



Top 10 Lessons Learned from a 5 Week Creative Sabbatical

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

“You can't force creativity. You need wide open space to be creative, and so it's important to step away and actually take that creative sabbatical so that you can come up with your best ideas.”

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

Intro: You're listening to Thrive by Design, business, marketing, and lifestyle strategies for your jewelry brand to Flourish & Thrive. . Let's get started.

Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive by Design podcast episode 163. Hey there, it's Tracy Matthews, the Chief Visionary Officer over at Flourish and Thrive Academy and I'm excited to be here today hosting this podcast because today is a very special episode. I'm going to be talking about something that is really fun, and that is my creative sabbatical and I just spent nine weeks in Europe, most of the time off, and I say most of the time because I was at two sort of business-y work things that were also fun, because I always combine work and fun. And then the rest of the time I took off, my team ran my business without me, actually both of my businesses because I was shipping jewelry and keeping Flourish and Thrive afloat while I was gone. I'm going to share some of the lessons I've learned with that, I'm also going to talk a little bit more about why this is so important, not only for me, but for you to consider at some point in the framework of how you're building your business. Because ultimately what we all want is to not be the main driver of sales and revenue in our companies, and we want to be able to have opportunity to step back or step away when we need it, because it's important.

As creative visionaries, our main purpose and goal in our business is to use our creativity to continue to grow our companies. And sometimes we need to move into analytical mode or into business mode or managerial mode, but our genius really lies in the creative talents that we have and how we sort of foster and harness that creative talent and use it in everything that we do in our business. And what ends up happening sometimes, if you're anything like me, is that we're working, working, working, we're focusing on growing the company and working on the business and then we get pulled back into the business and we're working in the business and doing a lot of things, and I hear designers say





they have to do all the things that they have to do to run a business, and it starts to suck the life out of you. And so sometimes it's important to take a step back, because that's where the brilliance and the genius comes in. In fact, right before I got on this podcast I was texting with one of my students and former mastermind designer Karina Harris of Waffles and Honey, and for those of you in the Flourish and Thrive community, I use her as an example a lot because she's someone who I have watched for many, many years go from working a full-time job to getting laid off or transition into a new position and she decided to leave that company and just go after her dream full time and made a really quick decision and within a month without a huge plan, and her business just took off.

So I was talking with her and these last couple of years she's been traveling a ton, I was joking because I'm heading to San Francisco shortly, and I wanted to meet up with some Flourish and Thrive designers and interview them about things that they've done in their business that are super awesome that I'd like to share with you guys. She was telling me that she's going away because it's her birthday a week, and I think that's so awesome and fun because there was a time when she didn't travel at all, and now she said to me something, like "I'm now living my best life and I focus on building a business that supports what matters to me most, which is living my best life.", which I love because that's exactly what I did the second time around when I was building my business. I want to really support all of you in doing the same thing, and creative sabbaticals are awesome for that, and it doesn't even mean you have to travel somewhere if you're not travel person like I am, but it's just about giving your mind a break and keeping your business going even when you're in that sort of stepping back stage, and we're going to talk a little bit about that.

This episode was also inspired by another designer in our community who I'm going to be interviewing Karina and Kristen Barrett. Kristen Barrett I've interviewed for the podcast before about her website transformation, but Kristen, I love her. Both Kristen and Karina were in our high level program, our mastermind program when we had it, which we transition into our SOS coaching program now. And Kristen texted me one day and she's like, "You're not going to believe this. I just got an offer from SCAB." which is where she went to school, to be their resident designer in France for two months. She basically has been working for years to set her business up in a way so that she ever wanted to step away that she could and she spent two months in France and her business continued working. Last year she was the Halstead grant winner, which I know the application just closed a couple weeks ago for that, and it's just awesome. It's so inspiring, like this is the reason why I started Flourish and Thrive Academy with my co-founder Robin and why I do this podcast, is to help emerging brands, help





emerging designers, whether you're in jewelry designed or you're in some other industry and you feel inspired by the messages that we share here, it is to show you that whatever it is that you dream about is really possible. But what it takes is a little strategy and a little planning and getting your head space in the right place so that you can create a business that actually works for you and not against you.

