
Jaime: Welcome to Eventual Millionaire. I'm Jaime Masters, and today on the show, we have Tonya Dalton. You can check her out at tonyadalton.com. But, you can also check out her book. It is called 'The Joy of Missing Out.' And, when I got this in the mail, I was like, "That is a really great title." Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Tonya: Well, thank you. I'm so happy to be here.

Jaime: Well, and you also have a lot of business experience. So, let's talk about this. Because you had a company before this and then you shifted to this and it also became seven-figures. So, I mean, you've got a crazy background. Give us an update.

Tonya: Well, I love to tell people, what's amazing is, I have never taken a single business course. So, I think people think you have to have all these letters after your name or you have to know everything before you dive into it. Listen, you can do it and figure it out as you go. I like to say my MBA comes from the streets, the mean online streets.

Jaime: Seriously, they are mean and online, yeah.

Tonya: We try things out, they don't work out. We try things out, they succeed. All of it is an opportunity for us to learn and grow. And, I think that for me, I started my first business with \$50.00. And, literally standing in my kitchen, making a decision, because my husband was traveling the world and was gone all the time, and he didn't like it. It made it him sad that he wasn't there for our family. And so, I made a decision that I was gonna grow my business to the point where he could come work alongside of me. My husband, does actually, have a real MBA from a real college.

And, to have that audacious goal was kind of crazy, knowing that I had no business experience. But, I think part of it is that fearlessness that you have to have. That belief in yourself, that you have the ability to choose your own path. And so, I did that. I made choices. And, within about a year, I was able to make that goal happen, he was able to come and work with me. And, then when I made the decision to close that business to open up inkWELL Press, again it was this idea of choosing. And, you'll see that idea, that theme, again and again throughout the book, that we feel that we don't have choices. We feel that we can't do things because we don't know what we're doing or we've never done something before.

But, that's just an opportunity, that's all it is. You can choose to step into it and try it out. And, that's really what I've done and how I was able to – well, I mean, there's a lot of steps to growing a seven-figure business, but it is all intentionality. I tell people, I'm like, "Come in the door it's all about productivity." They come in and I'm like, "Listen, it's intentional living. It's really about making the right choices for you and your business and your family. And, making those right choices align with where it is you wanna go."

Jaime: I love your enthusiasm also, just as a side-note. And, I completely agree with you. Especially, we live in a world where there's so much information, we have no excuse. Even if it's not accredited, that's doesn't matter, right? Wisdom is, actually going through it yourself. So, but, question. Because you talk about fearless, were you always fearless? Were you that way as a kid or is it something not innate?

Tonya: Yeah, well, I moved 11 times before I was 18. I was the new kid at junior high not once, not twice, but three times. If that doesn't gain a little fearlessness in you, I think honestly I realized that each time with each of my moves that you have an opportunity. You can reinvent yourself or you can conform to who everybody else is, right? And, you try that squeezing into that box of what everyone else expects of you. And, then you realize, gosh, you know what, I don't like everybody else's boxes. I wanna do the things that are important to me and align with who I truly am at my heart. And, I think that's where a lot of my confidence and my fearlessness comes from.

I like to tell people fearlessness doesn't necessarily mean there's a complete absence of fear. It means that I know there's a risk, I know there's some fear, and I step into anyways with the knowledge I already have. And, that's the difference, right? It's looking at those bread crumbs behind me to realize, okay, I've done these things in the past; I can do this moving forward.

Jaime: Well, and like you said, "It's a conscious choice." But, it seems like you have a lot more conscious choice of bigness than most people do, not that entrepreneurs don't in general, but even a lot of entrepreneurs play it sort of safe. So, how do you decide to take a leap as big as you did, especially to leave a business that was very successful?

Tonya: Yes, to leave a business that was successful and our sole income, because my husband, as I mentioned, does work with me. He's my CMO, I'm the CEO. And so, to realize that we were gonna go without income for several months, it wasn't something we took lightly. It wasn't a decision where it was like, "Okay, we're doing this," and then you suddenly start doing it; there was some planning involved. There was a lot of scraping pennies together, checking between the cushions of the couch. And, making some choices that okay, this means we're not going out to dinner anymore.

This means that we're not gonna go to the movies. This means that the kid's after-school activities are gonna scale down. Which, to be honest with you, is a good thing all around, not just temporarily.

Jaime: Seriously.

Tonya: Again, it's all choices to decide that I believe in this so strongly that I'm going to go all in. It's not about dipping your toes in the water; it's about making that dive. But, it doesn't have to be a dive without checking the depth, first. We don't wanna dive into the shallow end. We wanna take some time and prepare. We want that leap to be like a leap onto a bridge, right? It doesn't have to be over a chasm but it can still be a leap with that knowledge behind you that you have an idea of where you're going. It's okay if you don't know exactly what that path looks like. But, you have an idea and you know what you've done in the past that you can bring with you on this journey. And, I think that makes a big difference in feeling confident in making those leaps.

Jaime: How do you know that you're a 110% all-in though? Because even if you're listening to intuition, even if you're like, "Ah, I get this inkling," sometimes it's subtle. And then, it's hard to go I'm gonna leap right now, right? It's an over-time potential kind of thing. So, how do you tap into that?

Tonya: Well, first of all, you hear my enthusiasm.

Jaime: Yes.

Tonya: This is how I feel every day that I talk about my business. This is how I feel every day when I talk about my book. I'm on fire for it. It's exciting to me. I love what I do. I love the impact that I make. And, I think part of it is I know what the opposite feels like because I grew a business that I didn't feel passionate about. I

grew a business that I grew because I wanted my husband to come on board. It wasn't something that I was like, oh, I really wanna do this. And so, to me it is this idea of looking at our long-term of where it is we wanna go, not where I wanna go in six months or 12 months, but what do I want my legacy to be?

