



10 Questions to Ask if You Want to Have the Best Year Ever

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

Change isn't really scary, it's just a normal part of life and the more that we can embrace change; the better opportunity we have to master our lives and step into that role of visionary for business and for our life.

You're listening to Thrive-By-Design business marketing and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to flourish and thrive. Let's get started.

Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive-by-Design podcast episode 126. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, your host today. I'm the Chief Visionary Officer over at Flourish & Thrive Academy and I love coming to you every single week bringing you great content and great episodes so that you can really grow your jewelry brand and build a company that is in alignment with what it is that you love to do the most. That's why I'm super excited about today's episode. But before I dive into the content, I think it's crazy, I can't believe it's already December. It's been such a crazy year and I love the end of the year because it gives us the opportunity to really reevaluate what happened throughout the entire year but then also it gives us an opportunity to really envision what it is that we want to create for next year. I know that each year when I start my year I sort of have a theme or a word or something that I like to bring forward but I think often times, you know as we are starting to plan our year and starting to think about what it is that we want to create in our business, some things sort of slide by the wayside and we don't really consider them when we are doing our planning. So today we are going to talk about 10 questions to ask yourself if you want to have the best year ever in your life and in your business so I'm super excited about this because it's going to be a fun episode but right is the time to start planning. We are about to host a really amazing training with our SOS Accelerator students all about planning their promotions for 2017 and if you haven't heard about the SOS Accelerator, it's our amazing one-on-one coaching program that is designed to support you with your e-commerce and digital marketing strategies. I've been really excited to create this program for those of you who are trying to sell more online which has been such a blast. We had our first training in November





which was awesome. Kathleen Cutler, one of our coaches, walked us through a complete step by step guide to setting up your email automation and the three most important sequences that you need in place, and plus she went through examples and she showed us exactly how to set it up in MailChimp which was pretty awesome. I was blown away. I was like I know a lot about email automation and nurture sequences but I learned some new things which was really, really fun. So this program is really just designed to support you not only on an one-on-one basis but to get you in the trenches of the latest and greatest digital marketing strategies so if you're interested in hearing more head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/SOS and you can check out what it's all about.

Now today we are going to dive in to talking about planning. I'm going to share with you some episodes that we did before because one of the things that I really want to create on this podcast is new content. I feel like if we have already covered like the basics of how to financially plan your year or how to create a business plan or how really map out your sales for the year and decide on all the stuff; I don't want to recover it every time at the same time each year. So I'm going to share with you some episodes momentarily that we've already done about all of these topics.

But before I do, I wanted to take a word from our sponsor. The sponsor for today's episode is Shopify. Now Shopify is my favorite e-commerce platform especially for jewelry designers who are trying to sell their jewelry online and here is the reason why so I'm a huge convert. For many years I was recommending other platforms which will remain nameless. I'm just going to say that. But you know I'm kind of a Shopify convert lately because I've seen the success that so many of the designers we have in the Flourish & Thrive community have had on the platform. Here is the reason why. I have supported 100s of – actually 1000s of designers with their e-commerce strategy and their digital strategy and I have seen designers pick up a platform that was really easy to jump into and then all of a sudden that platform just stopped innovating and upgrading. The one thing that is so amazing about Shopify is it is such a robust platform and there is so much you can do with it from abandon cart sequences to retargeting to integrations with Pinterest to you name – there are so many applications and so many – I want to use the word plugins but that's not the right word so there are so many applications that you can add to your





Shopify platform to create just a great shopping experience not only for your customers but to also increase your average order like integration with Pinterest, abandon cart sequences, upsell sequences, cross sale sequences – there is so much that you can do with the platform and they are always adding to it. In fact, next episode, I’m going to be sharing with some of my favorite or fan favorites I should say applications that integrate with Shopify so I’m really excited to share that with you. We negotiated a 10% discount off with your Shopify subscription if you head on over and check it out. We have also negotiated a free trial with Shopify for those of you that are new to the platform which is pretty awesome. So you can head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Shopify that’s www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Shopify it’s really awesome for you because you can get in, get 10% off, try it out for free, no questions asked, awesome. I’m excited about this.

Let’s start right into the episode today because it’s time to talk about 10 questions to ask yourself if you want to have the best year ever in life and business. Let’s do this.

