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Janice Hostager: 0:02

Running a business isn't just about chasing your passion, especially for small business owners who wear all the hats. It's about juggling finances, managing clients, meeting deadlines, working with your team and keeping it all together. When you're handling everything yourself, it's easy to burn out before you even realize what's happening. Burnout isn't just feeling tired. It's an overwhelming sense of exhaustion that can drain your creativity, your motivation and sometimes even your love for your business. According to startupstash.com, 45% of entrepreneurs said they've experienced burnout due to juggling too many responsibilities. If you've experienced burnout, or even when you feel it coming on juggling too many responsibilities, if you've experienced burnout, or even when you feel it coming on from having too many things on your plate, don't panic.

Janice Hostager: 0:51

My guest today is business coach and good friend, Tammy McKinney. If you're a long time listeners, Tammy's been on my podcast before, way back in episode three. In that episode, she talked about when her life was upended while she was going through a divorce, had multiple children in the hospital and simultaneously tried to keep her business afloat. So she is no stranger to stress and, as she points out on today's episode, stress bleeds from our work life into our personal life and vice versa, and it can certainly be a contributing factor to burnout. Tammy has some great insight into what causes burnout and what we need to do to fix it. So here's my conversation with Tammy.

Janice Hostager: 1:33

Hey, Tammy, welcome to My Weekly Marketing once again.

Tammy McKinney: 1:37

Good morning, happy to be here again.

Janice Hostager: 1:40

Well, I'm pretty excited to get in today's topic, just because I think it's so relevant for so many of us who have lived it and encountered it in other people and that's the topic of burnout. And I mean, you as a business owner and I as a business owner, certainly have skirted it, if not lived it ourselves. But I love that you are so knowledgeable with blending topics like this with running a business. And so tell me, first of all, let's start out with a definition: what is burnout?

Tammy McKinney: 2:19

Well, I think, to me the easiest definition is feeling fed up, which, you know, obviously, is not the definition in the dictionary, but just this idea that things don't feel okay, you feel less motivated than usual, you feel incapable of performing your daily duties with any level of contentment or even joy. I don't have the definition, do I? Let's see definition right here in front of me, but it is this, it's a feeling, right, burnout is a set of feelings that impact your social, emotional, mental capacities and it is knowing that there is something that is off and not even necessarily being able to put a finger on it, but just feeling fed up in so many areas of life, or maybe specifically at work or specifically at home. But we can get burnt out, you know, in different areas, but typically we know that bleeds over into every area of our life.

Janice Hostager: 3:32

Yeah, yeah, and I like that you said that it can impact everything, because sometimes I think it's kind of hard to know why we're feeling what we're feeling, you know, I mean, sometimes I mean I can get really excited about my business, but there are times where I just think, oh, it's become a job again, you know, and I think that feeling is sort of a warning sign for me anyway that I need to take a look at what's happening in my work and my mental health and kind of re-examine everything. Have you had some personal experiences and had to overcome burnout in your business journey?

Tammy McKinney: 4:08

Yes, and I think it's interesting because we get to distinguish between and we talked about this a little bit you know what is a hard season, what is a season where you're dealing with a lot of unexpected things, versus being in a season where you're striving for big goals, you're trying to achieve new results, you're really trying to stay on mission or stay on tasks, to achieve your goals, but all of a sudden you find yourself just taking on way too much. You've just taken on way too much and you feel like you want to do it all. Nothing's happening fast enough and you just start to feel exhausted. And I think I've been in both of those seasons where I was all in like, let's make it happen, fired up, passionate, know what I'm doing in alignment with you know, got my goals set, I'm getting some results in some area. But then you start to feel like, oh my gosh, I've got to do my bookkeeping and I've got to do my marketing and I've got to do, you know, all of this, you know, writing or content creation and oh by the way, I'm still serving customers directly, clients directly, and so that's a season where I've been where I just felt like, oh, it's just all too much. It's just all too much, like I'm starting to procrastinate, I'm starting to distract myself because I get so overwhelmed I can't figure out what to do next.

Tammy McKinney: 5:34

And that's different than the seasons where something has happened and you know, as I've shared even on your podcast before, you know where my kids have unexpected medical challenges or there's you know, one of the cars goes down or you know there's a pandemic, right.

Tammy McKinney: 5:50

There's these seasons where you have these unexpected things and I think that's less burnout and more stressed out right, because there's so many factors that are outside of your control and that's not to say you can't be in burnout because of factors outside of your control.