You've heard my story before, but first time I forayed into entrepreneurship as a jewelry designer and a jewelry maker I had a great business. I grew it over 11 years, I've sold in 350 stores around the world, but there was a time when my business just started taking over my life, and it became not fun anymore. I just felt like I couldn't step away after a certain period of time because I kept building and building and building and growing and growing and growing, and while there were periods of time when I would take long breaks or long vacations, I felt that I had built this like trap for myself. The bigger my company got, the more I felt trapped. I decided this next time around that I wanted to grow a company, but also not feel trapped by it, and that that was going to mean that I was going to build an awesome team, which I've been doing over here at Flourish and Thrive, you are going to be hearing me talk a lot more about this, about how the importance of surrounding yourself with the right support and getting awesome A players on your team, even before you think it's ready. So scary. Like right now we're in the process of hiring one to two new team members, and it's scary because every time you do that more cash goes out of the business and you have to think, "Okay, what do I need to up-level our income to in order to get to a place where we can support that extra team." But for some reason it always works out when you're planning and focusing on what your end goal is.

My mission is to help create a visionary, highly creative visionary of people like me, and those who aren't like me, but those people who are running a business, who are passionate and driven and ambitious and want to get their products out there; to surround themselves with the right team, so that they can do what they're best at. So that's sort of like the inspiration behind today's episode. A lot of that starts with setting yourself up the right way financially, which gives us nice segue into our sponsor today, which is Accounting for Jewelers. If you don't know about Accounting for Jewelers, you are missing out. Mariel Diaz is the founder of Accounting for Jewelers and she has brought her lifetime of experience in the jewelry industry to accounting. She comes from a long lineage of jewelers and accountants. Her father was a really famous art jeweler. She's a graduate gemologist, and she's a German trained gemstone carver and a second generation classically trained metalsmith. I think this is important because she loves numbers just as much as she loves making jewelry, and she really understands how important it is for a jewelry business to have their numbers in





check. So Accounting for Jewelers is five years old this year, it's a tech savvy accounting firm which is based in Nashville, Tennessee, and they are serving the jewelry industry nationwide, here in the U.S. Whether you're a studio artist or an established franchise, they're here to help with your bookkeeping needs, so they do full service bookkeeping, registrations and taxes, verification services, financial strategy and business advisory services. They also have a DIY training course for complete set up and maintenance of zero accounting, zero bookkeeping, and they have this really great software company that they just bought, called Get Bench Works, which is an inventory management application. So definitely go on over and check out Accounting for Jewelers, you can head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/A4J, we'll also have a link in our show notes over at episode 163, and check it out. It's awesome. You can use the code "Thrive by Design" for \$100 any course or payment plan, so definitely go grab it. There is no expiration date, check this out. And if you like schedule a free consultation; we'll also have a link in the show notes as well. Alright. Let's dive into today's episode.

So let' dive into today's episodes, we're going to be talking about ten lessons learned while I was on creative sabbatical, because I'm always learning lessons and I'm excited because thanks to our sponsors, Accounting for Jewelers who's bringing us this episode today, we are going to have a blast.

So I don't know if you've heard about Flourish and Thrive Live, but it's our amazing event here in New York City. This is the last year that we're actually hosting this, and so I really hope that you can make it. We only have a couple of tickets left. I'm mentioning that's because we have some really amazing people on the line, we're curating an entire influencer panel this year. The names are going to be announced really shortly, we're just waiting for contracts to be signed, which is incredible. Last year influencers, Pamela Pekerman and Dawn Del Russo hooked up a ton of the designers that they actually physically met at the event to get them on camera, on shows, in magazines and stuff like that. The same is going to be true for this year. So we have some new influencers coming on. Sabina and I will be curating or hosting an amazing influencer panel. We have a great marketing panel as well, which I'm very excited about. And also, of course, our business day. The business day is the second day of the event which is all about getting all these systems and streamlining things, getting team member supported etc. and your business in a place where you could do something like take a creative sabbatical, because you're surrounding with yourself with the right people. And obviously, there are some basic things that need to happen before you start hiring team members, but I don't want you to poopoo the idea of getting even contractor help in the short term, because even a little bit of help





can help take a lot of things off your plate, which can help you kind of get a lot more done.

I know a lot of people think of money going out of their business as like an expense, instead of an investment in their growth, and I want to help you shift that mindset today, because here is what can happen when you set the back end of your business up properly. This is everything that we kind of teach you in your Multiply Your Profits course... In "your" Multiply Your Profits course, in our Multiply Your Profits course, which is one of the main reasons why I wanted to start this Flourish and Thrive Academy in the first place, was because it was the one thing that I didn't realize I needed so badly in the beginning, and it's the one thing that I waited the longest to actually put in place in my business. I'm so excited that I kind of cracked the code and figured out how to do it, because my life has forever changed. All this started with reading a book called The E Myth, which is, you've heard me talk about before, but if you haven't read that, yet make sure that you do, it's awesome.