What are the things I wanna be remembered for beyond me, beyond my children? And, really understanding what that is. And so, for me, it is, a lot of that idea that I talk about in the first section of the book with your North Star, your mission, your vision, your core values, and getting those to all align so that guides you on your path of where you wanna go.

Jaime: Okay, so let's dive into that a little bit. Because I know people that are listening, especially when it's about the money, right? So, my shows all about life first and then money but there's a lot of people that are like, "I'm doing what I gotta do." Can you paint the picture of what it was like when you felt unaligned? Because a lot of entrepreneurs are in it and don't even realize that they're there.

Tonya: Yes. Well, I feel like when you're not – first of all, no one goes into entrepreneurship because they're like, "You know what I really would like to stress out all weekend, and I'd like to work 90 hours a week." We go into it first of all because we wanna solve a problem, we wanna help people, we wanna make an impact. But, also a lot of us go into it because we wanna have a certain lifestyle, right? We wanna be able to have a nice harmony between home life and work-life and be able to take off work at 3:00 p.m., which is one of the things that I do every day. I take off work every day at 3:00 p.m. and I put my Mom hat on and I go and I focus on my kids. That's why we get into entrepreneurship.

So, if you're finding that you're like, "Okay, I'm stressing myself out, I'm wearing myself out, and I'm not even happy," it's not worth it. Even if it's paying the bill, even if it's checking all those boxes of like, yep, good follower count, yep, making money, yep, covering the rent. I think we tend to undervalue the idea of happiness. Happiness is, no matter what our goals are, that's truly what we're striving for. You wanna run a marathon; you wanna be happy crossing that finish line, right? So, that feeling you want, you wanna grow a business; you wanna be happy not having a boss. You wanna lose weight; you wanna feel happy on the beach.

So, when we stop and take stock of, Am I happy? Is this fulfilling to me? Do I feel like what I'm putting forth is making the impact I

want? That's when we can begin to see whether we're in alignment or not. For me, when I was out of alignment it meant I was waking up in the morning going, ugh, I gotta go to work, right? Even though for me work was just going down to the basement kind of a thing, right? And so, it's really when you start to see and you notice that things don't feel right. And, a lot of it is the intuition. A lot of it is listening to your gut.

And, I think we tend to think sometimes that's maybe a little woo-woo to listen to our gut, but that's our first line of defense. It's in there intentionally. It's wired into us to listen and pay attention to ourselves and how we're feeling. And then, paying attention to not just whether I'm in the black, or in the red, but is the money I'm making put forth the mission that I want. You gotta make money for the mission. Money is important. Listen, my kids, they like to eat three times a day. I mean, I've tried to convince them to go down to one, they won't do it. So, you have to have money.

And really, the intentionality behind your business has to be to make money because you're responsible for your team; you're responsible for your family, responsible for yourself. We have to make money and it's important. And so, we can't undervalue that. But, the element of happiness has to tie in there. And, it is my mission to help people understand that you can have that great, audacious, wonderful life and still have that time for yourself. For self-care, for pouring yourself fully into your family, for being present, for really taking account, what is truly important to you? And, I think we're so busy chasing down fires in our businesses that we forget, why did I start this business in the first place? And, that's where I would go first. Why did you do it?

Jaime: Yeah, and it's okay if you're not happy in your – a lot of times you've also spent so much time and so much effort, you're like, "But, I built it and I should be hap – I should be better than I am right now." And, "Other people don't have it this good and at least it's somewhat better than what I had before," right? We justify all this stuff. And, it's okay not to be happy with it.

Tonya: We get comfortable in our own discomfort.

Jaime: Yes.

Tonya: That's the truth, is we do. We get to a point where we're like, "Well, that's just the way life is." And, I, actually, just said this the other day in a Podcast, on my Podcast, where I said, "That's just

the way life is, is the battle cry for people who don't wanna change." And, I think it's so true. It's like, that's not how life has to be. We are choosing not to choose, it's still a choice. So, going back to that why, why did you do it? Are you still aligned with that why? That helps you see, okay, yes, this is really where I'm needing to be. And listen, here's the truth, doing what you love doesn't mean you love what you do every day.

There's gonna be hard days. There's gonna be days that you don't wanna get out of bed. We all have to pay taxes regardless. We have to deal with disgruntled employees or customers who are difficult or all those things are part of running and owning a business. So, not every day is sunshine and lollipops. So, let's go ahead and throw that out the window. We're not all sitting by the pool doing our work. Sometimes we're sitting in, on a Saturday, doing some work too. But, here's the truth, it's all about how does it feel about what you're putting forth and does it feel aligned with that why that you started it with?

Jaime: Yeah, because you can be aligned and have bad days because everybody's allowed to have bad days too.

Tonya: Everybody's allowed – every single person has a bad day from time to time. Anyone that tells you they're not is lying, that's just their Instagram feed.

Jaime: Right, seriously. And, that's the hard thing; we're so in comparison mode. How long did it, actually take you to go from, okay, intuition, I know I'm going out of this business, wanna go into the other one before the other one started to make money?

Tonya: Yes, that's a great question. So, I knew in October of what year was that? 2014. I knew that I was out of alignment and I knew that I needed to change. But, I also knew that was the busiest time of the year where I was gonna make the money I needed to make for my family. So, I made the decision in October, I know I'm gonna change but I'm gonna give myself space in January after my busy period stops and I'm able to really focus. And then, when I got to January I very intentionally carved out weeks of time, space for me dive in, to dig into who I am. What it is I want to do? What am I passionate about? What is my North Star?

