

SEASON ONE - EPISODE TEN

BEHIND *the* MEMBERSHIP

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- Callie: Welcome to episode 10 of Behind the Membership. In this episode, I'm talking with Laura Robinson from Worditude and we're taking a look at how her membership has evolved in the first nine months that it's been running. One of the things that Laura does, which is a little bit different to most memberships, is that she actually includes quite a lot of one-to-one feedback and support, which isn't something you'll typically see in this kind of membership site. Laura's membership stands out in that respect. We also talk about her initial launch and how she's using collaborations as a great way of getting ongoing members for her membership site. Whilst Laura's membership site isn't even a year old yet, there's a lot of great takeaways from this interview, so enjoy.
- Speaker 2: Welcome to Behind the Membership with Callie Willows. Real people, real stories, real memberships.
- Callie: Today, I'm joined by copywriter and content strategist Laura Robinson from Worditude. Thanks so much for joining me on the show today, Laura.
- Laura: Oh, you're welcome.
- Callie: I'm excited to talk a little bit more about your membership. Let's start with the basics. Your membership site is The Worditude Club. Can you tell us a little bit more about the membership, what it offers, who it's for?
- Laura: The membership club is a library of materials that will help people create the website copy that they need for their website, and then also help them to write engaging emails to their email list, blog posts, guest posts. Alongside that, I run a Facebook group, but also can contact me through email support

so that I'm providing feedback on what's been written and just guidance on what content might be needed. It's kind of a mixture between a handholding service, but also that pre-written content for people to work through.

Callie: That's awesome. You're kind of helping people add that extra pizzazz to their website.

Laura: The biggest thing I have to help with is people really suck at selling themselves, so they find it really difficult to write anything that might be even vaguely nice about themselves on their own website. That's the hardest thing is I keep looking at what they've written and sending it back and go, "No, you can do better than that," just to keep pushing them to own what they do and speak up with more pride about their work.

Callie: Yeah, that sounds awesome. It sounds like you have quite a lot of feedback involved in the membership, quite a lot of more one-to-one kind of content, as well.

Laura: There is now. To begin with I had in mind that it would be much more hands-off and a more traditional type membership model because I worked one-to-one with clients. I thought this would be more based on the platform and leave them to it, but I didn't find that very rewarding. I much prefer to get involved and be able to get to know each of the businesses. I find that just a few minutes of input here and there can make a really big difference and unstuck people and get them moving again. I'm really happy to provide that input.

Callie: Is that input done kind of publicly through the community Facebook group or is that done privately?

Laura: We can do it either way. I'm happy to respond by email if people prefer, but often people ask in the Facebook group, which is only the people who are members can see inside the Facebook group. That's a really good learning environment because a lot of the questions that come up are similar to questions that other people have got but maybe they haven't got round to asking or haven't thought about yet. Something else that I've really enjoyed about that group is if I'm not immediately available, they are starting to chip in and help each other out, which is nice, as well.

Callie: Yeah, it's great when your community gets to that stage where they kind of ... it almost runs without you at times.

Laura: It's getting there. And if I don't know the answer, if it's something that's not quite my field of expertise, people put in the questions anyway because we know that they'll be someone in there that can help them out.

Callie: Yeah. Is it aimed at a particular type of business, the membership, or is it kind of open to anyone?

Laura: It works best for service-based businesses, and ideally have already been going for a year or so. They're already confident that what they're doing works and what they're doing will make them money, but they need to get in front of more people and they need to make it more efficient. I find that at the beginning we tend to woo our clients one at a time with conversations and lots of in-persons meetings or Skype chats. And then you get to a certain point where that's just no longer possible because you're spending a lot of your time delivering work and then you're not able to market your services in person. And then that's when the website needs to step up and take over that marketing activity.

Callie: Yeah. It's that kind of next level essentially.

Laura: Yeah. It's still fairly early days for a lot of my members, but they know that what they've got is a good business model and they know it's going to work. They just need that help growing their audience and making it all a seamless journey from when that audience member first meets right through to becoming a paying customer. I help them hook all of that together so it's a seamless transition rather than just throwing sales-based emails or adverts at them constantly.

Callie: How long has the club been open for now?

Laura: Since November last year, so almost about nine months now. That's gone really quickly.

Callie: Still pretty early days for you then, really.