So let's dive into my ten lessons learned while on creative sabbatical, and we can kind of flush these out a little bit, I'm going to tell you why these are important. So number one, my first lesson learned was that the work you do now pays off in dividends later. Here is what I mean by this. There were many times in my life when I never thought I would be able to step away from my business. I remember the first time I ever wanted to take a long vacation, it was at a time in my career where I was not in a place where I felt like I could leave during the holiday season. I know a lot of us are so busy, but I had an opportunity to go to India, this was in 2004, for basically to go on a Ayurvedic retreat. I was basically doing my eat, pray, love time. I got divorced a couple years before, I was super into yoga and I was teaching, and a friend of mine invited me to join her for this partial retreat that they were taking in December to go to India. I couldn't go on the exact date, so I decided to sort of cross over, so I wasn't doing the trip alone, but going India had been a dream of mine. For anyone who's a yogi, you probably have the same dream because it's the motherland of yoga. This was something that I had wanted to do for a long time, I didn't want to pass up this opportunity to go then and there. You know what I did? I just booked it and I'm like the details will fall into place later. That was sort of the beginning of me starting to do the work to set myself up so that I could step away. Here's what I mean by this.

I hear from a lot of designers that they get frustrated with all the things they have to do to actually get their business going. All the marketing stuff, the business stuff that they have to do. You know, setting up their accounting, and doing the admin work, keeping those books updated and all the other things. I get it, it's a lot of





work. I am like a huge fan of delegation, so I am always trying to outsource whatever I can, so that I can get some of the stuff that feels overwhelming to me off my plate. I had a legal professional tell me the other day that I might be outsourcing too much of the business side of things, well we'll see if that's true or not. I take those things to heart because there might be some truth to that. But thinking about what you can get off your plate, you have to definitely have an understanding and know what's going on behind the scenes, but if you are not savvy at tech stuff, if you're not savvy or our data entry drives you bonkers and makes your eyes cross over, some people love it, some people hate it, then those are the things that you probably shouldn't be doing. You need to check them and make sure that the numbers match up, but it's not something that your hands need to be dabbling in. What you need to be focusing on are the things that are actually growing your business and the things that you love doing. So basically setting up your business the right way in the beginning is something that later will allow you to do things like take a creative sabbatical.

When I left I was terrified to leave. This was like a couple month process for me to be able to step away from my business, because I had taken many vacations before and it hasn't been a big deal, but that's like two weeks of me being off the grid, and then I would come back and/or people would have access to you. My team knew that there was going to be times when I wasn't going to be on internet access and that I really actually needed to check out or else I was going to lose my marbles. They wanted that for me, too, because they knew if I were to step away that I would be just a happier human being and a better boss, and they also wanted to prove to me that they could do it without me. This is where I think it becomes super important that they could run the business without me. That's what we've been working towards for many, many years. So in my jewelry business I was working on a project. As soon as I landed in Rome I needed to get some sketches done, but I handed over to my assistant Sarah the sketches, we landed the project, we got the payment from the client, Sarah had the piece created in New York, there were just a few messages that went back and forth, but I clarified my vision of everything that I needed to happen really crystal clearly and everything kind of worked like clockwork. It was amazing. The piece was delivered in a couple of weeks, we hit a deadline for the customer, it was awesome. She was also fielding, Sarah, my assistant, was also fielding questions from new clients as they were coming in, and that's because I've trained her and we have systems for that on the back end about how we want to have it handled.

As far as Flourish and Thrive Academy goes, I empowered Abby and Ari to you run the business without me, and they were in charge while I was gone. Quite frankly, Abby's in charge anyway. She's the boss of me, but it's important because like





she wanted to prove to me that she could do this and she killed it. She did an awesome job, we hit all of our sales goals and I was so proud that the two of them worked together, her and Ari worked together to help manage the team and got the whole team to buy in to their vision of what we're trying to create while I was gone, to keep the ship running. So we worked for six years to get the business systematized in a way that I can do this. Every single Monday before meeting Abby's collecting systems from team members so that we have a curated catalog of how to do things in the business, so that if someone steps away that someone else can step in, and this is the most important thing that you can do. If you don't have a team yet, this can all be done by you, and all you got to do is document what you're doing. And like I said before, this is all stuff that we kind of teach and advise on in our Multiply Your Profits course. This is how you're able to take as creative sabbatical.