And so, I started doing that in January. And then, I had thought, I had this whole idea that I was going to continue that first business while opening up the second business. And then, what happened is,

I got aligned with my North Star and my North Star was like, “Oh, my gosh, this is what I wanna do.” I wanted nothing to do with that first business. I wanted nothing to do – I was like, “Oh, I don’t wanna deal with you.” So, I ended up deciding to close that business in, I think it was April, closed that business in April. And then, we went without income until we launched in November.

So, the day before our launch I look at my husband, and we scrapped our email list because I didn’t feel like it was fair, they were very different businesses. I didn’t feel like it was fair to bring over those people and expect them to wanna continue following me. So, I started with an email list of zero and I worked over the summer to start building that up and being very intentional with who I was curating and who I was talking to. And so, the day before our launch in November I looked at my husband and I said, “This is either gonna be amazing or we’re gonna be living in our car under a bridge.”

I mean, I maybe laughed, I maybe cried, probably both. And, the next day we launched and with our launch, we had 500 orders.

Jaime: Wow.

Tonya: And, I looked at him and I was like, “Okay, we’re gonna do this, this is gonna happen.” And then, within 18 months of launching the business, we were seven-figures. That’s with me, my husband, and one other part-time employee.

Jaime: Okay, tell me more.

Tonya: So, here’s the thing.

Jaime: Yes, exactly, go ahead.

Tonya: You don’t need a big theme. You don’t need – you don’t need all the bells and whistles to be able to grow to that seven-figures; you need that intentionality. It is about creating systems and creating a way for the business to run so you don’t have to have a huge team, so you don’t have to have all these other things. And so, I think that’s – I live what I teach. And, I think that’s why I’m passionate about it because I’ve created this lifestyle for myself that – that is achievable. It’s not some sort of ideal. You can truly do it.

All it takes is intentionality. Being focused on what it is you wanna do, using things like Pareto principle, which is our 80/20 rule, to

dive into, what are the vital few things that make the biggest impact in my business? What are the things that are gonna help our growth? What's gonna help us with our customer base? What it is that's gonna get our customers excited? And then, choosing to say no to the – to the rest, to the trivial many, right, the 80% that takes up our day. And so, it is getting that laser vision of what do I need to focus in on? And, letting some of that other clutter and noise go away.

I mean, that's why I called the book, 'The Joy of Missing Out' because it is about choosing to miss out on all of the clutter and the noise and finding the joy that's right there, right?

Jaime: Easier said than done though. So, okay so, yeah. Let's break it down a little bit too. Especially, especially when, like you said, "I don't have an MBA." And, there's so much information online too. So, if you're going into learning mode, you could be listening to people that have no idea what they're saying about it but they have really good marketing, you know what I mean? There's just, there's so much noise out there. How did you figure out not only who and what to listen to but also what the 80% of that was?

Tonya: Yes, I love that question. Because you're right, there's a lot of people who are selling some snake oil out there, right? Or, who act like they know what they're doing and then you dive into it, or now at the point where I am in business, where I know a lot of things, I'm like, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, no don't."

Jaime: Yeah, please stop teaching that, please. Yeah, yeah, yes.

Tonya: So, it is too, kind of starting to figure out, start with just a few people. Who do I want I believe in? Who do I trust? Who do I know is not just out there affiliating themselves over and over again? Because there are people who do know what they're talking about but then they don't care, they're affiliating, right? They're doing all these JV kind of things. I want people who are gonna recommend people they believe in, not because they're getting a cut but because they truly believe in them, right? That they really want to put forth these other people's businesses because of the good they're doing.

So, I try to make sure that who I'm following and who I'm paying attention to, who I'm surrounding myself with, is also interested in that, right? And so, that's really how you start to figure out, who are my gurus? Who are the people that I wanna pay attention to?

Finding one Podcast and paying attention to, who are the guests that they have on? Do I believe in that Podcast host's message because I know that they're pulling guests intentionally that are gonna give me the tools I need? And, then you can start to dig into it. I think it's important not to just dive in feet first. You gotta just pay attention and do a bit of Nancy Drew-ing, I like to call it. You gotta be your own Nancy Drew, dive into it.

Because here's the truth, Google's never gonna judge you for your searches. It's never gonna be like, "You searched for that yesterday." It's not. It's okay not to know. It's okay to Google the same person two or three times to figure out who they are and what their message is. And, the other thing is, are they walking their talk? Are they aligning with what they're telling me? If I'm listening to somebody who's telling me you should be doing this in marketing, and then I look and they're not doing that, that's probably not a person I need to listen to.

I like to tell my kids when people show you who they are, believe them, right? You can still like them, you can still follow them, but you have to be like, "Alright, I know who you are now." And, I think it's the same thing in business, we have to choose who we want to follow because there are a lot of people out there in this space. And so, it's easy to go okay, I need to do this, I need to do that, I need to this. But, pay attention to who you respect. And, by respect, I mean that you align with their beliefs. You align with how they grow their business. You align with their belief system.

I think it's important to have diversity of belief and all of that. But, if you're looking for like, how do I wanna grow my business the same way this person is? That's what you do. And, I think the other part of it is realizing that just because person-X grew their business this way doesn't mean that's gonna work for me. We need to make sure that we're playing to our strengths but also playing into our weaknesses. I talk about that in the book because we wanna pretend like, oh, we don't have any weaknesses, like, let's just shove them under the rug, let's pretend they're not there. It's how I cleaned my room when I was 13-years-old. I just would shove it under the bed, but it's still there.