Laura: Yeah, still early days. I'm still finding my feet about the direction that I want to take it in. I've built up ... there's a good selection of content in there already. In the early days, I was creating new content every month. Now I don't need to do that because I think that becomes overwhelming for people to try and keep up with. I didn't want to just create it for the sake of it, so now I'm working towards making that content much more easier to navigate and helping people know where they need to dive in and what they need to do next.

Callie: Great. You're much more flexible with that content schedule now from the sounds of it.

Laura: Yeah. If something comes up where people ... there's an appetite for a new piece of content ... I've had a few one-to-ones with my members this

summer, which has helped me to get a feel for where we're going and what they want from me. There's a couple of things that keep coming up, one of them is how to create a hardworking home page. I don't have a module on that already, so I'll create that because I know there's a few people that will benefit from it.

Callie: Okay, great. So very much member-led then in terms of what content you're creating.

Laura: Definitely. It has been from I would say the first three or four months. I started out with a plan, and then once I had a good membership base, about 30 or 40 people, I was able to be much more led by what they wanted.

Callie: Awesome. Is the content you're creating, is that courses? Is it kind of articles? What kind of content is the membership made of?

Laura: It depends on the size of what I'm trying to teach. It depends how ambitious it is. Sometimes I can do like small bonus guide, which are more like a very, very long blog post. If something's a bit more complicated, then I'll write a post to walk them through it and do a video at the top. It's like the video gives an overview of what's going to be involved, a blog post that talks them through it, and then usually a workbook, as well, for them to start keeping track of their own thoughts or information that they want to record.

Callie: Okay. So you're kind of delivering a few varieties of content there.

Laura: Yeah. It's really flexible because I use MemberPress. It's really flexible how I deliver the content. It hasn't got to look the same every time, so I'm able to adapt it to whatever I think is going to be the best way of getting across my point.

Callie: Awesome. Is the membership open all the time for anyone to join, or do you only open at certain time periods?

Laura: It will be. I've closed it over the summer while I've been working to rearrange the library and make a smoother onboarding experience for new members. Once it reopens at the end of September, it stays open.

Callie: Cool. Did you decide to close the doors because you were rejigging a lot of things, you didn't want that disruption? Or was it kind of a more strategic relaunch close?

Laura: I didn't think I would be able to get the new people the attention that they deserved if I was busy doing something, so it made sense to me. I'm not very good at multi-tasking to that extent, so it makes sense to me to go, "I can't

concentrate on that right, so we're just not going to have any new people for a while. And then I'll get on with making it how I want it to be, and then I'll open the doors so that the next wave of new people get the best joining experience that I can give them."

Callie: Yeah, I think that works well if you're making big changes to the site or even just rejigging things a lot. It gives you that extra push when you do open the doors, as well.

Laura: Yeah. I mean, I'm not going to do a massive launch. I've been thinking about that a lot and I thought, "I don't want to get stuck back into that launching cycle," because I find it really exhausting and it doesn't really suit me. So the doors will be open, and then I'm just going to carry on with my usual marketing activity and just see where it takes me. I'm hoping for a smooth number of joiners every month, just a handful of people every month so that it doesn't disrupt the group too much and it's manageable for me to get to know those people and get them really stuck into the materials before the next wave of people join.

Callie: Yeah. It sounds a bit more like you're going for consistency rather than quantity kind of thing?

Laura: Definitely. Yeah.

Callie: What gave you the idea to actually create the membership?

Laura: I had a little band of followers who would ask me questions in other Facebook groups, or sometimes via email, and they weren't really in a position to work with me one-to-one as a copywriter, but also it wasn't as simple as just needing one page of web copy or a couple of pages of web copy. It was more about the whole content marketing journey and the whole sales funnel. I was getting nudged by them to like, "We'd like something. Is there some way we can pay you? Is there some sort of club where we can ask you for help and not feel guilty that we're doing it for free all the time?" It was definitely demand-led.

And then, I had it in my mind that I was going to do this in 2017. I'd like pencilled it in, so it wasn't going to happen last year. My business coach was available for some one-to-one sessions at the end of the year and I thought, "Oh, let's just do it." It ended up taking on a bit of a life of its own, and I launched it a lot quicker than I had intended to. But it definitely helped because there was that demand there for it, so I knew I wasn't just working hard on something that was a shot in the dark and hoping that someone would want it in the end. I was trying to create something that I had already been asked for.