The next thing that I learned is if you build a culture and expectations, your team will rise up. So company culture has been a huge thing for me. We have, one of our core values as a company is to always be learning and to always be sharing what we've learned with our other team members. And it's also about community and collaboration, which you've heard us talk about before, and supporting each other on those main goals. So behind the scenes we have this culture of collaboration, because I think it's really important for me to know that my team members are empowered to do whatever it takes to get the job done, and that their ideas are valued and honored. Like one of the things that I really try to foster in the people that I bring on to the team, are to bring ideas to the table. It's not that we always go with their ideas, but it helps inspire creativity amongst the team, and maybe one person's idea will inspire a whole other train of ideas that actually turn into the strategy in the plan, or help improve on something that we've already come up with. And so what this does is it empowers your team to actually show up for you when you need to step away. This requires a lot of trust, it is not easy, but it's something that when you set it up properly and you get your team to buy into your vision of what you're trying to create as a company and you get your team to buy into the core values of what you stand for, and you empower them to actually do their job, then the rest is clockwork. It makes it easy for you to step away.

The other thing that I learned, so my lesson number three that I learned, I'm going to talk little bit more about the reason why this... I didn't talk about why this creative sabbatical was important, but I'm going to try to lead it into the learning lessons here. Is that you can have a plan, but nothing works out like you actually expect it to. So we had a plan of all the things that we were trying to complete, and all the things that we were trying to do. A couple things that fell off the rails, we had some technical issues with a partner webinar that that we were doing, they





totally sidelined a project. I was supposed to be on something and they scheduled it for like midnight for my time, I got food poisoning at a certain point in Barcelona. In fact we call it Barfelona now because I had tickets to a Bruno Mars concert and I got food poisoning from the lunch I ate that day, and when I got to the Bruno Mars concert I was barfing everywhere and I was out of commission for a couple of days, which basically like took me out of the game not only for my creative sabbatical, but even if I team needed to reach out to me and stuff like that. So it became interesting. So you can have a plan but sometimes that plan gets side-railed, and just have to roll with the punches and be able to pivot. So remember that nothing works out like you expect.

Another thing that I want to talk about and having a plan, not just with team, my plan on this creative sabbatical was to get a ton of stuff done. I wanted to write a book, I wanted to... Or at least get my book outlined, I wanted to design an entire new collection, I wanted to come up with a ton of blog content for my website, for my jewelry website, I wanted to get all my autoresponder sequences set up. Guess what I did? Nothing. Here's the reason why. I didn't map out any of this. I started writing one blog post, I think that was the most that I did. The reason why is because when I approached this creative sabbatical and I was coming into it, I was completely burned out, I was exhausted and stressed out, and I just need to give my mind a break. And all you visionaries out there, when you burn that creativity, you're burning it at both ends, what can happen is something really tragic. You lose it and you have to somehow take a step back so you can get that spark back. I mean I've been learning this from my mentors and healers for years about taking time for self care and taking time to meditate and taking time for long walks and creating space for creativity, but sometimes you just can't do it because you're reacting to so many things that are happening in your business, so you literally need to pull yourself out of the game.

That's what happens, and I had all these things planned, and at the end of the day I didn't get any of it done. I was disappointed at first and then I realized that this is exactly what I needed. It was to lay on a lounge chair, drink rosé, ride a bike around the south of France, network with some people. I did work a little bit while I was in Riomaggiore, I had a writing workshop and I did network and learned some things a little bit while I was in Croatia at another conference. But at the end of the day, the other times I really spent just enjoying life, and that was the most important thing. I did have to pop in for a few Facebook Lives here and there to get a little work done, but I was fine with that because that's what this was all about.

Lesson number four is meeting new people inspires new ideas and makes you think differently. I had a really great opportunity on this trip to go to a conference in





Croatia hosted by friends of mine over at Baby Bathwater Institute. It was awesome. There were 150 entrepreneurs on this private island in Croatia. It was an amazing situation and scenario and it was just awesome to meet. I meet a lot of people and it was awesome to meet so many people that I'd never met before. I learned so much about YouTube video ads and using content to promote, to build the know, like, and trust factor, how to run more effective Facebook Ads. Just so, so many things. And so much more than that. I developed some really great friendships. The person I was roommate-ing with, because they set you in these bunks with a roommate was someone who has a vegan clothing brand and I learned so much about how she's become an influencer in the vegan space and how that has helped her elevate her brand just by leveraging, you know, a really strong brand positioning, which is her commitments to veganism and avoiding animal cruelty. It really inspired me to think differently about how I was putting myself out there as an influencer, as someone who you know wants to build a strong brand around this idea of creatives are the new nerds and visionaries rule the world because this is like my new messaging, a new platform about how we can get to the next level. So the more that you can develop around brand positioning and stuff, etc., the more you can really leverage that to grow your business. But that's a little bit besides the point. Lesson learned here is really about meeting new people.