So, we need to be cognizant and paying attention to all these things, right? Instead of pretending that they don't exist, let's pay attention to what our weaknesses are and let's play to them. If email is your weakness, then pay attention to how somebody does email who's not super strong in email. Join some email lists and

follow people who you know aren't copywriting experts, follow ones who are, but also follow ones that aren't that you resonate with. Because you can start to see, oh, this is how they do it. They don't email every day because it's not their strong suit, right?

Same thing with different marketing or different things with operations, pick and choose, it's kind of like a menu. You can pick and choose, it's a la carte. You don't have to do something just because somebody else did it that way.

Jaime: I completely agree. And, it's the nuances that you're talking about though of self-awareness of knowing of what you're like, the strengths and the weaknesses. You need to know what those are before you can cater to either side of them. So, how did you start figuring that stuff out? Was it the going into different high schools, so you, actually knew yourself better? Or, how did you, actually start learning that?

Tonya: I think honestly I'm just really honest with myself that I'm like, "Boy I suck at this." So, you know what I mean? And, it's okay to suck. It's okay to not be good at everything. So, I sat down one day and I started by figuring out, what are my strengths? Let's start with the positive, right? Let's write down the things that I like to do and that I want to do. And, just because you like to do something doesn't mean you have to do it. Let's keep that in mind too.

And then, let's write down the things that maybe we don't do quite as well. What are the things that I struggle with? Or, what are the things that I feel unmotivated for? Those are usually the things that you don't do well. Like, if you're not good at copy, sitting down and writing the email you'll come up with 17 different things. You'll clean out the litter box for the cat before you sit down and do it. Pay attention to whenever you are procrastinating or feeling unmotivated, what's the task that's drawing you to that? It's probably a weakness. And then, have that list there too.

And then, figure out, okay, if these are my weaknesses, can I delegate it? Can I outsource it? Maybe, maybe not. If you can't delegate it, what can I do so I'm not spending the majority of my time on this thing that I'm weaker at? Let's focus on my strengths. Because naturally those are gonna be the areas we're gonna make the bigger leaps and bounds in our businesses, right? And, we talk about the whole idea in the book of systems and how you create that, and creating habits, creating habits for things that we want to

have in our day, creating habits for the things that are harder for us to do in the day.

If email is a struggle for you, let's not set up a time to do it right after lunch when you're tired and sluggish already. Let's set up to do that right after you've exercised where you're energized and a little more upbeat and ready to go, you can knock that out a lot faster. So, playing to your strengths and weaknesses I think is important. And, not following that somebody else's playbook said, they went here and then there and then there and you have to do the exact same path. Blaze your own trail.

Jaime: And, figuring out what that trail is, takes a lot of time.

Tonya: It does.

Jaime: So, when you're trying to start to figure that out, how often do you recalibrate that? And, how often are you so preplanned about what you do and when? Because I know there's optimization. But, then there's also being kind of crazy. When I talk to entrepreneurs and we talk about master schedules, they're like, "I don't wanna be told what to do in a small amount of timeframe," right?

Tonya: Entrepreneurs hate being told what to do, that's why we don't work for other people.

Jaime: Exactly, exactly.

Tonya: It's the truth. So, what I do to make sure that I'm staying aligned with everything is, I sit down in November and at this point in my life, I take two days off. I take two days. I go away from my house because I don't wanna be pulled into laundry. Or, oh, I've gotta fill out this field trip form for my kids or any of that kind of thing. I go away and I do a full-reflection exercise where I reflect back on my business. And, I have it categorized, different areas of my business, the programs I'm offering, our marketing plans, our operations, my staff and culture, my own life harmony. So, I have this whole – categories that I go through.

I look back at how I did in the previous year and then I make a plan for where I think I'd like to go, where am I dreaming of going in the coming year. And, I do that in November and I map it out on kind of a grid of where I wanna go and how I wanna get there. And then, what I do is each quarter of the year I stop and I take another day off. And, the people right now might be like, "You take a lot

of days off.” But, it’s working on my business instead of being in my business, right? It’s an investment. So, I take the day off and then I sit down and I go okay, this is where I wanted to be, am I there? What do I need to focus in on for this quarter?

And, we talk in the book about this idea of you gotta do away with balance because we don’t want balance. If we’re perfectly balanced we’re not moving in any direction, we’re just perfectly still. You have to lean into a priority for a time and then you have to counterbalance. And then, you have to lean into something else for a while and counterbalance. When you’re launching something that’s a time to lean, right, and then you gotta counterbalance. So, each quarter I like to think alright, where do I wanna lean into in my business for this coming quarter? And, I map it out loosely.

And then, each month I sit down on the final Friday of the month and I meet with my team and we talk about alright, here’s what we have going on, right, what do we wanna get done this month? And, we map out and we set goals for each person in the company. Like, alright, for marketing, what are we doing this month? This is where I think we should be. Where do you think we should be? And, that way everyone on my team is aligned. We have the same vision of where we’re going. We’re prioritizing the same. And, I think that’s a big thing, is making sure your team, whether it’s contractors or in-person or virtual, that you’re all aligned.

It does you no good if everybody’s going in different directions and no one knows what the priorities are. So, we sit down and each month we’re like, “Okay, this is what you’re gonna focus on for this month. How does this feel to you? What do you think?” And, I give my team a chance to give input and give their thoughts as well. They meet with me a lot of times during those quarterly planning times because they wanna have a say and I want them to have a say. And so, each Monday we do a Monday Momentum Meeting and we check-in. Alright, it’s Monday, what’s our priorities for this week? What are you prioritizing? What are you prioritizing?