Callie: Yeah. Did you actually involve your audience in what you were creating? Did you get their ideas on content and layout and things like that?

Laura: Yeah, definitely. I was emailing them or asking them in Facebook groups. Some of them, we've ended up being quite good friends so we chat online a fair amount. I can say, "This is what I have in mind, this is how I think it's going to work." I've got a group of about four or five people that I really trust, as well. I know that they would tell me if that was not the right thing to do, because it's easy to get a group of supporters who love everything that you do, but that's not necessarily what you need. Sometimes you need someone who's going to say, "No, that's a terrible idea because of these reasons." Yeah, there was a lot of chatting with my trusted circle of online business friends and they gave me a lot of their input and direction so I could feel quite confident about what I was doing.

Callie: Cool. When you did launch, did you do a big launch? Or was it more of a softly, softly launch?

Laura: I used this analogy in another Facebook group. It was like watching a drunk arrive home and try to get through the front door, because I was so exhausted by the time it was done. I was just like flailing around like, "It's done. I finished it. It's built. You can join now if you want to." I was just so worn out by it. I had a few things. I had in mind that I wanted to get 40 people at a start, so I did a little start-up and just kept sharing that to say how ... just keep it visible that people were joining and there were people already in this club, and just really ad hoc Facebook posts. I don't think any Facebook Ads. I had a relatively small email list, so I emailed them a few times. It was a real cast iron example of how not to do it, but I was just tired at the end I was just like, "Just get it done. Get some people through the door."

Callie: But were you happy with the results of the launch in the end then?

Laura: Yeah, it was good. I did get about 40 people. I think I ended at 38, and then I did have a period where the doors were closed after that because I needed to sleep. Yeah, it was a good start. It was what I had aimed for, and it was a good group of people to get me started with. And then once we had settled into a routine, then the doors have been open since then until this summer where I've decided I needed ... It comes in waves, doesn't it, when you've decided like, "Okay, it's time for a revamp," or, "Now it needs a bit of a makeover." This is like, we're ready for phase two now from September.

Callie: Yeah. In terms of, you were mentioning there the revamp and things, what changes have you actually decided to make with the membership?

Laura: I'm making a stronger road map, because your road map is brilliant in The Member Site Academy. I have tried one before, but it's really hard to get something together that's going to work for everyone when they first arrive because everyone's at a different stage in their journey. I'm working on one that makes it a bit easier to see where people need to join in. And then, how the actual library of content is laid out because when I started out there wasn't much in the library, so every item in the library could have a pretty big picture and a reasonable size description and that was fine. You could still see it fairly quickly at a glance. Now there's about 15 or 16 modules on there. You're going to be scrolling for a while to find the thing that you wanted. I need to find a more suitable way of organising that.

I also want to work on automating the onboarding. There's some emails that go out automatically for new members to give them their login details and say welcome, and that's about it. Everything else I've been doing manually up until this point, which is quite tiring. Now I need to get that ... because I don't know what I need to automate until I've done it myself a few dozen times and then you think, "Okay. Now I need to automate this." So I'm doing that, as well.

Callie: Cool. Yeah, automating that onboarding definitely makes a huge, huge difference.

Laura: I'm just not very good at outsourcing our automating anything because I feel like I really need to have done it. I need to know how this really works before I can do a good job of automating it or asking someone else to do it for me. Yeah, it's been a bit slow and painful, but I'm ready now to let go of that bit of individual attention. I'll still be interacting with my member individually, it just means that I won't have to do those first few emails myself.

Callie: Yeah. What do you think has been your biggest challenge so far in running the membership?

Laura: It's been quite hard to juggle that alongside still doing one-to-one work. Again, because I think that's not how my brain is wired. My brain likes to have one job not two, and this is already part-time. In addition, I've got two children. There are already quite a lot of jobs going on, and so if I have a big one-to-one job on, it's really hard to discipline myself to put the time aside to keep working on the membership site. And then, it's hard if I'm really involved in the membership site to remember I still need to be marketing myself for one-to-one work, as well. I would say juggling the two sides of the business has been quite a challenge.

Callie: Do you have a team helping you out, or is it all just you?