Tammy McKinney: 6:06

I mean, we look at the engagement rates in organizations now and the engagement rate of, you know, different generations in the workforce and those are factors outside of our control to some extent and that can cause a lot of frustration and exhaustion and sort of burnout because you feel like you're spinning your wheels, doing all the things and there's other people that aren't necessarily performing the way that we need them to, and I've experienced that in my business as well where I've gone and I've done an intensive three-day workshop and my content that has landed so well before and impacted and changed you know the trajectory of different clients' work and performance and then go and do it in another environment where the people are just checked out, they're burnt out, they're exhausted, they're under-resourced, they don't have the energy to even absorb what I'm telling them, and it's pretty much exactly the same content, right? And so I think we get to acknowledge both of those situations where burnout can be our burnout and burnout can also be the people that we're trying to influence or trying to impact, whether that be clients or people that work for you, or even your own family right.

Tammy McKinney: 7:21

Is feeling burnout or overwhelmed and you're trying to get excited and move them forward on something, but they're not in a place to do it.

Janice Hostager: 7:31

Yeah, I think that's a really good tip, even if you are doing a presentation and your audience is somehow just not responsive, or some days, we ourselves I can't speak for you, Tammy, but I know that for myself, if I don't come from a place of energy it really gets communicated really quickly across Zoom or any other phone, or even in person.

Janice Hostager: 7:57

You really have to build yourself up sometimes, I think, especially for video or something like that, video conferencing, because I don't know if something about the camera kind of loses an energy after a while. You know, and so it's really not relevant just for our own lives, but it's relevant for, like you said, the people we work with. So do you feel like, is there? So what would you do? And I know I'm coming out going off on a tangent here but what would you do if you're working with people and you can see that they have burnout, rather than just talking about what we should ourselves do? But what? What if we can see it in somebody else that they just are kind of like running low or whatever? Do you have recommendations about what we can do to help them out?

Tammy McKinney: 8:45

Well, I think that's a great question, because what we need to do is call it out right, not to say, well, you look, worked out, you're not listening to me, you know but to be able to say, like, when you start to feel that there's a lack of engagement, a lack of responsiveness to and you know, this is with my one-on-one clients as well as when I'm teaching a workshop or a retreat or something, and I work with leaders and business owners and so on, and so you know, this experience I was sharing earlier, what happened was that it was people from a bunch of different organizations, so not everybody in the same room was experiencing burnout, but it was a pretty big vibe in the room. And so I had to kind of shift my agenda, shift what I was coming forth to present, and say, you know what I'm sensing, that there is just a lot going on in your workspace. Energetically, I'm feeling like that some of you might be really tired, that some of you might be feeling really overwhelmed, and while you're glad to be in this space, away from your day to day, you're also thinking about all the things that you've left behind on your plate. And so, just making that little shift to start to kind of call out what you're seeing in your client or clients and you know, then give them the opportunity in the space. I mean again, everybody wants to feel seen and heard and understood, right, and so when we just keep going with our agenda, of course they're going to check out if they're, especially if they're already burnt out because they don't feel seen and heard and understood. And this is what I started to hear.

Tammy McKinney: 10:24

Well, this is all great, but I have no staff, like we're understaffed and we're having a hard time hiring people. So I'm doing everybody's job, so I'm sitting there trying to talk to them about leadership principles, of how to lead their team and their bare bones of even having a team right, and so they're feeling that burnout, that overwhelm, and I think that that's when we're working with people that we can sense it. Let's just value the relationship over the agenda, value the relationship over being right, like hey, you guys

paid to be here, you're going to get this right, instead to just back up and say, what is it you really need right now? Like how can I support you in this moment? Because you know, we've all heard it like people remember more how you make them feel.

Tammy McKinney: 11:09

And if you make somebody that's burnt out feel like you see them and you at least have some level of empathy for them, they're more likely going to want to hear what you have to say, whether it be in that season or maybe to circle back, and I've had that happen a lot, where I've had conversations with people that I thought were ready to pull the trigger and then it was. You know, a month or two later they called and they said hey, and I said well, I was wondering what happened to you and they said I was just so overwhelmed, so fried, you know maybe they said burnt out, and I just felt like it wasn't the right time. And I've done that with coaches. I paid a fortune for some coaching and when it came time to renew she was even graciously going to, you know, gift me a month or two or whatever it was, and I said look.