So, each week I’m checking in. I’m not micromanaging. I’m not hovering on top of them but I’m making sure that everybody is stepping in the same direction. And, if we as a group are stepping in that same forward motion, we’re gonna get there faster. If we’re all going – if somebody’s going left and somebody’s going right and someone’s going backwards, we’re gonna be scattered and all over the place. It is about getting everybody on board, getting them

behind your vision of where you wanna go by including them, and then everyone moving together. So, that's basically how I do it. There's a lot of flexibility in that because I think that's important because life needs flexibility.

And, that's the kind of productivity that I teach. It's this idea that we don't want it to be so structured and so rigid that it shatters like glass as soon as something changes. We wanna be able to give in to the ebbs and flows of life, right? We wanna be able to shift and we wanna be able to pivot when it needs to happen, but having that structure it's almost like having your skeleton. Your skeleton doesn't make you run or walk or tiptoe or do any of those things but it gives you the framework so it can happen. And, that's what good planning does for you. It gives you that structure and that skeleton so you can get to where you wanna go.

Jaime: Okay, let's dive deeper into that then too. Because you said when there's other opportunities you can be flexible. But, when do you know when it's a good opportunity and when it's not? Especially when it's like you're already running towards a goal and then we're bombarded by either it's an opportunity or a distraction. And, we have to sort of calibrate and know what's what.

Tonya: Yes.

Jaime: How do you do that?

Tonya: I think that's one of the biggest challenges. I'm pulling up – I wanna show – because in the book, we have this whole, Finding Your Yes Matrix. Because I think this is one of the biggest challenges is it's not about saying no, right? Because people are like, "Oh, you need to say no more often, you need to say no." It's not about saying no, it's about finding your "yes." What are the yeses that are aligned to you? And, I think so often we think opportunity only knocks once so I've got to – I've gotta open the door every single time. But, here's the truth, are all those opportunities going to benefit you on where you wanna go?

So, in this matrix that we walk through it asks questions. Like, the first question is, why do you wanna take this on? Let's start with that gut feeling. What's our intuition telling us? Is this telling us, oh, this is exciting, we really should do this? Or, is it like, oh gah, this is gonna be terrible? Pay attention to that. Then we need to ask ourselves is this aligned with our North Star? Is this aligned with where it is I wanna go? And then, we ask the question do you –

how much time will it take? And, not until we get all the way through like three/four questions do we say, do you have the time? Because I think so often we think, well, I've got 15 minutes so I can do this 45-minute project, right?

Jaime: Seriously, yes.

Tonya: And then, we wonder why we're exhausted and wearing ourselves out. It's not about having the time. It's about is it your "yes"? Is this the "yes" that's right for you? Is it the "yes" that's right for your business to get you to where you want to go? We forget that opportunities, they are at a cost; time, energy, focus. And, that takes away from other areas of our life, of our business, of everything. And so, we have to remember that every time we're saying yes, every time we're opening that door to opportunity, we're saying no to something else. And, that no might be our own passion project or our own goals or time with our families, right, or time with the people that we care about.

We have to remember that. And, I think that is one of the biggest challenges is that right now we are flushed with opportunities in our world. Because of the online space, it's so much easier to wanna do this and wanna that. So, it is actively choosing. And, getting back to the idea of the 80/20 rule; deciding what's gonna make the biggest impact for you and your business.

Jaime: How do you get good at timelining and, actually guessing on how long some of this stuff is too? I used to be a Project Manager and even me I'm like, "Oh, I still suck." I have to double it or triple it to make sure I have adequate time, instead of me feeling like I'm always on a deadline, which sucks.

Tonya: Yeah, it's tricky because you wanna give yourself some buffers, right? You wanna give yourself some breathing room for that flexibility. But, if you have a project that's gonna take an hour and you give yourself a week to work on it, you're gonna feel that week.

Jaime: Yes.

Tonya: It's truly, it's a law called Parkinson's Law, that the project the time will expand if the time allowed, right? And so, but what we will fill it with is the stress and the procrastination and the feelings of guilt that we haven't worked on it. And so, it's this balance of like, okay, how do I figure out how much time while giving myself

these buffers? So, what I like to do is I like to try to track my time and pay attention to past projects. And, I take notes and I write those things down, like last time we did a website redesign it, actually – we thought it would take this long – but we took this long.

Jaime: Right, that specifically, ridiculously, yep.

Tonya: Don't even get me started on a website design.

Jaime: I always joke with my clients and I was like, "Yeah, you think that's what it's gonna be, okay, you can keep thinking that if you want to, feel free," right? And then, they're like, "Ooh, right? It's tough."

Tonya: Right, right. Well, I think too having these – instead of it being one final deadline, having a series of many deadlines and then stopping and reassessing. Is that final deadline still appropriate or does it need to be moved up, does it need to be moved back? And, giving yourself that grace and that flexibility to shift, I think so often we think this needs to be due on this date and there's no way around it. Well, if that's true then you need to give yourself extra, extra space to start it, right?

Because contractors won't get back to you, something goes wrong, something has to be redone, you get a sick kid for a week and then suddenly you haven't worked on the business for as long as you thought you would that week. Those things happen. So, stopping and creating these mini-deadlines for yourselves allows you to stop and say okay, where do I need to go next, what's my next deadline? And, kind of backing it up, instead of setting those deadlines all the way back at the beginning of the project. You can kind of set like an ideal deadline but know that they're gonna shift.

Jaime: What about, especially when I'm working with clients, we don't trust ourselves in our deadlines anymore, right? So, it's like, "Oh, so I pushed it out – well I'll just push it – I just," right? And then, even the act of making a deadline doesn't matter as what it used to, or if you worked in corporate or there's an external deadline, totally different.

Tonya: Yes.

Jaime: So, how do we, actually cultivate, so we're, actually doing something with our deadlines that we're putting there?