Laura: I'm amassing my team now. It's getting bigger. I have a VA, and she has a team. So it's not just one VA, she has a team. That's great. I know that there's a lot of the day-to-day stuff now that lands on my door and I can just go, "Help me, Jess. Will you deal with this?" She also set up my membership site for me, so she knows how it works inside and out. That's been really important to me to have someone who can just keep the momentum going, as well. I guess you find this, too, but you can be doing one job and then a technical problem comes up that could just throw you off track for hours. But now I don't get distracted by it. I can just fly that off to my VA team and say, "You sort that out. I'm going to stay focused on what I'm doing."

I have a business coach, and she helps me not lose mind or go and get a normal job. It's like her full-time job is to talk me down from the cliff edge when I'm going, "That's it. I'm just going to go and work at a supermarket. This is too difficult. I don't want to do it anymore."

Callie: Hopefully that doesn't happen too often.

Laura: It's about two or three times a year, and it'll always be something really stupid that sets me off like if a WordPress update goes wrong or I lose a piece of work, then decide it's just too much. It's too hard. Then I get over myself. I'll go and eat some ice cream and some crisps or something, then I'll be fine.

Callie: I have days like that where it's just like, "Okay." You get to a certain point where it's like, "Yeah, I just need to go and watch Netflix all day or something and come back to this tomorrow."

Laura: I have days where everything I touch breaks, and then after the third thing breaking I think, "I'm just going to go and sit quietly in the corner where I can't do any damage. Today is not the day for working. I'm just going to go away now."

Callie: Yeah. I think it definitely goes better if you just give in to that, as well. Rather than ...

Laura: I'm learning. I've learnt the hard way, and I feel really proud of myself when I get to that moment. Or when I'm working on something really late at night, like one or two o'clock in the morning and you thinking, "Oh, I can just do this one extra job." And the little voice inside me goes, "Don't do it. Don't you do it. You know this is going to go wrong." And then I've realised now I'm a grown up, because I listen to that voice and I don't push through the tiredness, I just go to bed. Whereas, three or four years ago, I would have carried on and made a big mess of it.

Callie: Yeah. Definitely been there. If that's kind of the challenge, the juggling things, what's been your highlight or the thing that makes running the membership worthwhile for you?

Laura: I really, honestly love getting to see everybody's businesses and seeing the progression in them. When I was working one-to-one with people, it's a smaller number of businesses that you get to see and you only get to see them for the tiniest snapshot in time. Usually it was for a launch. That was exciting because I could see that they would ... and I would get repeat clients, as well ... It's exciting. I can see what the new thing is they've created and help them to launch it and see the results that they have. But with the membership club, I've got people on that have been there from the beginning, so about nine months in now and I can see the progression of their business in that time.

I really love seeing the progression in their writing, as well, because people arrive and they're quite stiff and corporate in the way that they write their web copy and blog posts because that's how we're taught we're supposed to write, sound professional and grammatically correct and everything has to be done in a particular way. And then, you can see the progression of how the sound more and more like themselves on their web copy and in their blog posts, see their confidence grow that they'll post more frequently on their social media pages. I really love seeing that.

And the variety of businesses. I think we might have a couple where they're very similar, but 60 or so different businesses that I would not have been able to think of, like I wouldn't know that was a business, but it is. You know what I mean? Someone will say to you, "Yeah, I'm going to do this as a job." You just nod and go, "Really?" But they are. They run successful businesses and it's really exciting to see them growing and what they want to achieve.

And I like that they're all very similar mindset to me, that you don't just have a business and then it sits at a certain point and you're happy with that. They're always looking towards, "What's next? What's next? How are we going to grow next? What direction are we going to move in next?" That's been encouraging for me because sometimes it feels a bit ... I think, "Am I never satisfied because I'm always thinking 'What's next? What's next?'" But to be surrounded by other business owners that think in a similar way is really encouraging to think, "Oh, actually I'm not some kind of dissatisfied freak. It's quite natural to be having ambitions all the time for what you want to do next."

Callie: Yeah. Sounds like a great group of members. Out of-

Laura: I do love them. I hope that comes across.