First of all I wanted to talk about some of the other planning episodes. Episode #69 was our end of the year planning session with Robin Kramer and Robin and I kind of walked through how to plan for your year for the next year so I’m really excited for you to come check out that episode if you’re looking at some sort of tactical things that you could do to map out each quarter to think about how you’re going to achieve your goals and to set revenue sales and other business goals for your business and then work backwards so it’s a great episode. I highly recommend you check it out. These are great episodes to revisit. I also did episode 70 with Nina Cooper last year and this episode was all about business planning; in fact it’s called “Do I Really Need a Business Plan?” In that episode we talk about how to make writing a business plan really easy, it doesn’t even need to be more than one page but how this really sets up you for success in our business so definitely check out that episode; it’s a really great one. You don’t want to miss it. Then I know you guys love talking about money but we would love for you to check out episode #71 where we talk about fun financial planning with Justin Krane. He is our financial guru over here at Flourish & Thrive Academy. He’s also going to be doing some trainings for us over at the SOS Accelerator. Justin is awesome plus he is super funny and just





an amazing all around financial guru to say the least. Make sure that you check out those episodes, these are going to be really more for the tactical planning stuff.

But today I wanted to get you kind of thinking in idealistically and creatively and get you really in that visionary mindset that we talk about a lot here at Flourish & Thrive Academy. Sometimes our creativity can get dulled when we are focused so much on doing, doing, doing and it's really awesome to be able to take some time to step back to create a vision of what it is that we really want for the year. So Michael Hyatt has this really great assessment called, "The Life Score Assessment" that I wanted to encourage you to take. It's actually super cool. It's an online tool that gives you tremendous clarity around the areas of your life that need to be improved if you want to have the best year ever. So if you want to check it out, I love quizzes and assessments, in fact we just relaunched our website and we are going to be incorporating more quizzes and assessments in that because I think it's really interesting like we created this amazing Marketing Scorecard for our Live! event and people were just blown away because they thought maybe they had all of their online stuff sort of dialed in and then realized they had a lot of work to do. So I love assessments because it really helps us highlight and show us some of the things that maybe we already know about ourselves but also some of the things that we might now see about yourselves which I think are really important. So if you want to check this out head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/lifescore don't worry about remembering it, I'm going to have it in the show notes over at episode 126. That's www.flourishthriveacademy.com/episode126 and we'll have everything linked there but you can head over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/lifescore.

Alrighty so we are getting prepped over here at Flourish & Thrive Academy for our SOS Accelerator planning meeting for the year which is an awesome training that we do with Inta Ivans who is one of our SOS coaches. Basically what we're doing is sort of breaking down the year and then figuring working backwards everything that needs to happen in order to support your goals. That's going to be a really fun training but I digress. So let's jump into the 10 questions that you need to ask yourself or you should ask yourself if you want to have the best year ever.





So every year, when I start my year, I pick one word, and that's like my theme of the year. This last year it was *simplified*. Quite honestly, I think I'm going to pick the same word for next year, which will be *simplified*. The two previous years before, it was *support*, and during those years I ended up hiring a bunch of the people on my team, who have become the most amazing A-players who are the people who bring Flourish & Thrive Academy to life. So the reason why I'm sharing this with you is because I think it is really important to think about what it is that you want to create and then be able to dial that down into just one specific word that can become your theme. Because when you start to practice what you preach and you start to really consider what it is that you want to create, and you can create it in one word, you can remind yourself consistently about what it is that you need in your life. So, with that being said, question number 1 is really about how do you want to feel? So you can ask yourself the question, how do I want to feel? I love this question because, especially when I think back to a couple years ago when I was feeling like really ungrounded and like I didn't have enough support to get to where I wanted to, not only with Flourish & Thrive Academy, and what I mean by that is I was doing everything myself along with Robin, and we we're trying to run this business, but we needed extra support in order to be able to nurture the community in the way that we wanted to do that, and to be able to grow our backend systems in a way that was set up for sustainable growth so that we could bring you things like this podcast or Diamond Insiders group or SOS Accelerator program, etc. You get the picture. At that time, I really needed to feel supported, and I think that that is something that was really pivotal in core to my ability to able to continue to grow Flourish & Thrive Academy, is to get that support surrounding me. For the last couple years, I've been really wanting to feel less stressed, and what I realized is the way my personality is that a lot of times what I end up doing is coming up with ideas and then wanting to move everything forward, and so it ends up happening, is I create a little bit of chaos in my world, and I move a bunch of things forward at once, which is never good for anyone. I know this about myself, so I am super aware of it. So my word last year was to simplify because we were trying to streamline a lot of things that were here at Flourish & Thrive Academy. I was trying to streamline a lot of things in my personal life. I was also trying to streamline a lot of things in my jewelry business. So, for you, I want you to think of how you want to feel and then be able to dial that down





into one word. This is going to be a really important practice for you. Question number 1: How do I want to feel?