Tonya: Well, the thing is, is because we're accountable to ourselves. And so, we are our own boss, so we can lie to our boss and be like, "It's okay, we'll just push that back," right? So, setting some things in place to help you be accountable, whether that's being in a mastermind group or in a peer group where you're checking in on each other and giving yourself like, "Hey, how you doing this week," and doing weekly check-ins can help. I find that to be really, really helpful in kind of pushing me out of my comfort zone from time to time and then also keeping me accountable.

I think too setting up some accountability that's a little bit painful from time to time. Like, if I don't have this done, then I have to take \$100.00 and I've got to give it to this person and I don't get to that \$100.00. That pain of losing that \$100.00 is enough to make you wanna do it. So, find the things that motivate you, sometimes it's positive reinforcement, sometimes it's negative, like the \$100.00 bill. But, giving yourself a reason why you should hit that goal makes a difference.

I'm a big fan of rewarding yourself, with okay, I got – I achieved this goal, I'm gonna reward myself. And, not every reward has to cost money. It could be, you know what, I'm gonna have an extra-long bath tonight, I'm gonna read a longer chapter of the book, I'm going to go for a walk by myself, I'm going to – I mean it could be anything. But, giving yourself little carats to work towards, that also helps at the same time.

Jaime: Do you do that oft – s o, is it something where during the day, where you're like, "Okay, when I get these three things done, then at the end of the day," how do you deal with your reward system? Is it on a long-term thing? Is it usually short-term?

Tonya: I think it depends. It depends on my motivation. Let's be honest. If I'm already highly motivated I don't need as much of an incentive and I don't need to reward myself as much, because if I'm motivated and I'm already excited about it, getting the work done is a reward to me, right? But, if it's something where it's like, "Oh gosh, I gotta do this." So, right now I'm mapping out book number two because I have to turn it into Harper Collins in October. And, I've been dragging my feet because I've had some other things going on.

And, I'm like, "Okay, I need to have the outline ready to go by such and such date." And, when I do it then I'm going to go out to

dinner with my husband to celebrate at this restaurant we've been wanting to go to. So, it's these little carats. It kind of just depends, project-to-project. Again, it's that idea of let's play to your strengths and your weaknesses. If something is a strength you're already excited about it, already motivated, you don't need as much of an incentive. But, if it's something that you're like, "Ooh, I don't wanna do this." Like again, the email example, if you go three months in a row with sending out your newsletter every week and that's a struggle for you, oh my gosh, go and celebrate that.

It doesn't matter what it is. It's, go celebrate. Give yourself a pat on the back. We're really, really quick to criticize and critique and tell ourselves everything we did wrong. And, we do not take the time to be like, "You know what? You did a really good job, solid work there." That makes a huge difference in our day. It really does.

Jaime: Yeah, I read Mastermind Group and it's so funny how often I – you know, me too, when you look at your past week or your past two weeks and last time, all the things that you could have done better versus all of the wins that you have.

Tonya: Right.

Jaime: I feel like as entrepreneurs we've got this modality, rose-colored glasses that are like brown-colored glasses and you're like, "I only see shit. I'm only looking around seeing the crap around me and not any of the good stuff," right?

Tonya: It's – yeah, the brown-colored glasses are absolutely correct. Here's the thing that I think is fascinating, brain research, actually shows that our brain for negative things is like Velcro and for positive things is like Teflon. So, what they have found is that for every time you do something negative, you have to offset it with five positive things. So, it can be that you screw something up and take five seconds to just deep breathe and think of five things you're grateful for in that very moment to kind of switch that flip around. Because we do, we ruminate on it and we stew in it, we love – it's like a hot tub, we're like all these things I did wrong, right? Instead, we need to be like these are the things I did right.

That's one of the reasons why I do the exercise that I talk about in the book, The Five-Minute Download each day, where you do start by writing down. You take one minute to write down the things you did well because we don't pay attention to the things we did

well. We tend to throw those to the side and forget all about them, and all we can think about is all the things we didn't do. I didn't do this, I forgot to do that, I did – I screwed this up, right? Meanwhile, you did 75,000 things well. You did 75,000 things right. You did three things wrong and that's all we can think about. So, that's why it's the first minute is because we need to stop and celebrate.

Let's take a minute, take a deep breath and just realize you know what, I did a lot better than I thought.

Jaime: Because the to-do list will never, ever, ever – no matter how many checklists I have with all the checklists off, if there's three without it's always like but, I –

Tonya: But, there's – yeah, all but these three, yeah. Sure, uh-oh, you know how I feel about to-do lists because you read the book. I don't – I don't believe in to-do lists. So, and that's why, yeah.

Jaime: Let's talk about that. Yes, definitely.

Tonya: I mean LinkedIn found that for business professionals only 11% of people actually achieve everything on their list. So, that means 89% of people go to bed at night going damn, I didn't do enough today, right, even though they were busy all day long. That is the worst way to go to bed. I mean, can you – that is the worst way to feel about yourself, that you didn't do enough. So, let's take the to-do list, let's throw it away because it's too long, it's unorganized, it's half-hazard, you just keep tacking things onto the bottom, and let's instead chose to make a priority list, which is basically a to-do list with intention, right? It's taking that to-do list and prioritizing your tasks based off of how important they are, right?

And, by important, I don't mean that they're an urgent fire. Urgent and important are two very different things. Important means it's connected to that North Star that we talked about, it's linked to a goal, it's something that you and only you can do, and it's an investment in yourself. It's an investment in you and your future. Those are the things that are important. And, by creating a list and we walk through all of this, where there's three categories on the list of Escalate, Cultivate, and Accommodate.