Tammy McKinney: 11:56

I said I just cannot take the coaching. I can't absorb anymore. I'm so burnt out, I'm so fried. Like it would be a disservice to you to accept your gift and it would be a disservice to me because I continue to beat myself up for not doing the things that I want to do, and I think that's a really important part of recognizing burnout and like in this situation again when I was teaching this retreat, I went home feeling pretty defeated. You know that, man. What did I do wrong? Why didn't this work? What was different this time? And so when I kind of took and I mean going home like at the end of the day the first day and saying, okay, what's really going on here? Is this me or is this something else going on, I think that that's one of the strategies when you start to feel that burnout is, start to make those adjustments, because it's not being your best for other people and it's certainly not being your best for you if you just continue to pretend like you're not struggling with some level of burnout.

Janice Hostager: 12:57

Yeah, and I mean it's so common among entrepreneurs too, because we, especially when we're just starting out, we feel like we should be able to do everything. You know, and I have tried a dozen different ways to stack my calendar in a way that I could get everything done and you might be able to achieve it, but at the end of the day it's like, I mean, if you have to fold laundry or make dinner or have a conversation with somebody in your house, I mean forget it. I mean so I, you know, I love what you're saying about that just that mental feeling of overwhelm, and sometimes I don't know about anybody else, but I feel a little guilty taking like an afternoon off and just maybe going to the pool

or just sitting in my backyard and reading a book or something like that, because I feel like I need to be doing something in the business. So I really think that there's a lot more that we can do in terms of mental health for ourselves as entrepreneurs. What do you suggest or what are your thoughts on that?

Tammy McKinney: 14:04

I think it starts with, you know, it starts at the very beginning of doing a self-assessment. What is working, what isn't working right now, and especially when you start to feel that overwhelm, that burnout, that isolation, that procrastination, you start to feel like I'm not in it right now, like something is going on, I'm not in it. Like back up and literally make a list what is working and what isn't working for you, and that means like emotionally, financially, socially. You know, I was looking at my calendar the other day and I was like you know what? I don't even have time to reflect on some of the meetings that I've had because I haven't scheduled in that margin, and so then I don't have the follow up. So what was the point of having the meeting in the first place if I'm not going to have the time to do the follow up and see people back, because I've just ruined, you know, my credibility with them. I mean, even though we may have had a lovely lunch or meeting or whatever together, if I've promised them something or said I wanted to follow up, or know that there's something I want to do, and I just I'm feeling burnt out and overwhelmed and I don't do the thing. That is just going to ruin my self-confidence and diminish my credibility with that person.

Tammy McKinney: 15:16

And so I think just doing that assessment of what is working and what isn't working right. So is going to back-to-back meetings working or not right? Is the way that I do follow-up working or not? Is my marketing, you know, all of the things that I'm doing in marketing, is it working or not? I mean, goodness knows, I posted on Instagram every day for I don't know how long before I realized it really wasn't doing anything to bring me clients, or at least the ones that I wanted to.

Tammy McKinney: 15:42

And of course, there's a season and there's a long trial period with marketing and all of that. But I'm just saying, like, stop and look at what is working and what isn't. You know, is the way you're talking to your spouse and your kids? Is it working? Is it not? Is your sleep schedule? Is it? Is it not so? So, just starting with that self-assessment, when you start to feel the burnout and make the list and it's not that everything needs to come off of it that isn't working for you for forever, but maybe for a season it's time to say you know what, let's do something else, with that, we either get to eliminate it, delegate it, automate it or just deprioritize it for now, and I think that those are really good things to

consider when you're looking at what isn't working for you is how do you set it aside for now?

Janice Hostager: 16:27

Right, yeah, I love what you said. Delegate, automate, or eliminate.

Janice Hostager: 16:34

Yeah, I actually have those on a sticky note by my desk because that is so important, I mean, and thankfully now you know there's so much we can do to automate things, which is really helpful. Of course, there's a learning curve to every new app out there, but you know, and even bringing somebody else on, you know, a virtual assistant just to handle the things that you just don't have time to do is can be really save your business in the long run, even though there's, you know, an upfront cost.