- Callie: It definitely does. Out of interest, because obviously you're UK based, is your members majority UK based or is it quite an international audience?
- Laura: It's completely international. The two furthest flung that I've got from where I live is Chrissy, she's in Costa Rica, and James in New Zealand. I think we basically wrap around the world. And then there's somewhere everywhere in between. There's a few in Europe, and then just mostly like America. Not many Australians. I do okay for people in New Zealand, but not so many Australians. But yeah, from all over the world and not even just UK speaking. I got a couple where English is their second language, as well. That is also very interesting. Presents a new dynamic to it.
- Callie: Definitely. I love how international memberships can be. It's one of my favourite things just having members from all around the world, but I'm always interested because, with UK memberships in particular, you either tend to find that they don't have any UK members or they're very much UK-centric. I always find that a curious kind of ...
- Laura: Yeah. When I started as the ... Like my copywriting business is on a .co.uk website because I don't know, I just wanted to make it clear that I was in the UK. I suppose I'd had a few Skype calls where people are suddenly taken aback by my British accent. [inaudible 00:22:41]. I was like, "Okay, well I'm just in the UK." Then at least you know what to expect. But it didn't put people off, so my one-to-one clients were international, as well. Yeah. I don't think it's even skewed in any particular direction, it just seems like a really good collection of people from all over the place. I have a few that don't stay still either. Sometimes they're in Switzerland and then sometimes they're in Bali, or sometimes in they're Australia and sometimes they're in France. It's hard to keep track of them because they keep moving around. They're living the like entrepreneur/traveler lifestyle that I can only dream of as I'm in my shoffice in Essex.
- Callie: Your shoffice?
- Laura: Shoffice. Shed office. My neighbour christened it.
- Callie: Quite like that. Let's shift gears a little bit now then and talk about what you're actually doing to grow the membership. Obviously the doors are closed at the minute while you're revamping things, but when they were open what was working well for you when it came to attracting new members?
- Laura: I think one thing that helped me to get in front of new people is when I collaborate with other business owners and also that's really cost efficient because I don't pay anything for it, or we pay some Facebook Ads, but the

budget is nothing like what you need when you're trying to get something going on your own. I've done collaborations where I've contributed to their programmes, where they run a programme and I'm like a guest speaker on it, or on a live event. I'll be on a call with them.

We did a collaboration a couple of months ago, might only have been a month ago, Female Entrepreneur Week where a few of us got together and we all had different specialisms so we had my business coach, Nadia, was in it and Caroline, who is my Facebook Ads person. I'm not going to start naming people because then I'll forget. I'll leave someone off the list. But we got together and did a week long programme of events just giving away information for free for people who were starting out. They weren't necessarily our target audience, it's just we thought when we were starting we really wish someone had told us this stuff, so we're going to just let other people hear it for free.

I've always got something like that on the go because I like to team up with other business owners. It gets me in front of their owners and then we can usually grow, get more people in, just because you're doing something. Any amount of activity attracts attention, so I try to do something like that at least every other month.

Callie: Awesome. I think with copywriting, as well, it's so relevant to pretty much everybody's business.

Laura: It's great, and I've been able to piggyback onto other people's programmes. Like for people who are Facebook Ads specialists, it's still helpful for them to have my input. I'm not just about writing web copy. I can jump into different programmes and help their audiences with anything to do with words, really. That has meant it's very flexible in terms of the audiences I can get in front of.

Callie: Awesome. Once someone's actually joined, how do you keep them coming back month after month? How are you keeping them engaged?

Laura: When they first join, we do 20 minute ... Well, it's supposed to be 20 minutes, but we talk for too long ... Skype call where I just get to know where they are in their business and I get a feel for what would be the materials that's most going to help them. I started doing that as an experiment, but I'm going to keep doing it because it's so helpful for me to know exactly where they are when I then give them feedback on other pieces of work they do further down the line. From that point, we make a 90-day programme and these are your priorities for the next 90 days. And then, we just make sure every month we're rolling, keep updating that so we always know what the most important next steps.

Usually people follow the same pattern. You need to get your website in order first because there's no point going out and getting a huge audience of people if your website's not ready to receive that big audience and to use that audience efficiently to convey into sales. Our first step is to get the website sorted out, and then we look into growing the audience. And then once they're coming in onto your email list, what do you do to net them to keep their sales going. I find that naturally a next step opens up. As soon as you're done one thing, you can add another thing to do the to-do list. It kind of naturally rolls on that they'll still need me the next month.

