The fastest way through is to accumulate as much failure as you can, which sounds really antithetical to being successful, but that's the fastest way through. It also means that doing whatever it takes, sometimes we think it means more action, like, doing more stuff, being willing to invest more, or I don't know, do ads or funnels or be very unique or like, it means more, but I think what it actually means is being more willing to experience newer depths of all of your emotions. So, it's not about the tasks like, investing more or doing ads or changing your marketing, like, all of that is neutral. It's really about, "Are you willing to experience disappointment, embarrassment, impatience? Are you also willing to feel or experience contentment and true pride in your work and compassion for yourself and trust in yourself? Are you willing to experience deeper levels of all of those things, of those emotions?" If you are, you can do whatever you want. And you'll

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get to whatever you want in conjunction with your willingness to like, have these experiences; the willingness to fail, the willingness to feel badly and not run from it, but make the decisions that allow you to learn so much, right? Like, willingness to risk is not willingness to like, bet it all on the farm, but just like, willingness to risk feeling these emotions, knowing that you have the emotional resilience and the skills to process, and the business strategy skills to continue on, and the resource management skills to continue on.

29:49

So, I think that's all I wanted to say. I think that's it for this episode. I am quite excited to come back and listen to it a year from now, just to see where I am and where the businesses is. This was probably— I mean, it's the most challenging thing that's happened in my business thus far this year. I'm sure there'll be more. But it's also, like I said in the beginning, how I know that I'm going to make a lot of money this year and how I know that the work works. So, as I mentioned before, Cohort Three is currently enrolling, and it is the place where you are allowed to, encouraged to, it's a requirement to bring your entire self. Bring your shiny fit-for-Internet-inspiration story self and your "I just massively fell on my face" self. It's a safe haven for female, first-generation entrepreneurs, and that means all that identify in that way, it's a safe haven and a safe spot for you to take up Residence as you mature into the person that is capable of winning big and failing big, because both are required on your way to create all of the things that are in your heart and mind to create over the next several years.

31:12

So, if you know you're ready for The Residency, like I said, your year, Cohort Three's year, will start when we have the best 12 Residents. And in the meantime, you get one-on-one coaching with me, which is at this point priced at \$30,000 for the year, right. And it's not something that I offer, by itself to anyone who is not a referral, a previous client, anything like that. So, you get my brain completely focused on you, and then your cohort starts a year with the best group of entrepreneurs that you can imagine. So, if you're ready, I'm ready. You can go to [BrainspaceOptimized.com/Residency](https://BrainspaceOptimized.com/Residency). You can find me on Instagram, you can also send me an email. I'm [hailey@brainspaceoptimized.com](mailto:hailey@brainspaceoptimized.com), and I will tell you exactly what you need to do to find us a talk time and interview time to see if this is a fit for the both of us. And if it is, get ready. Get ready for your life to change. Get ready for the trajectory of where you are going to shift altogether. I'm so excited for you, for me, for the future versions of The Residency. So, thanks for listening to this episode. I will catch you next week.

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