Tammy McKinney: 17:08

A hundred percent and we've talked about this before like just even having a housekeeper come in, knowing that person is coming, even if it's only once a month, which is what I do and knowing that these are the things they're going to take care of, allows me to free up that mental space that it's on my list of things to take care of, right? Or car maintenance or whatever it might be. So, we know, as business owners, we've got to look at our life from a very integrated perspective and something you may decide you're not ready to let go of in the business, maybe something on the personal side you can let go of to reduce that stress. And I think the second thing you know, after we sort of do this assessment, is to really go back and make sure you're clear on your vision of where you want to be a year from now and not to hold on necessarily so tight to those outcomes, but so that you can really step into and what I say is, you know, obedience to the things that you need to do to keep moving towards those key objectives. And you know we oftentimes just keep doing things that we've been doing without assessing if they're really working or not, but also we kind of lose sight of what we said we were going to do a year from now, especially as entrepreneurs. I don't know about you, well, I do know about you. We have a million ideas about how we can help people, right? And so we have to stay crystal clear on our mission.

Tammy McKinney: 18:29

What it is that we're called to focus on, you know, for a year at a time. So you come back into that quarterly, monthly, weekly and even daily and that's the next piece I really work on with people is, you know, okay, if you do get super clear on what you're trying, the outcomes you're trying to get and the goals that you have, your milestones, you know really, going all the way down to daily waking up and saying okay, in order to move

towards that, what are the three outcomes I get to focus on today? And I think that, in and of itself, will reduce your burnout more than anything else, assuming that you're not going to be able to take off time and you're going to continue to try to move things forward but what are those three outcomes that I can reasonably do to keep moving towards my goals without becoming so overwhelmed or discouraged or distracting myself? And so if I don't do that, personally, I am all over the place.

Tammy McKinney: 19:29

I'm like, oh yeah, I was going to do this thing and I was going to do that thing, right. And so every single day I go back and I plan, you know, quarterly, monthly, weekly and then daily looking at, and not to spend so much time planning that you're not taking any action. But it is very helpful to say this is what I need to focus on today, because I have, you know, my daughter's birthday party tonight and I have a lunch date and I have, right, and so realistically looking at your calendar and deciding maybe it's not three things, maybe it's one thing for today. And you know it may be disappointing that that's all you can get done. But if you're not realistic with yourself, that's where the overwhelm comes in and creeps in and in and in, until you're just burnt out and you're just like I don't want to do anything anymore.

Janice Hostager: 20:16

And that's so true. It's so hard to get that list down to three some days, right? I mean I've done way more than three already today and it's only 1130 in the morning, and you know. But I mean that's always been my goal. It's very hard to do, especially like, so...

Janice Hostager: 20:36

How do you handle distractions? Do you check email just once a day, or do you turn off your Slack? Do you turn off your phone? I mean, that's I think really, I know they talk to other professionals who look at time management, look at context switching. You lose 10 minutes of productive work every time you switch from one task to another, and every time the phone rings or you get a text from even one of your kids or your husband or whatever, it can take you so long to get back into it that I feel like we all have something to learn about how to just structure the minutes of our day. And yet it is really hard to get to like three a day, you know, and not have that long list.

Tammy McKinney: 21:23

Well, and I think that there's a difference too. I mean, if you think about three outcomes you're trying to get for the day, like those are kind of the big outcomes for today. Right, it may have tasks underneath them, but what is the ultimate outcomes? And so, like I, I say, some days that may be just one, maybe it is five days bonus, right, that's good, but I

keep the three main outcomes at the forefront. But then I have my huge to-do list over here all my all, not tasks, but all the things that need to get done. You know, like we need to pay this bill. I just got a text that my homeowners association due is you know today, and, and that kind of stuff is, you know, just talking about this idea of distractions, we get to look at what's most important first, and if you really keep that front of mind daily, then it's easier to keep the distractions at bay.

Tammy McKinney: 22:15

I think that when we aren't clear on what outcomes we're working towards each day, it's easy to say let me just pop on here for a minute and look at so-and-so I've been thinking about on Facebook, and then we know where that time goes, and you know, let me just post something on Instagram and the next thing we know we've been on there for 20 minutes and so there's tons of tools out there. But ultimately it's a mindset that I am going to prioritize my work and I am going to do my best to stay on my priorities and not let other people's agendas or distractions or new things come into my awareness, if at all possible. And so it's removing the temptations. I mean literally just saying I'm not going to post on social media during the day, because every time I do I get distracted, right, and so that you go back to the well, is that something you can schedule, time to create and automate and or delegate to somebody else and whatnot, and so everybody's got to look for themselves at those things? Um, but knowing where your time goes, then you can manage it right, I think, as Brendan always says, a lot of people say but you know, what you don't measure, you can't manage. And so, literally when I do my planner, I write down where every hour is going to go. I build in a little bit of margin. I've been having to nap a lot this year just because of some health issues and other things going on, and so I've been building that in now. And if I don't use it and I don't need a nap, great, but if I do, I've already built in that margin and I always coach my clients too to kind of think about, okay, so if you build your schedule like little Lego blocks, this is the hour where I'm writing content, this is the hour where I'm making phone calls, this is the hour where I'm, you know, coaching clients or whatever it might be, then you can pick up that block and move it.