Question number 2 is how do I want my relationships to look? This really important for those of you who have family members or for those of you who have really strong friendships and relationships that are important you. Maybe it's your business relationships. So for me, when I think about my jewelry business, I want to be working with customers who I can be able to support who come back to me in here again, who I am continuing to work with over and over again who think of me first, and one of the people that I think of right away when I think of my clients like this and their kinds of relationships that I want to build, and I'm using business as an example, but the same thing is true for life, is my client, Amy. Amy came to me a couple years ago, and she had some diamonds that she wanted, her mother's engagement ring and her parents' wedding bands, repurposed into something that she could wear every day. I took the diamonds out and made a couple of stacking rings for her that she wore with her grandmother's ring, and this was the start of a really amazing business relationship that has actually turned into a friendship, and I love this about working with clients like Amy because she has come to me now for, I think, 6 or 7 pieces. I just recently created something that had a lot of meaning for her with some extra diamonds that she had that was a sun. I got to create this really beautiful stylized sun that now she can wear every single day, but on top of that, I have created a bunch of other pieces because I've really focused on how I want my relationships to be, not only in my business but in my life, and so this is a great question to ask yourself. What do I want my relationships to look like?

The next question I think is really important is something that I've personally been facing this year is like how do I want to improve my health? This is probably like TMI, I'm just going to share with you, but it really does affect your business, and I like to bring some of this more real life stuff to the podcast. I remember when I was teaching yoga, I think one of the reasons why people liked coming to my class was, at least this is what my students would say, is because I was a real-life yogi. I wasn't sitting there talking about some random Indian gods who are not... I'm just using this as a joke... But like sitting on a hill and meditating and living in the middle of nowhere. I was a real-life yogi, like stuff goes down, and you've got to deal with it, and my classes were really focused on real life, and how to use yoga to handle the real-life struggles that





come up. Oftentimes, those things... they could be solved with chanting, but I think there are more powerful ways to deal with it. Sometimes it's through movement, sometimes it's through breath work, sometimes it's just by understanding that you're not alone, but it all kind of relates back your health. When I bring stuff on this podcast, like sometimes I'm going to be sharing personal stuff with you like I'm about to do right now, but this last year, I have not been super focused on my health, and the effect of that is that I've been extra tired. I've been having some health problems, nothing severe, but I don't really have the same kind of energy that I used to have, but I realize it's because I have been a little bit more stressed, I haven't been taking care of myself as well. I've still been committed to my workout schedule, but I've let some things that are really important to creating physical and mental health fall by the wayside because I've been so busy. One of my goals next year is to get back to being a lot more healthy, eating better, meditating more, making sure that I'm doing the things that I need to do for self-care in order to support my health. This is a really important question because if you're healthy and strong and vibrant, you can show up in your business so much better and get a lot more done. So how do I want to improve my health? This is an important question.

The next question, question number 4 is how do I want to improve my lifestyle? I love this question because sometimes improving your lifestyle might be something as simple as moving into a new apartment. I recently moved into a new apartment in Hudson Yards. In fact, I'm actually recording this episode from my old apartment, but by the time this episode goes live, I will have already moved into my new apartment. I have been living in the same West Village walkup for 10 year in New York City, and I loved it. I loved my neighborhood, but I was just feeling inside like I needed a change, and I wanted a bigger apartment that actually reflected the person who I'm becoming. Now I took a huge risk, and this is not something I'd recommend necessarily for everyone, but I am confident in my ability to earn money with my jewelry business, so I took a big leap, and it was a big financial upgrade and a lifestyle upgrade because this was important to me. It was time for me to kind of grow up, as I like to say. So maybe your version of upgrading your lifestyle or changing your lifestyle might not be something like moving into a new home or apartment, but it might be something like maybe it's taking more time for yourself or doing more, I'm going to say self-care, that sort of has to do with your health or maybe it is taking more vacations or maybe it's something





about how often and how much you're working in your business and how often and how much you're spending time with your family and friends. So all these things related to lifestyle, and I think it's really important to evaluate what we're doing, what is not making us happy, and then try to change that and upgrade it for the next year. So the fourth question is what do I want to do to improve my lifestyle?

