

myweeklymarketing.

Janice Hostager

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being the entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to My Weekly Marketing. You're a little tired of all the glitz and polish that we see on social media, how we feel the need to have an Instagram perfect life to show off before you're even taken seriously.

00:39

Christine Innes, my guest for today, would tell you that the power is not in our perfection, but in our authenticity. Christine is the founder of the Corporate Escapist and she's here to talk about how to discover our authentic self and how to embrace our real story and the lessons we learned in an authentic way. She believes that what sets us apart in business is our own story and our why why we started a business in the first place. She'll talk to us about how to take ownership of our story and how to let go of any shame or judgment of past mistakes and even integrate those messy parts into our marketing story. Here's my conversation with Christine. Hey, welcome, Christine. I'm so glad you could be here today.

Christine Innes 1:24

Oh, thank you so much for having me so excited to be here.

Janice Hostager 1:28

Oh, I'm glad to have you, so tell me about your story. In the introduction I talked about what you do and your magazine and all the good things that you have going on. How did you get to that point?

Christine Innes 1:44

I had what I call the not so gracious exit for corporate, so it wasn't just a normal like. Here's a light bulb moment that happened, I got diagnosed with two life-changing illnesses, left a toxic marriage and filed for bankruptcy. But I always say that was the best thing that ever happened, because I got to really discover who I was and what I wanted to do. And along that journey I started to share my story, because people were seeing the difference in the transformation within myself and from sharing my story I've now created this amazing global business getting to help other people share their story.

Janice Hostager 2:21

I love that. What about that? So I'm assuming, like you said, you had these really hard times in your life and that led it to where you are right now. But what about? Your journey led specifically to what you're doing right now. So I know you said that you had these things, but what was it? What interested you in kind of telling the world and all of that?

Christine Innes 2:48

Yeah, I sort of dived into sort of personal development had heard a little bit about it in my corporate career but mindset, and there was a really powerful part where going you need to stop being the victim, and it was very confronting that sort of part of it.

03:09

But what I realized is that by living in the victim sort of mentality of it, it was the poor me, the why me, everything's happening to me.

03:19

I was no longer moving forward. I was literally still living in the past and it was allowing then all of those stories, all of the things that had happened, to continue to control the decisions that I was making for my future. So, by learning all of that and going through processes such as like ideal day, asking even questions of who do I want to be and that being part was really important for me because I'd been so attached to a job title for 22 years working in corporate that I didn't know who I was without a job title. So it was really learning and uncovering who I was and actually giving myself permission to ask those questions and then to start thinking well, if I let go of what's happened, who do I want to be, what do I want to do, what do I want to achieve, and it was almost like opening up a limitless opportunities to me because I let go of that sort of shame and guilt that I was attached to with everything that had happened.

Janice Hostager 4:27

Wow, that is powerful. That probably took you a while. I'm assuming you get through that whole process. Oh my goodness, yes, well, I love what you wrote about using your ideal day worksheet, because I downloaded that as well, and on that worksheet, or in that download, you wrote the biggest challenge I faced was learning who I was.

04:49

We can all lose our identity as we go through different stages of life. Living life authentically is not as easy as it sounds. That just hit me totally. Hit home for me, for sure, I think, especially like you said, if we come from a corporate setting. We are our job title, and men do this too. Right, what do you do for a living? It's one of the first questions we ask people when we meet them,

but we can lose ourselves to that. Not only that, but I was a stay at home mom for a number of years and I was so focused on everybody else all the time that when my last one went off to college, I was like I don't know who I am anymore. Have you seen that with other people too?

Christine Innes 5:36

Yeah, absolutely. I think, like you know, the mum part is so reliable to so many people because if you introduce yourself like you're going to go, oh, I'm so and so mum, like you know, you don't even use your name anymore. You're using your kid's name or your partner's name before your own. So therefore, you're already losing part of that identity for yourself and even just sort of working out. You know, as you know, as we all grow and you know, things happen in our life like we've become different people, so it's almost like on a daily basis. You need to start to get to know yourself as well.

Janice Hostager 6:14

Right? Yep, that is true. How is it that? What does living authentically look like? I mean, is it? I mean, we all put on a mask to some degree, I think, which this whole process of preparing for this interview? It reminded me of a book I read when I was in grad school by Irving Goughman, which was the presentation of self and everyday life, and his whole promise was that we all wear masks throughout the day and in different situations. But that's inauthentic, right, Even on social media, right? We make sure that the lighting is good and all of that. What does authenticity look like to you?