Tammy McKinney: 24:07

When something does come up that's unexpected or truly is a crisis, and in the organizations that I work with the leaders, you know they have that's their top complaint. Well, there's always so many crisis that come up, and so the next thing is think about, well, what are they and how can I proactively mitigate them from becoming crisis? You know what are those that typically come up and distract you or get you off task from actually achieving those top three things. What is it that you can do to mitigate them becoming a crisis? Are there standard operating procedures you can hand off to

somebody else? Is there, you know, a sign you can put on your door that says don't knock during this hour.

Tammy McKinney: 24:49

You know, is it educating? You know, if you're working from home, is it letting your family know like during these hours I absolutely do not want to be interrupted unless somebody is bleeding or dying, right, and you know those kinds of things that become distractions. Making a note of those, and back to this idea of measuring it so you can manage it. I spend time I won't say every week, but every couple of weeks and just write down okay, this is where I said my time was going to go. Where did it actually go? Because when I start to measure it, you know it's just like counting calories or macros in an app, right, if you start to look at where it actually went, you can start to say, oh yeah, that is a little bit of a problem. That's distracting me.

Tammy McKinney: 25:29

No wonder I'm not getting my stuff done, right, and all these things, you know, regardless of the reason when you start to feel those cognitive symptoms of I'm procrastinating, I'm isolating, I'm distracting myself more, that's when you get to look at if it's burnout or not. But all of these are good strategies for managing your time better if you really want to achieve different, bigger results in your business and in your life. And so also looking at your emotions and kind of tracking those, and again, my planner's over there. But using your planner to say this day I just couldn't feel the energy, I couldn't feel the joy, I was frustrated, I was agitated, I was irritated, I was short with everybody; those are all signs of burnout. They can be signs of other things too, obviously circumstances or health issues or whatever.

Tammy McKinney: 26:23

But looking at and tracking how you're feeling from day to day, I think is real important. Because then you got to get underneath that, like why am I feeling so sad? Why am I feeling so discouraged? And honestly, after I came back from and I'll just keep going on that example, that retreat that I taught and I was having a hard time restarting and kind of to your point, like restarting some of the things that I was, you know, had really good momentum on, and it was like no, I'm just feeling really discouraged. And so I had to get under that emotion and say, why am I feeling so discouraged? Well, they didn't really respond and I didn't really get a lot of follow-up calls and blah, blah, blah. But then I started working through it and reminding myself what they were going through and it wasn't really about me. So then, what can I focus on for me to make the shifts.

Janice Hostager: 27:16

Oh, excuse me, I just want to say I love what you said about just recording your mental state for the day on a calendar. That's such a simple task and any of us can even do it on our Google Calendar, probably. Can we even note on a Google Calendar? I'm not even sure. Especially when, yeah, if it goes on day after day after day, it really is a good indicator of what's going on. We kind of forget about it. We just kind of get through the day or get through the week and then we feel like, okay, I got the next week, I got the weekend to recover, I'm going to go full force again next week and we don't really do that leg measure right. We do a lead measure but not a lag measure. So we know what our intentions are and we know where we're starting from, but then we don't really measure afterwards and say, okay, how did that week actually go? Did those changes that I made? Did they make a difference? So I love that idea. That's awesome.