Starting at the top with the work that's important and working your way down, then when you get to the bottom where the things are unimportant, those are the tasks that we're like uh; that aren't hitting the things in our heart that make a difference. They're not

the things that are growing our businesses. They're not the things that make us feel satisfied. So, when we create a priority list and use those categories, that's when we go to bed and we go I did well today, I did really good.

Because I think we get caught up with a to-do list in the number. I did 50 things, right? Well, if you stand somewhere and you take 50 steps in 50 different directions, where are you gonna end up? I mean you could be in the same spot, you might be further behind.

Jaime: Seriously.

Tonya: But, if instead, you chose to make five steps, only five, but they're five steps in one forward direction because they're things that are important to you and your business, where are you gonna end up? Closer to where you wanna go. And, the five steps are so much more meaningful and that's where we feel satisfied at night, that's where we successful, not the 50. We gotta stop thinking about quantity and focus in on the quality of what we're doing. That's what makes a huge difference.

Jaime: I completely agree. I call them active actions versus passive actions, but the same thing – how do you do that in your personal life though? Like I have somebody who does my laundry and some of the – but there's some things that we just have to do.

Tonya: Yes.

Jaime: And, it's more of a pain in the butt to outsource them. So, how do you deal with those things?

Tonya: Yes, I love this question because I like to talk about productivity. I like to call it “wholistically,” wholistically with a “w” because it's your whole life. Because you're more than just a worker bee, right? Maybe you're a wife or a significant other, or a boyfriend, or a cousin, a neighbor, a mom; you're all these other things. We need to make sure that we're feeling productive in our home-life as well as our work-life. And, a lot of what we talk about applies to both. I like to tell people that your home is a non-profit. It's not making any money but what you're creating, the product you're creating, are well-adjusted kids or a family that lives to its values, right, those are the products we're creating.

And so, thinking about it in terms of that it makes a big difference with how you run it. So, those things have to happen, right,

fertilizing the yard, going grocery shopping, all those glamorous activities like dusting and vacuuming and cleaning bathrooms. So, we don't wanna think about it, do we? I mean I don't wanna think about doing laundry ever if I can help it. So, we create automations. Let's do things so they happen automatically and let's bring our team into it. So, for me, I call my family my team. So, I have two kids. My kids are now 17, which is crazy, he's 6'2", and my daughter is 13, and I have my husband John who I mentioned works with me.

And, what we do is on Sunday's we do team planning together and we sit down as a family and we talk about what's going on for this week? What's happening this week? And, everybody knows what's happening and everyone takes part. It's not me running the show. My job is not to serve my kids. My job is to role model for my children, right? And, a good role model is someone who is delegating, who's having people outsource, who is having – living a life outside of being a parent. And so, I bring them on board and everybody takes their part and does what they need to do.

One of the things that we started when they were really, really little was this idea of automations, things that you do automatically so that you're not thinking about it, like laundry. So, when my kids were little, Tuesday was laundry day for them. Every Tuesday it was "It's Tuesday, it's laundry day." And, when they were teeny tiny like two/three years old they would drag their hampers out of their room and into the living room. And then, they got older and I would say, "It's Tuesday, it's laundry day," and they would take their hampers and they'd bring them out and then they would sort them.

Yes, I could have sorted it faster. Yes, there were times I wanted to tear my hair out because it was taking so long. But yes, I was investing in my kids because soon enough I wasn't standing over them and they were sorting the laundry. Then, they got a little bit older and I'd say, "It's Tuesday laundry day." They'd bring down the laundry, they would sort it. Then, they put it in the washing machine. And, right now I don't say "It's Tuesday, it's laundry day." anymore because I don't worry about laundry because my daughter does her laundry, my son does his laundry, and they, actually do the house laundry as well.

So, it's this whole idea of let's set some of those things on automatic as well. We can do that at work with things like inventorying and website maintenance, let's do it at home. Let's do

it with things like laundry and meal planning. Let's do it with when we're gonna fertilize the yard and what day we're gonna mow the yard. Let's stop thinking about those things that are just taking away our brainpower from growing our businesses. Let's set those to work on autopilot. Let's empower our teams to know when those things should be happening so that they can take part in it as well.

Jaime: I love the laundry example.

Tonya: I mean that all – right, that's the whole section three of the book is this idea of, how do you simplify and make sure that those things happen?

Jaime: Well, and I also appreciate the fact that you said that you pulled your hair out a little. Because it's not like it's oh, and then you click a button and your kids learn to do the laundry. It's not like that at all.

Tonya: Oh yeah, there were birds fluttering around and butterflies and rainbows were shooting out of the sky. No, I was like, "Good Lord. Yes, it's a dark put it in the dark pile," right? Meanwhile, you're gritting your teeth and you're like, "Alright, this is fun."

Jaime: One day you'll be doing this whole thing. I know it. I know.

Tonya: One day I'm gonna guess. And, it does pay off, it does pay off.

Jaime: Now, do you put that stuff in the cal – how does – I get that at the beginning you're sort of reminding them and stuff like that. But, do you preplan all of these things? So, do you have a work calendar and a home calendar? Tell me a little bit more about how you're paying attention to that.

Tonya: So yes, I purposely keep those separate because I like to think of them as very separate compartments. So, when I'm at work I'm fully focused and engaged at work and I'm not having the pull of what's happening at home and thinking about that. And then, when I leave work I think of it as a door. I literally walk out, close the door on my brain, and I'm fully 100% present for my family. Because truly they deserve that and I deserve that. They don't deserve –

Jaime: Wait, how do you do that? Because that's way easy – to shut the door and to completely – I have to meditate in between. I have all

these things that I have to do, in order to recalibrate.