Question number 5: How will I create more adventure and joy in my life? Now I think this is one is really important because a lot of times we don't focus on happiness, and this is really the most important thing that you need to be focusing on. It's like what is it that makes you happy? And a lot of times that gets dialed down to adventure. So what are you doing that is pushing you outside your comfort zone? That's bring you joy and happiness that is lifting you up when you feel down. I want you to really think about this question long and hard because for you... For me, adventure might be going on a trekking vacation in India or on an exploratory trip through the wine country in Italy. For everyone, adventure is going through a different way. For some of you, it might be diving out of a plane or hiking Mount Everest or maybe it's even just doing something fun with your kids that pushes you out of your comfort zone. I want you to really think about what it is that is going to bring more adventure and joy in your life and ultimately happiness, so I think that that's a really important question, number five: How will I create more adventure and joy in my life?

Question number 6: We have to get into money at some point here. What are my financial goals? Do you want to save more money? Do you want to make more money? Do you want to become more profitable? These are all really important things, and for me, in my life and my business, my financial goals are coming to the forefront, and some of those goals include maybe not being so frivolous with how I'm spending my money on silly things that maybe aren't going to add value in the long term in my life like buying new clothes all the time or buying all the shoes that I love, and I'm not going to deprive myself of those things, but I really focus on investing my money now. One of my financial goals is to start setting some of that extra budget that I had for some of the fun stuff that I do in my life, that maybe it's like more consumerism to invest in stuff like real estate or cash flow investments so that I have additional sources of revenue coming into my financial wheelhouse, so I want you to think about





that. What are your financial goals? Maybe it's investing, maybe it's saving more, maybe it's becoming more profitable in your business, maybe it's reaching of certain sales goal. All these things are great financial goals, and there is a lot more that you can choose from. So I want you to think strategically about question number 6. What are my financial goals?

Question number 7: What is one bucket list item I will complete this year? I think is sort of tied into the adventure and fun one thing, but I think... I was talking with my friend the other day, and we were trying to make plans, she was like I can't make it, sadly have to fly back to my hometown because a friend of mine passed away. And my friend is about 50, and her friend is about 50 as well, and her friend passed away, and this always brings me back to, this reminded that life is too short to put things that are important to you to accomplish on to the next year or later in life. I say this as I talk with my hands and hit my microphone as I'm talking because a lot of you, I've shared my personal story with you. My mother passed away when she was my age. I'm 46 years old right now, and I remember thinking back at that time – I'll try not to cry – that she died way too young... Forty-six years old is... I feel so young. I can't even imagine the idea of my life being over right now, but I'm constantly reminded when I hear stories of what happened to my friend, that life is really short, and it's not putting things on hold till later, is not really the answer. I want to really encourage you to think about what is one item on your bucket list that you can check off this year, and if you're up for it, pick five things. I'm always doing bucket list things every single year. I think this is really important practice for you to continue on and even if it's something very small. I would really encourage you to ask yourself this question, number 7, what is one bucket list item that I will complete this year?

Question number 8: Where do I see or envision my business going? This is really important, especially when I'm doing this on a business podcast. We need to talk about business, but life is really important, but business is also important as well, especially for those of you who are jewelry business owners or jewelry business entrepreneurs, however you identify. You need to really think about what you want for your business. Do you want it stay the same? Do you want it to grow? Do you want to take a step back in, and you're okay with that? These are things that you want to think through because if you're not thinking like a visionary, you can really struggle when you're in the thick of





it to really get things done. This is an important question to ask yourself: Where do I envision my business going?

Question number 9: What needs to change? Now this is a great question that we all need to ask, probably more than once a year. A lot of times, we continue on our path, moving forward, getting things done, cranking that wheel, and then we end up somewhere, thinking to ourselves like, wow, what's going on right now? It's not really making me happy or not fulfilling me or not filling me up with joy because we're going through the motions, and a lot of times, we get to a place in life and business that everything that we were doing was right, but then all of sudden, something is wrong, and it needs to change. I want you to really think about this in yourself. Identify areas in your life that are maybe feeling like deadweight or that aren't lighting you up, that aren't exciting for you, and identify what needs to change, whether that be in business, whether that be in your personal life, whether that be in your spiritual practice or health. A lot of times we need to consider this... Change, yeah, I used to say this saying all the time in my yoga classes, so there is this old adage that you've certainly heard before that the only constant in life is change, and so I want to remind you that change isn't really scary. It is just a normal part of life, and the more that we can embrace change in our lives, the better opportunity we have to really master our lives and go with the flow and step into that role of visionary for business and for life, and so I want you to not think of this as something that is daunting or heavy, but something that is exciting, like what can change, what can you streamline, what needs to be cut out? There is always going to need to be something that is going to help you evolve. So question number 9, super important, what needs to change?