Christine Innes 7:00

I think it's a twofold process, because we're always wanting to be a better person. So you know, therefore, like that's the mask that we're sort of putting on as well, but what I really love is to coming back to your values. So what are your values and are you standing by them every single day? Now, I do have authenticity as my top value, but what is it like am I truly showing up for myself? Am I letting go of shame and guilt? Am I, you know, saying what I need to say in the way that I would normally do, not how people think that you need to do it? One of the other values is, you know, love. Like I want to love on people, but I also need to love myself, and I think that's really what authenticity is like. What you give out, you can also give back and receive for yourself as well.

Janice Hostager 7:54

Hmm, that is awesome. That is so true. I mean, we do neglect ourselves sometimes in so many different roles and I love that. We have to learn to receive it as well in order to be authentic. That's absolutely true. So let's pivot a little bit and talk about storytelling, because I know we had talked about you, know what you have available for people and how do you include authenticity in storytelling?

Christine Innes 8:31

It's a very yeah, it's such an interesting topic, you know with it. But you know a lot of people forget, you know, where they started in their business and looking at that growth and really being that raw and vulnerable and letting people know that there are highs and lows, you know, just as in life, it is the same in business and I think that's where the true authenticity really starts to show to let people know that you know you're not just seeing the end result. That has been the late nights. It has been, you know, sometimes caught up in the corner, crying, thinking, oh, I'm just going to give up because this is all too hard, or, you know, people not believing in you. But it all starts with an idea, it all starts with your why. And I think if you can show that whole journey, that is when you're really truly authentic and you're really showing up and showing people you know the real you, the real business side of it and the path and the journey that you've taken to get to where you are.

Janice Hostager 9:37

Hmm, do you feel like we want to talk about in the past tense, or do you feel like being authentic also means showing up saying I'm really having a horrible day, or this week has really sucked? You know what your thoughts are?

Christine Innes 9:52

on that.

09:54

I tend to not show up when I'm having those vulnerable moments. I'm a big believer in energy and sometimes you can show up in those raw, vulnerable moments and then you may get the wrong advice or you may get the wrong. You know it might be attracting the wrong people. So generally what I would do is like go through it and then show up and share with it so I can tell people what the outcome was and let them know that I was going through it. But you know, I don't believe that there's anything wrong if you are able to share, you know in those or even just record it in that moment and maybe not share it live, because you know when we're having those vulnerable moments we may say the wrong thing or we might not be in the right you know mindset to be able to share it. But I think there's anything wrong if you feel the need to show up right there and then and do it. But my preference is to wait until the aftermath and to sort of let people know what the journey was through it.

Janice Hostager 11:01

And that's. I would agree with that too. I feel like if I can get through it and learn something from it, which I hope to do with everything I go through in life right then I can share that lesson as well and still relate to people when they do have those moments, because we all have those moments, especially as entrepreneurs. We all have those times where you just want to throw up

your hands and say this is just too hard, I don't want to do this anymore, but hopefully they're fleeting moments, right, we don't want to, you know, make a life decision or life choice when we're feeling frustrated, and yeah, so I love that. That. I think you're right. I think we have to kind of take a step back and say, all right, what is it that I really want to be sharing at this moment? So tell me about. We talked beforehand about what you call the pen theory, so let's talk about that a little bit. What is that?

Christine Innes 12:00

Yeah, oh, it's something that I came up with. You know, obviously I've worked with some amazing coaches throughout the years and, you know, one coach turned around and said to me you know, don't ever let anybody write your story. Another coach is always. You know, it's not happening to you, it's happening for you. And I love general writing. So within that, I came up with my own pen theory and with general writing you tend to, you know, grab the pen and you're writing your future or you're scripting it out, and that there is, you know, just creating this beautiful vision that you have for it.

12:39

But what I've realized with that, when holding the pen, like in that very moment you're in the present and that actually is so powerful, Like when you're just literally holding the pen to think about the very moment, you know what's your surroundings, Like what are you grateful for, to really come down and be grounded in that absolute moment of it before you start writing. But also, too, I took it to one extra level is like, at the back, here there's no eraser, there's nothing that you can go ahead and erase the past. And along my journey, I have learned the power that you need to own your story. And when you own your story, you step out of the victim mode, you own everything. And one other thing that I've learned is that when you're owning your story, you let go of shaming guilt and shaming guilt for every person has the ability to allow other people to affect how you write your story. So we're thinking about what we want to write for the future.

13:45

We need to really be in the present moment, but also we need to own our story in the past, and by doing that it just means that you know, like for myself, it's like well, I own the fact that I had to go through bankruptcy, so nobody else now can come and like I've let go of the shaming guilt for it, but nobody can go. Oh my God, did you know that they were bankrupt? It's almost like now I, you know, nobody else has any control over that. And I think that's really powerful for everybody, and especially business owners, because there's, you know, things that have happened that you know we may not be happy with. But if we can own it and we can let go of the shame and get ourselves that, when we write our beautiful future, nobody has any control over that.