Tammy McKinney: 28:13

The other thing that you asked about too was about strategies about checking email and stuff like that. And I am really big on this and I know I get the most resistance on this too. But if you can literally schedule time to check your email and train your people that that's when you check your email, it does work. And people say, no, no, I got to be checking all day in case my boss needs something. Well, you know, you can lead up to and say you know, I'm really trying to have focused, intentional time to do x, y, z, and in an effort to do that, I'm only checking, you know, email at 10 and two. So if it's urgent and you really need me beyond that, you know, then you can text me or whatever you can put in some other procedure for that. And this has been the biggest thing that I hear back from my leaders. When they started doing that, when they started training their people how to contact, their overwhelm went down so much when they said I, You know, at first everybody was upset that I quit answering texts after six o'clock at night. But you know now that I've been doing it for two years like nobody even bothers to try to do it, unless it's a total crisis. And so you know they'll say we can train people. We do train people how to treat us. Well, it's the same in our business, too, and oftentimes, especially if you're first starting out or the income or revenue is down, you start to get into this mode of like well, I got to do whatever they want or they're going to not want to work with me. Well, I've actually found that the opposite is true is that you, if you set boundaries that make you the most productive and the most present with your clients when you're actually with them, they tend to have greater respect for that, and it's a lesson that you can pass on, no matter what business you're in, to say they're like well, you know, if they say something like well, I love how much attention you give me when we finally get time together and you can share. Well, that's because I have really strong boundaries around the things that matter most and my time with you matters. And so

the other little tip and I don't want to lose this before I forget it, but I call it T4, take time to transition.

Tammy McKinney: 30:17

And this is another big one, with my clients too, is that, before you switch from task to task, take time to transition. Like, literally stop pause, give yourself permission, like am I really finished with that task that I just had? Okay, make a note if you need to follow up on something later. I'm going into this meeting now, or I'm going home to see my spouse now, or I'm going to my kid's soccer game now. Like, take time to transition to be fully present to that next activity.

Tammy McKinney: 30:49

Because when we don't do that, we're often carrying everything with us, and we all do this way with like well, hold on one more text. Well, hold on, let me just answer this, well, hold on, right? And then, before you know it, that person's like well, why bother? You know, why are you, even... And so taking time to transition is another very strategic tactic that I coach people on, because the value that you get from that is that your work is more impactful, your energy and your time is more focused, that you're actually getting stuff done a lot faster than if you weren't taking that time to transition over. And it can only be, you know, it can be only a minute or two, but whether you pray or you meditate, or you just stop and think, or you do some deep breathing, or maybe you stretch, whatever that might be that is helpful, you know. Just try those things and see what works for you to transition from activity to activity without carrying the stress of the last one with you.

Janice Hostager: 32:14

Yeah, I mean, that mental health aspect too is so great, and just even getting up and you know, walking to get a glass of water or a cup or coffee, or a tea, or whatever it is that you can do to just take a minute, you know? So alright, let's say that you are completely in the throes of burnout. I think you have some really, really, really good recommendations for that? Do you recommend that somebody actually just takes a day off? Because you use the word margin a lot and I love that word because I don't have enough of it in my own life, but I think when I do use it, it is so valuable, like last Friday. So I was sick last week with COVID and that's why I have very little voice today, but I just told my team that I was down for the day, I was gone, I was out and I just took some time and just sat out on my back porch and just soaked everything in. And you know, even though I was sick, it was so nourishing for my mind to be able to just let go of everything and feel like the day was my own, rather than belonging to my team or my

clients or whoever, because as far as they were concerned, I was out, you know, and I was out, you know.

Janice Hostager: 33:19

But just having that time to just process things, I think is so necessary, especially for entrepreneurs, because we're always redoing our goals and looking at the big pictures and if we don't have that time where we pull our nose up from the grindstone and say, okay, wait, where am I and how am I? Am I really headed toward that goal, or am I off here on a cul-de-sac? Then we really we well, we just need that, I mean, or we're not effective and we do burn out for sure. Do you build days like that into your calendar, because I mentioned earlier that guilt that comes with it, definitely.

Tammy McKinney: 34:01

Yeah, definitely. And I think you know, okay, take off my organizational you know, sort of coaching and talking about just business owners and entrepreneurs. You get to build the schedule that works for you, right? And so I always kind of back people up and say what is your ideal day look like, work day? What does your ideal week look like, what does your ideal month look like, what does your ideal year look like? Because oftentimes we get into this business building and we think, oh, yeah, I'm going to have all this time and financial freedom one day. Well, how about you start with the end in mind and just tell yourself, like, ideally, I want to be working X number of days, x number of hours, and then you build your schedule around that. And then you get to say, okay, I'm in startup or I'm in a season where I need to do more, so then you add that in, but keep that vision of where you really want to end up as an entrepreneur, rather than waiting for Sunday. And so that's one thing is, when you're a business owner or entrepreneur, thinking about it differently too, like you don't have to be working in the 40 hours a week that everybody else is working either, and so for you. If you know, I've gotten into the habit myself of taking a lot more quiet time in the morning and bumping my client time later and later in the day. Because why not? You know, if I'm if I'm most effective at my writing and my other quiet time activities that I do in the morning, then there's no reason I can't tell clients that my schedule starts at 9 or 10 or 11 or whatever I want it to, depending on the day, and I think we don't do enough of that on the proactive side.