And then question number 10: What do I need to add or subtract to make this all possible or make this a possibility? A lot of times when I think back to my years when my word was *support*, what I needed to add at that time, was A+ team players, and I built this amazing team. I've got Abby as my business manager, I have Jessica as our community leader, Rebecca is our content writer. I've got you know of course Robin here as my co-founder here at Flourish & Thrive but we have really set up and empowered our team to be able to offer this support. That goes all the way down to me like handing over the reins to Sharon to run our social media and giving her feedback but letting her actually run with it so that she can thrive in the position. She's not always relying on me





to give her the answers. To work with our project manager Ari to get everything done and to work with all of our contractors who are trying to get things to the next level. You know in that year where I was looking for support, it was an adding year but there are years where you need to subtract. I will give you an example of this in my own business. Every year at the end of the year, I start thinking of things and looking through my financials and saying things like “Do I really need this?”, “Is this something that is really important?” In fact my personal finances, I am a subscriber to like three or four maybe even five streaming TV, movie type services like Netflix, Hulu, HBO Now, Amazon Prime so I think it’s funny because I have all these streaming services but I’m like, “Am I really watching them all?” So I think I’m going to cut one of them. So there are things that you might need to subtract and that’s sort of a silly example but like in your business do you need to be spending all the money you’re spending on certain things or is there a place where you need to be investing more to help grow? So going through this stage of evaluation or maybe it’s that you have someone on your team that has been working for there for awhile but they are just not invested in the position anymore and it’s time for you guys to change your arrangement. There are a lot of ways that you can think of this. So think about this last question. What do I need to add or subtract to make this a possibility?

So those are my 10 questions, there you go. I really love going through these sorts of evaluative processes because these questions can be really powerful in getting you to the next level of where you really want to be in your life and business. I love this time of the year. It’s just like such a fun time because we get to sort of wrap out year like really crush our holiday sales but then it’s a really amazing time to evaluate what it is that we want to put forward into the next year. So I want you guys to really dive deep. You have about a month to kind of take these things on and really go with it. I want to remind you that if you’re someone who really wants to take a look and investigate what’s going on with you and see sort of how you stand make sure that you check out Michael Hyatt’s Life Score. You can head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/lifescore take that assessment. It’s going to be fun. It’s just a great way for you to take a look at what’s going on right now in your life and what can be improved to help you have the best year ever. So I’m super excited about this.





Alright you guys, thank you so much for listening to the show today. This was so fun for me. It brings me back to my days of teaching yoga and doing something a little bit outside the box and getting you back to real life, tactical, you know thinking about your life questions.

Before we go I wanted to leave you on two notes. The first one is that one of the best ways that you can really learn is from learning from your peers; in fact as I record this I'm about to head to our last Mastermind party in Las Vegas and one of the reasons I've grown so much in business not only in my jewelry businesses in the last three years but also in Flourish & Thrive being able to become a better leader and sort of launching this podcast even probably wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for my Mastermind. Is that I had this opportunity to learn some really great things from my peers to see who they are doing it in a very different way. So I became really inspired so I asked a couple of designers to share with us what they are doing to really elevate and sell out during the holiday season. So we have a really resource that we have for you that I would love to share so that you can get inspired by what others are doing to really create the best holiday season ever for your business. It's called Simple Sales Hacks and it's how 10 designers are selling out this holiday season. So I hope you'll go grab it. You can head on over to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/saleshacks that's www.flourishthriveacademy.com/saleshacks and grab the free download. You can also get it over at the show notes over at www.flourishthriveacademy.com/Episode126 and I wanted to remind you that January is a very special time over here at Flourish & Thrive Academy. Every year we kick off the year with a special training or boot camp and this year we're bringing back our Jewelry Brand Makeover Boot Camp and it's incredible. For those of you have participated last year, you know how this really helps you set up your year for success. So I would like to invite you to join. We'll have some details over on the show notes on how you can join us or just head to www.flourishthriveacademy.com/makeover and jump on the waiting list.

Alright I'm really excited to support you and watch your business Flourish & Thrive, sending you lots of good juju for an amazing rest of the holiday season. Have an awesome day everyone, talk to you soon.