Callie: I love that you kind of have that personal touch. I think for a lot of people they wouldn't necessarily go to do that kind of one-to-one call with the membership because it obviously doesn't scale very well.

Laura: Yeah. If you think about it a lot because that's not the natural way to do things and I had to sit and think because I know it's not scalable. I know that that's not going to get me hundreds of members. After a lot of thinking, I thought, "Actually, but that's not why you went into business. I went into business so that I could do work that I love and get paid for it." And so then it was my job to decide what that looks like. It wasn't my job to create a membership site that works on paper or is how everybody else tells you how to do it, it was my job to make a membership site that was exactly what I wanted, that would be like my dream job to turn up and do every day. That's how that's come about because that's how I wanted to be spending my time and that's the level of engagement I wanted to have with my members. I appreciate that that's not going to work for everybody.

Callie: No, I love that though. I love that you've actually sat down and thought about, "Okay, so what do I want from this membership? What's going to work for my members? What are my actual goals and what's going to make me happy?" Because I think, as you touched on there, so many people are just like, "Well, a membership has to be X, Y, Z, so I can't do this." But I do think having it in a way that works for you, makes you happy, makes you want to do it long-term, and fits with your goals is essential. Yes, that one-to-one element might make it a little less scalable, but you've already mentioned that you're kind of wanting that consistency rather than quantity anyway.

Laura: Yeah, definitely. It got scary to me to think, "Okay, if I scale it, what does it look like in a year? What does it look like in two years?" I wasn't working towards a model where I can outsource almost everything and I can have limited input. That's not what I want right now. Maybe in the future that's something I want, and I'll create a different product to do that. But it just didn't suit what I wanted right now, and it didn't suit what my members want either. They've really responded well to having that one-to-one input.

There is a bit of a gap, I think, between one-to-one work or if you pay a lot of money for a short-term programme where it's high intensity. But what if you just want a little bit of help every now and then to keep you chugging along, which is basically what I want to deliver.

Callie: It sounds like you've kind of found a good place in the market there for that, as well.

Laura: I think so. It's been well received, so time will tell. I reopen in September. If at Christmas, I think, nobody has joined then I've made a mistake. But I think I'll be okay.

Callie: Yeah. It sounds like you're doing a good job and people are wanting this.

Laura: One of the loveliest things to hear is from people who are relatively early in their business and they're saying that on their wish list of things that they want when they're marking more money is that they would like to be able to join the club, like that's something that they aspire to. It's not massively financially out of reach, but I remember having that when I started out. One of my things on my wish list was I wanted to buy Yeti mic. Now, it was not a big deal, but at the time it was like, "I really want to do that." Or I wanted to join certain programmes. I wanted to be able to spend money on Facebook Ads. It's nice to know that my little programme makes it on to other people's lists of things they wish they could buy.

Callie: Yeah. That's absolutely awesome when you're on people's wish list for one day.

Laura: Yeah. The other thing that's really cool is some people print out my workbooks and then they post a picture of it and they say like, "Oh, I'm working on this today." I think, "Oh I made that on my computer."

Callie: Yeah, I love that. Okay. Let's talk about life as a membership site owner now. You've already mentioned that this is kind of part-time with you. You're still doing one-to-one work and you've got your kids, as well. What does a typical day look like for you now you have the membership? Has it changed your daily routine much?

Laura: It's changed the routine over the week. So I have Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are membership days. And then, if I have one-to-one work, I have to slot on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so over the course of the five days everything gets looked at. That was working fine while the children were at school and we had a normal household routine. And then, in May, my husband got made redundant so he's been home for 12 weeks now. That has thrown things off a little bit because ... and the kids are on summer holidays,

so nobody needs to leave the house ever. I'm slowly becoming more and more nocturnal. We don't go to bed at a sensible time or eat at normal times. I would like to pretend I've managed to maintain a nice, healthy working week, but that's not happened at all. But I'm sure I'll get back to it in September.

Callie: I think the good thing with the membership though is that you can be quite flexible with your time most of the time. There's not normally the same kind of deadlines or time schedules with a membership that you would have with other kinds of businesses.