Janice Hostager 14:30

Oh, I love that it also becomes such a powerful part of your own story, right, and you can use that to help other people. I mean, there is so much that we go through that, Um we. Once we take the time to process it, it can actually become an asset rather than a liability.

Christine Innes 14:52

Yes, absolutely, and you know when you let go of shame and guilt, you know, and you truly forgive yourself for it. It's almost like you're freeing up this space within yourself to allow more goodness to come in as well. So you know, holding on to the negativity or the toxic part of you know that part of the story you're now allowing so much more to come in. I mean, it's almost like you're filling up your cup even more.

Janice Hostager 15:22

Right, right. So do you? You obviously journal. You journal daily, yeah, I'm assuming, and so I got to tell you. I've tried to journal many, many times and I went through seasons, especially hard times, where I felt like it was really helpful to write everything down, but then it kind of it slips by the wayside again. And, as an entrepreneur, do you feel like there's a benefit in journaling every day?

Christine Innes 15:52

Yeah, and it generally looks like so many different things, like some days it just could be me writing, you know I am statements, you know, just to, you know, boost myself up, it could just be one particular word that come in that I feel aligned to that day. So I don't think there's ever you know, a particular format that anything is. But also too like we find that most entrepreneurs are so creative that to actually allow the thoughts to come out and you write them or you voice, note them, just get them literally, get them out of your mind and put them down, and again it frees up for more things to come in and you know, then we can go back and go oh yeah, that's right, I wrote that that might be a good idea, or maybe not, that, you know, maybe something that's later to come up, or not for me at this stage. So I think there's, you know, so many different benefits but there are so many different ways that we can journal right.

Janice Hostager 16:53

Can I get into details? Do you journal in the morning, do you journal at night, or does it vary depending on the day?

Christine Innes 17:00

Mine's normally morning, so I have a full morning routine. It's. You know, I take the dog for a quick walk, I'll meditate, I'll do some journal writing and I do gratitude every single day. So that's my morning routine and I find that if I skip that, and especially if I haven't had a few cups of coffee, then you know it, you know don't talk to me. You know throughout the day, but you know

there might be, you know, if I've had a very creative day and being surrounded by, you know, loads of people, there's lots of things going through my head. So I might just want to, you know, free up my mind before I actually go to sleep as well, and that could just be either doing a meditation, and you can journal right during a meditation. There's, like I said, it's not just sometimes pen and paper.

Janice Hostager 17:46

Mm, that's very cool. Yeah, I love the idea of a gratitude list too, because that can turn a rough morning into a wonderful day, you know, Just sitting there and seeing. Well, you know what I do have a lot to be thankful for, even though I don't feel it the moment or I'm having a rough day. I love that idea. I'm going to work on my journaling skills. It's because it does well. I love what you said. It does free your mind up, you know, so you're not constantly processing everything in your head.

18:20

I think from the most part I did it in the evenings, before I'd go to bed at night and just sit down and just kind of like, like urge the day onto the paper, and which is sometimes good, but sometimes it's not, because you know you can relive everything and sometimes, right before you get to sleep at night, is that's not the time to do it, no, so I do like the idea of a morning journal and I have a lot of really pretty journals I bought. I bought them from a lot of different people, being sure that if I just had that journal I would do it. But I think for me I'm just pretty type A and I'm a doer. So the thought of like sitting down and doing that just like I always put it off, you know, it's like doing my finances, that's another thing I hate to do. So I always put those off, you know, but like my finances, it's important and it's necessary.

19:22

So I really like that idea.

Christine Innes 19:25

Yeah, it's my time in the morning. It's like giving back to myself before I have to give to so many other people.

Janice Hostager 19:30

Yeah, I do do meditation and I have like a prayer time and all of that in the morning, but I haven't done the journaling thing. So I think I'm gonna have to try and give that a try. So what ways have you personally grown from just starting this business?

Christine Innes 19:50

I think the biggest thing is the self trust within myself, and I'd always been such a people pleaser. I always say that I'm a recovering people pleaser because I can always pull back into that but it's actually trusting myself and the decisions that I've made and even if they may not have been the right decision, but at the time it was the right decision and you've learned from it. So I think just that self trust, self belief within myself as well, going well, look what you've created, like anything really is possible with it, and I think we forget that as business owners I think so many people forget it that you had the courage to start a business. So many people don't even just start, they've just got an idea. But you've had the courage to start and that is like such a huge achievement.