Tonya: Well, that's the thing is what's gonna work for you to recalibrate? So, you meditate between? I do the little five-minute download that I talked about, where I talked about the minute one and we go through in the book. I do that and that for me is part of that routine. And, part of it is creating that habit in yourself. And, that's what routines are. They're a series of habits that are built-in stacking one after the other. When you create those habits it's almost like your brain becomes primed for it. It's just like a bedtime routine where it's like your body starts to realize oh, this is time for me to start winding down, right?

So, you do the things that are helping you close that compartment. So, part of that five-minute download, that fifth minute you write down these are the things that are in my head that I'm thinking about right now for work tomorrow. You write those down. That way they're out of your head. And, I know that I'm not gonna forget about them the next day so they're not still nagging on me because that's part of that five-minute exercise. And then, I go home. Now for me, I get in a car and I drive home. So, part of it is that transition but I for a very, long time worked out of my house.

So, what I would do is I would have a desk area set up. For a long time, my desk area was in the kitchen and it was like two feet by one foot, right? So, there were certain things I would put out when I was in work mode and I would put them away when I was in home mode. And so, it almost was like some visual reminders for yourself, some routines to kind of create that readiness in your body and in your brain to shut that compartment and move into the home compartment.

Jaime: It takes practice also.

Tonya: It does take practice. And so too, with my planning, I do my planning for home life on Sundays with my team, so that's part of my team planning. And, I actually have a YouTube video where I walk through the whole thing and you see my kids, actually doing the planning with me just because I know a lot of people are visual learners. So, I do that on Sundays and then on Mondays I do it for work. So again, they're very intentionally separated so that that way I'm able to focus in on what I want to accomplish at work for that week. And, because we've had these automations for a while, we'll shift and we'll change them from time to time.

My kids automatically know because it becomes again a habit. I didn't have to say "It's Tuesday, it's laundry day," because they knew Tuesday was laundry day. When they were five-years-old they knew. All I had to say is "Good morning, it's Tuesday." And, they were like "Getting the laundry out mom," right? They know. And so, now with my kids being older, we've shifted and they have chore charts. So, Kate has a chore chart, Jack has a chore chart. And we – it just depends on what's going on each week, whether it's recycling week or housekeepers are coming this week kind of a thing. And, it says like, here's their chores.

And, I have them choose, I do this on Monday, I do this on Tuesday, I do this. So, I give them ownership over their own schedules. But, they've created their own automation. So then, on Monday they know that they're gonna do this, on Tuesday they know they're gonna do that. And so, it takes it out – it takes me, as the micromanaging mom, out of it. I'm not nagging them. I'm not worrying about whether it's getting done because we sit down on Sunday, and on each Sunday we sit down and we say, "How did your chores go last week? Let's take a look." And, we talk about it and then we plan for the next week to come.

So, it is so important. We think about empowering our teams a lot. We think about managing our teams at work. We need to manage our team at home and we need to outsource to our team at home. Because truly, when we bring them in, it makes them part of the circle. It makes – we feel like we're supposed to do all of the heavy-lifting, but when you allow others to come in and do some of the lifting of you, helping you out when you're having a busy or stressful week, your kids will rise to the occasion. They love to be a part of it.

Think about when they were little and they were like, "I do it myself," right? Or, "I do this," and they'd wanna do big grown-up things. People wanna believe that they belong to the group and if you're doing everything for them, they know it's for them and they're not contributing. So, you bring them in and that makes your team stronger. I'm really big on building relationships and I think productivity allows a lot of that, with creating these systems.

Jaime: I love that you link the two because most people don't link those two things at all.

Tonya: Yeah.

Jaime: And, community in general, because that's – I mean you're creating something with your whole family. That's awesome. I didn't even realize what time it was. So, that's always a good sign. So, we'll have to start wrapping up. I was like, "Wow, I didn't even realize it's been that long," which doesn't happen very often. So, I have to ask the last question, what is one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of a million?

Tonya: Yes, what I would tell you is this, take let's say 20 minutes to write down all the things you're doing, all the tasks that you're doing for your business. And then, I want you to rank them one to ten. What are the things that are really making the impact, in your business? What are the things that are moving you forward? And, let's say that you have, let's say you have 20 things on that list. If we're thinking about that Pareto principle, the 80/20 rule, 20% of 20 is 4, is that right? Oh, my gosh math, not my strong suit.

Jaime: Mine either.

Tonya: Take that 20%. Put that at the top, those are your priority items. All the other stuff, help it go away as much as you possibly can. Focus in on that 20% of your actions and your job that will drive your business forward. That is by far the fastest, easiest, simplest way to get to that seven-figure mark.

Jaime: And, everybody knows the Pareto principle and nobody actually – not nobody. You have to do it a lot, people, a lot; because it gets in the way all the time.

Tonya: Again, it's the check-ins, right, the quarterly check-ins, where you're checking in every now and then. It makes – it's a five-minute exercise and it makes a huge difference.

Jaime: Awesome. Where do we find more about you? Where do we listen to your Podcast? Where do we get your book?

Tonya: Yes, so you can find me at tonyadalton.com. So, that's Tonya with an "o" and a "y." You can find links to my Podcast there, productivity paradox. My book is, 'The Joy of Missing Out.' There are links there or you can go to joyofmissingout.com. But, it's available anywhere. It's at Target, Barnes & Noble. Or, right now I think it's at Wal-Mart, it's at, anywhere and everywhere, Amazon. So, you can find it there. But, tonyadalton.com is the best place to find all things about me.

Jaime: Awesome. Thank you so much for coming on the show today. I totally, really appreciate you.

Tonya: Thank you so much for having me.

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Duration: 50 minutes