Laura: Yeah, definitely. I haven't taken on one-to-one clients over the summer because I know I haven't got the mental space to deal with it. If I'm going to have a one-to-one client, I need the whole day to be really peaceful and not have any distractions. That's not possible over the summer holidays. But with the membership club, it feels like it's a different part of my brain that's required to answer questions and give feedback than is to write copy. I can cope with doing that in much smaller chunks of time. It doesn't irritate me as much when I get interrupted because I find it easier to jump back in where I was. It's much better suited to family life.

Callie: Cool. Overall, what impact would you say having the membership has had on your life and business so far? Obviously it's still early days, but how do you think it's affected what you're doing?

Laura: It's definitely smoothed my income because I think like a lot of people who work one-to-one, especially copywriters, it's a bit of a feast or famine. You are either begging people to leave you alone because you've got so much work on, and then turn around and they've all gone and there's nothing to do for three months. It's definitely smoothed my workload and smoothed my income. It's helped me to be better at it, as well. I'm having to learn new things all the time, because as much as I think I know, one of my members is always going to come back and ask me a question I don't know the answer to. Then I'm having to research and learn more things all the time, which I really enjoy.

Having the membership club does naturally market my one-to-one services, because I'm constantly marketing the club but there's always going to be those people that look at that and go, "No, I don't want to have to figure out this myself. I just want to pay you and you do it for me." It's made it easier to get one-to-one clients because there's always some sort of marketing noise going on around my business now, whereas before I would definitely go very quiet when I didn't want anymore clients because I was overbooked. And then, when those clients ran out, it would be too quiet and I didn't have anyone to work for.

Callie: Yeah, so you have that more kind of natural flow into the one-to-one services now really.

Laura: Yeah, definitely. It's much more consistent.

Callie: So it is very early days in the membership still, but is there anything that you would do differently if you were starting The Worditude Club again now?

Laura: I don't know really. It would have been nice to have planned a proper launch, but then on the other hand I'm the kind of person that could plan for a really, really, really long time and not actually doing anything. In my previous job, when I had a corporate job, a proper job, where I left the house and got paid a regular salary, I was a project manager. That was my job was to plan and plan and plan things. And then I had a team of people underneath me that would do it, so I didn't actually have to do any of the stuff. I would just have this amazing plan and then point at people and say, "You're doing this and it needs to be done by this date." I would just keep track of their delivery.

The adjustment to being me who has to plan it and do it is really difficult and I would tend to find myself getting trapped into just doing a lot of planning and not actually doing it. Although it looks kind of messy, and maybe in an ideal world there would have been more planning, I think, knowing myself, the only thing that was going to work was if someone fired the starter gun and I just started running as fast I could and see what happens.

Callie: Yeah. Sometimes you've just gotta do something rather than plan to do something.

Laura: Than think about it, yeah.

Callie: Yeah, I've definitely fallen into that trap before, as well.

Laura: And you just get the fear as well that it doesn't matter how much you plan it's still not going to be perfect. At what point do you just say, "Oh, let's just do it."

Callie: Yeah. I think that's one of the things we see most in the academy is people that get to that point where they can launch, but they don't because there is that kind of, "Well, it's not perfect," or, "I'm not quite sure how to do X, Y, Z." It's kind of like, "It's never going to be perfect. Just do it."

Laura: Yeah. When I was setting up for my membership site, some of the materials that I'd written, that was coming out of documents that I wrote two years ago because I already knew that the structures that I used to do my one-to-one clients, I was writing them down thinking, "You know, I could teach

people how to do this for themselves." In the back of mind I'd already had this plan, and so I was already gathering materials that I would put into the cloud. I think I was just about getting to the point where it was the perfect time to just get on with, because if it had been any longer I'd be looking at that and kicking myself thinking, "You sat on this idea for years." Whereas, at the point where I launched, I thought, "I have sat on the idea for a while, but I've let it kind of ripen and mature. I've improved my skills and grown my audience, so now is the right time."

Callie: Yeah, I think that's great when you've got material already to kind of kickstart things, as well.

Laura: Yeah, almost everything that I opened with I'd already got. I obviously needed to make it a little more professional and it was just my notes that I'd used for myself, but I had been collecting that material through all my different client jobs and tweaking it. I had like my own templates, my own instructions that I went to even though I didn't really need to read the instructions before I wrote a sales page because I know off the back of my head now. Back of my head? Off the back of my hand? What's the right expression? I know it like the back of my hand, but I would still keep refining those templates and those instructions because I knew at some point I'd want to share it with other people.