Janice Hostager 20:49

Yes, it really is, and I think, especially entrepreneurs, we have a tendency to always set new goals. You do something, you accomplish something and then it's on to the next thing and personally, I don't often look back and say, wow, I did this thing. For me personally, starting the podcast was a big deal. I was nervous to do it. I thought I don't have the tech knowledge, I don't have what it takes, and I talked myself out of it for so long and finally I decided I'm just going to do it, I'm going to try it. What's the worst thing that could happen? But I think it takes putting yourself out there like that and saying you know what? I do have this within me, I do have the skills and if I don't, I can learn them, you know, I mean, yeah, so that's really awesome. Has there anything that's really been a struggle that made you question why you're in business?

Christine Innes 21:53

Oh, I think it is also just the self-doubt that comes in. You know it's you sort of go, oh okay, well, I've done this. But I think everyone still lives with, you know, the self-doubt within themselves and you know it's really overcoming that on a daily basis. It's like switching the mindset to. You know, see the positive scene, you know the impact that you're making and letting go of the self-doubt, letting go of that inner critic that's within yourself that can so quickly rise, you know, higher than everything else.

Janice Hostager 22:30

Mm, very, very true. Tell me about how you started. You have a magazine, right? Yeah, yeah. So tell me about that and how that got started. Was that the first part of your business or was that? Did that come later on?

Christine Innes 22:46

Yeah, that was the second part of the business. So the interview series was the first part. And then, during a meditation, I saw magazine covers and I just laughed. I just thought, oh, this is hilarious. Like there's no way I'm going to be on the front cover of a magazine. But second of all, like I don't even know how to start a magazine. There's just, you know, I have never been in marketing or any of that sort of stuff.

23:12

And then within three months it came to life. It's, you know, here's a mock-up of the front cover. And if you could see I've still got that mock-up and it's hilarious to get to where it is. But then it, you know, I just thought, okay, well, if I've been showing this, look, and again, what's the worst thing that happened, like I'd already gone through so much and I'm like, well, you've overcome that. You know, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. Like let's go. And now we're four years later, you know, into the magazines. So, you know, it's worked and it's grown and expanded.

23:50

But the first big break came, where I did a social post and I said to people you know, I want to have another avenue of sharing stories, I want another way of you know, allowing, you know business owners the opportunity to share their stories and also, you know, getting in front of their ideal clients. And a friend of mine said, well, how much for the front cover. And I thought, oh, I never thought of it as like a business model and yeah, so it went from there and then COVID hit. So there was a lot of like moments that happened and we still decided to launch the magazine right in the middle of COVID and, like I said, it's been a beautiful journey. Four years later, we're celebrating our fourth birthday this year.

Janice Hostager 24:34

Oh, congratulations, that's exciting.

Christine Innes 24:36

Thank you.

Janice Hostager 24:38

So do you have people that? Do you ask people to write, or do people ask you to be in your magazine, or how does that part work?

Christine Innes 24:49

It's a bit of both. Really, you know, grateful that we've, you know, got a really great sort of network around us and we'll have people who you know have beautiful stories and obviously you know it's paid marketing that they want help and support to be able to do that. But then I hear stories I'm like, okay, we need to get that in there and a lot of people don't understand their story and the impact that that's going to have as well. So you know I'll go and ask them. You know, would you like to share your story? And we can help write it for you as well if you're uncomfortable with writing. But there's different opportunities of how that comes about.

Janice Hostager 25:29

Do you have a framework that you ask people to use when you're writing a story?

Christine Innes 25:38

Yeah, we use the hero journey and it's pretty much the. If you think about, like when you're sitting in that I call it the pity party. You know the why me, the poor me, you know you're feeling sorry for yourself and then how are the journey that you went to to sort of where you are now and you think about it. You've got to take people. It's like leading them through a beautiful garden pathway and all the twists and turns that you may need to take, but the end result, if you think of it from a client perspective, is that end result is where they want to be and if you can show them elements of how you were, how you got there, it's almost like people are like oh my goodness, you're inside my head, like this is me right now. I need to know more, and that's the hero's journey.

Janice Hostager 26:25

Right, right, and how you you were able to overcome all the obstacles that you encountered. Yeah, I love that. So where can people find out more about you, christine?

Christine Innes 26:36

Yeah, they can head over to the website, which is the corporateescapist.com, or on our socials at the corporate escapist.

Janice Hostager 26:45

Oh, that sounds perfect. I just love the name too. We all wanted to be corporate escapists when we were, when we were in corporate life. I think most entrepreneurs kind of feel that way for sure. Well, thank you so much for being with me today, and I look forward to hearing more about you as your magazine grows. It's an exciting time. Thank you so much for having me.

27:11

So right after I quit recording, I told Christine that I need to start journaling again, and the great thing is that she's making that really easy. She has a Design your Life Journal available for free on her website. I'll put the link to that and all the other things we talked about in today's episode in our show notes for today at <https://myweeklymarketing.com/51> , episode 51. Thanks so much for joining me today. As always, I'm so appreciative. See you next time. Bye for now.