Tammy McKinney: 35:48

But then to your question about what you're in the throes of burnout now. What do you do, right? Now what do you do? Well, I was coaching a client just this last week and she was so overwhelmed she's like I'm just so exhausted. I almost called in today and I didn't call in today for a mental health day because I just got back from, she had lost both parents in the last year. She had taken a lot of time off while they were passing and

then after they passed, of course, and then she has her kids and and doing things with them, and then they had some health issues, right, like all those unexpected, maybe semi-expected but unplanned for life events and stuff. So she's just really burnt out.

Tammy McKinney: 36:25

And she said you know, I've got you know this person telling me that I need to go to all of these workshops and conferences this month and meanwhile, and she's an executive and she's running the whole organization and she's got you know the day-to-day stuff and then she's working on relationships with her teams and she's just, she's just overwhelmed, she's just totally overwhelmed. And so I started to ask her some questions and I said, okay, so if you had taken the day off today and called in, what would you have done with it? Probably laid around and stressed out about all the things that wasn't getting done. And I said so why did you basically suck it up and make it happen anyway? And she's like well, I just it comes down to other people's perceptions of us, and we don't often consider like but if I show up frazzled and burnt out and overwhelmed, then there's those perceptions too. Right, and so we need to model taking the time for ourself, for the other people in our organization, to give themselves permission or our family or whatever. And so and I'm not saying what was right or wrong for her, but the things that I encouraged her to do was looking forward, look at everything she had coming up and really, really, really get clear about the purpose of each one of those. And if she was the one to attend those things, what was it that she was hoping those outcomes would be, and would she be able to get those in the current state of burnout and overwhelm and exhaustion that she's in? And so she's working on that this week actually.

Tammy McKinney: 37:59

But again, and then I said to her you know, if those are events that maybe somebody else could get same or better results if you sent them, then you're giving somebody else the opportunity to be empowered. Or maybe you look at it and say, you know, we go to that thing every year and sometimes I get some value out of it, but you know, this year that's not really the most important thing. So let's just take it, let's just eliminate it, let's take it off the plate for this year, Right? And some of the other things that we were looking at was, is this the right time for you to even try to do this thing with everything you've had going on in your life? It's hard to answer that question categorically and you have to know yourself and know like is this a day where I can be productive at all? Is it worth me showing up rather than just taking this time off and trying to recoup?

Tammy McKinney: 38:47

But then, if you do and this is really important, if you do take that time off, be intentional about how you spend it. There's a lane there in guilt that you just want to binge Netflix or whatever. Just be intentional if that's what you want to do. That's what you want to do. Like, your goal is to just completely tune out. Great, let that be your goal. But I think oftentimes what we see is people are burnt out, they're exhausted, they're tired and they just take time off. Well, then they end up, you know, doing all the chores around their house that they were going to. You know been putting, and maybe that is a good thing, but sometimes that's not the key to reducing the level of overwhelm and exhaustion and frustration that you're feeling. And definitely you know going and trying to get other people to do things when you're agitated and irritated. It's not the most productive either. It can add to that overwhelm, so it really comes with being intentional.

Janice Hostager: 39:42

Yeah, yeah, and I think just building in vacations and I think oftentimes for those of us who are self-employed, we tend not to do that I mean, when we're employed by someone else, it's easy to say, oh, I've got three weeks of vacation this year, how should I schedule them, or where should we take them, and we'll plan ahead. But when it's your own business, first of all, well, I think any corporate job too runs into this, where it's almost harder to take a vacation than to not because you have to figure out what's going to be happening while you're gone. And then you get back and you've got, you know, 5,000 emails and all these things that you kind of put out of your mind for that week you were off. However, I think just having that time to just really decompress and sometimes I think it takes several days to really unplug mentally, at least for me, it's not enough.

Janice Hostager: 40:35

I don't think in a weekend I really mentally unplug. It's always in the back of my mind. So I think it probably takes people sometimes longer to just sort of let go of everything and just really get your mental health back, your physical health back, and kind of get everything aligned again and reprioritize everything in your life, not just your work life, but your family life and everything.

Tammy McKinney: 41:04

Well and it goes back to that vision of your life right, your ideal day your ideal week, your ideal month, your ideal year.