Callie: I love that. What does the future hold then? What are your goals for the club? Where would you like to be in the next 12 months?

Laura: Just for the next 12 months, as a family, we'd really like to settle down into a routine. I won't be working full-time on it. At the moment I'm working full-time because my husband's home, so now I'm going to make the adjustment back to only being part-time. I want a nice, stable year of consistent growth and just helping my members and nothing crazy, no big launches. I think sometimes you need a year like to kind of regroup and to just feel like normal life for a little while. Nothing crazy. I'll probably end up launching something in about three months now I've said that, but my plan is nothing crazy for the next 12 months.

Callie: I agree with you that actually sometimes what you need just kind of that consistency, that continual growth as opposed to any huge jumps or leaps in things.

Laura: Yeah, I'd like it to feel like ... We'd call it, when a project would finish, then it goes to business as usual. So this is the new normal. This is what our new working life or routine looks like. That's what I'd like, just a year of business as usual and just see what that looks like. And then probably from that it will inspire new ideas or I will want to move in a particular direction. But I would

at least a few months of just consistent business as usual life. That would be lovely.

Callie: All fingers crossed for that for you.

Laura: I know. I can't type I've got my fingers crossed, though. I never say that. I don't say fingers crossed because I'm always typing away at the keyboard, that's not going to work. I'll have to cross my toes instead.

Callie: Yeah. Okay. Thank you so much for sharing your journey so far with us, Laura. If anyone wants to improve their copywriting or just find out more about you or the membership, where can they find you?

Laura: They just go to worditude.co.uk, and then in the menu bar there's a section that says free resources, and that's my vault of all of the free content that I've ever put out there. It's actually quite well organised now. Please admire that because it took me hours to put that together, and it doesn't even ask for an email address. You can just go to it and dip in. There's things there on how to get blog post ideas, how to sort your copy out for a launch, lots of different resources that might be useful for people that run their own business.

Callie: Awesome. Yeah. Thank you so much for joining me today. It's been great talking with you, Laura, and I'm looking forward to seeing what the future holds for The Worditude Club. I will keep everything crossed for that business as usual year for you.

Laura: Nice quiet life, that's what I'd like, thanks.

Callie: Yeah. Thank you so much.

Laura: Thanks, Callie.

Callie: Thank you so much, once again, to Laura for sharing her membership journey with us in this episode. And thank you so much for listening. That's actually it for season one of Behind the Membership. This is our last episode, but don't worry we'll be back with you for season two shortly. I really hope you've enjoyed this season, and I really hope that you've got some good takeaways from all the different people I've interviewed.

A big thank you, once again, to all of my guests this season for sharing their membership sites with us. Hopefully it's given you a good idea of what running a membership site is really like and all the different ways that a membership can be run, as well, because there isn't a one size fits all approach.

If you have enjoyed this season, I would love to hear your biggest takeaways over in our free Facebook group at [talkmemberships.com](https://www.facebook.com/talkmemberships.com). Don't worry about missing me too much, you can find me writing over on our blog at [themembershipguys.com](https://www.themembershipguys.com). And, of course, if you're a member of Member Site Academy, you'll find me in there, too. If you're worried about what's going to fill your podcast ears while you wait for season two, then do check out Mike Morrison's The Membership Guys podcast, which offers great tips and advice for membership site owners. That's it for me. Thank you so much for joining me for this season. Thank you, once again, to all my guests, and thank you for listening.

Speaker 4: If you've enjoyed today's episode of behind the membership, we invite you to check out [themembersiteacademy.com](https://www.themembersiteacademy.com). The Member Site Academy is the essential resource for anyone at any stage of starting, growing and running a membership website. Whether you're still figuring out what your idea is going to be or whether your website is already up and running and you're just looking for ways to grow it and attract new members, then The Member Site Academy can help you to get to the next level. With our extensive course library, monthly training, exclusively member-only discounts, perks and tools, and a supportive, active community to help you along the way with feedback, encouragement and advice, the Member Site Academy is the perfect place to be for anyone looking to start, manage, and grow a successful membership website. Check it out at [membersiteacademy.com](https://www.membersiteacademy.com).