Tammy McKinney: 41:10

And you know, I always encourage we've talked about this before, you know have the big calendar of the year and block out all of those non-negotiable days off and vacations.

But that that kind of starts with having a vision for your life too, and that's why you know, when I coach, I mean we're, we're life coaching, leadership coaching, business coaching. We're doing all the things because it's all so integrated, and so having this vision for what you want your life to look like is just as important, if not more, than having this vision of what you want your business to look like. And so when you do plan those vacations, that time off, that gets to be part of your reward system for working hard right, for doing the things that you're doing in your business, so that you can have that lifestyle that you want.

Tammy McKinney: 41:55

We all know we're not guaranteed tomorrow, and so we want to take that joy and that fulfillment this was in my quiet time this morning. We want to get as much joy out of what we're doing every single day, and when you're burnt out and overwhelmed, you've missed a whole opportunity to have a day where you're enjoying your life, right? So it's important to know that I can make work enjoyable, I can find contentment in what I'm doing, and it can also be rewarded with these other things like vacation or family time or time to myself or whatever it is. And you know, for me, one of the things that I started doing is when I travel for my work, is to drive whenever possible, and people are like, are you crazy?

Tammy McKinney: 42:40

That's like a 12, 13 hour drive and I said I have just found a way for that to be so enjoyable for me and it forces me to just be with my thoughts and maybe somebody else is with me and be with that person and also, you know, listen to books and podcasts and be really focused on that, and so I plan for that now when I'm traveling not all the time, obviously, it depends on how far it is and what else I've got going on but you get to decide how to do your business, how to do your life, and we forget sometimes and we feel like, and we let our clients drive how we're doing everything, instead of saying this is what works for me, let me find the clients that I can still serve in this, because the reality is there's so many clients out there for all of us and it doesn't feel like it sometimes, but we might as well find the ones that work for us.

Janice Hostager: 43:34

Yeah, right, right. Oh, so much good stuff, Tammy. I sure appreciate you sharing all of it. How can people find out more about you?

Tammy McKinney: 43:43

Well, right now I've got uyes.com, unlockingyourextordinarysuccess.com, and so I do executive coaching and then organizational coaching, training, consulting too, and so

that's probably the best place to find me right now. I've actually eliminated a lot of my social. I'm also on LinkedIn, but on uyes. com, there's a leadership self-assessment and you know whether you're an organizational leader or leader of your own life. It's probably a pretty good list of questions to just go through and kind of assess how you're doing, how you're feeling. You will have some things that jump out that are you're not doing that well and you're like no wonder I'm feeling stressed and burnt out and overwhelmed.

Tammy McKinney: 44:27

These are some areas that I want to learn and grow in, and that's another piece of this is always having that time for your personal development, for your own teamwork, for your own personal professional growth, whatever it is. I think that's another thing to address. Burnout is making sure that you're not just taking time for self care, which, of course, we know is really important. But self care I tell people all the time; boundaries, personal development, healing, that's all self-care too, and if we're not taking care of ourselves and we go down, especially in small business or as a solopreneur, nothing gets done. So that's really it, but anyway. So yeah, uyes. com for now is the easiest way to find me, and on LinkedIn.

Janice Hostager: 45:16

Okay, great, and that's U, the letter U and the word yes, and I'll put the links in the show notes as well. And quick question about the leadership assessment. Is that for people that have teams, or could that be for anybody, whether you have a team or not?

Tammy McKinney: 45:30

It could be for anybody, whether you have a team or not. And, to be honest, you know the way that I approach leadership is we all influence somebody, and Jack Maxwell always says leadership is influence. Nothing more, nothing less. So if you have people following you; social media, email, in your home, wherever, then you have influence. If nobody's following you, you're not a leader.

Janice Hostager: 45:59

Thank you so much, Tammy. It was enlightening as always.

Tammy McKinney: 46:03

It was my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Janice Hostager: 46:06

So did Tammy's advice ring a bell or two? I'm determined to apply some of the tips she suggested. Like she said, if we burn out, we won't have a business to run either. So I

highly recommend that you take her free leadership assessment and see where you fall in that. Hopefully, these tips will help you. If you're feeling burned out right now, if you are feeling overwhelmed or struggling to manage the stress, reaching out for professional mental health support is not a sign of weakness. It's a step toward taking care of yourself and your business. Just like you'd seek expert advice for your business, your mental health deserves the same level of care. So stay well, my friend, and take care. See you next time. Bye for now.