But the other thing that was really cool is that the first night or the second I was there, I was in Rome, got hijacked by this Roman guy, an Italian guy who wanted to walk me to my dinner. Long story short, I'm not going to tell the whole story here because it's a story for another day, but he eventually tried to swindle me for some Euro, and I said "no" and he spit on me. I decided to change my plans and go to a different place for dinner than I was originally planning. He spit right in my eye, which is like another story. I got away from him, which is good. But ultimately ended up having dinner at this place called Da Enzo. I got there thinking I was going to have to wait about another hour for dinner, I was starving, and I was just a single person there, and there was another woman there that was waiting for a table for one as well. She'd been waiting for an hour and we got hooked up to sit at the same table, and it was awesome because I got to share the story of everything that happened with this guy spitting in my eye and trying to swindle me for money and how he kind of like was trying to romance me into that positioning. I learned a lot more about how she is as a millennial trying to position herself as a digital marketer. So we had this great lesson, we we're actually in the process of hiring someone, a marketing specialist, and we've had this great conversation about jobs in the market and stuff like that and so we stay connected. So Sasha, if you're listening, it was great meeting you and having dinner with you.





It really helped me just think about things a little bit differently in my life, in my business. And I hope that meeting new people and really making the effort to go to conferences and events to meet people can become a habit of yours, because it's really one of the best business building things that you can absolutely do. So I hope that I see you on the list for Flourish and Thrive Live, we'll definitely have a link in the show notes below. You can head on over to episode 163 if you want to check out tickets. We have very few left at this point, but being there in person is really, really important because that's where you get to connect with the people and meet the influencers. We have some just amazing people in the lineup this year, which is really awesome.

This segues me into the next story, which is all about taking risks. So I am going to tell you a little bit more about the guy who spit in my eye and all, because this is where it really fits into this part of the story. So long story short, I was walking to dinner with that guy, because I had a meeting story about meeting someone at dinner, because the guy spit in my eye, I'll tell you the full story. So, I was walking to dinner and I know exactly where I was going, I was going to traastevere area and I was trying to make this reservation, I was hitting a really tight timeline at Antica Pesa, which is a restaurant that is really well known Roman restaurant. Booking along this way, this Italian guy walks up to me and starts speaking to me in Italian. I'm like, "I don't speak Italian." in English, so he starts chit-chatting with me, "Where are you from? What do you do?" Starts walking with me, "Where are you going?" I'm like, "I'm going to dinner." He's like, "Let me walk with you, I'll show you a short cut." So he takes me through a short cut through a neighborhood and I was like, "This guy's is taking you for a ride, Tracy." But I had my GPS open, so I knew I was like still walking in the proper direction, just in a different way. So he tries to show me around this one area of town and pretend like it's like this hidden area, which was, it was nice and stuff but it, you know, whatever. It was just like a neighborhood.

He's chit-chatting with me and we're having a nice conversation and it was nice, I have to admit. He was sharing with me a little bit about more about Roman culture and the history of Rome, and sort of what it's like to live in Italy as an Italian, etc. And so I was listening to this and listening to his story and at one point he's like, "I don't have dinner plans and I know you're going to dinner. Do you want to eat together?" I was like, "Sure." We start walking to the restaurant, he's like, "I know a place, why don't you bail on your other restaurant, this place is so much better." and one thing that I do know is that taking recommendations from people who live in the city who actually like live there is better than reservations from something like Trip Advisor a lot of the time, because those are the places that where the locals eat. So he takes me to this place, I was like, "I don't know about this place." It was kind of risky for me to go with this





random dude. He was trying to hold my hand and trying to get like a lot of physical with me, I was kind of just like shaking it off. We get to this restaurant and I'm like, "What are you doing, Tracy?" and I go to the bathroom, we put our name on the list, I go to the bathroom and I have a little talk with myself. "Alright Tracy, at least if nothing else, this is a funny story at the end of the day that you can share with your audience, and/or your friends if it's not something to share with your audience."

So I go back you go back down and our table's almost ready, we sit outside. He sits down at the table and says to me, "Tracy, you know, I forgot my cash, so can you spot me 50 euro, I think that's like what dinner will cost with an appetizer, a beer and entree." And I said to him, because at this point he's like totally swindling me. I said, I just was like "no". I just said, "No, I'm sorry. I can't." He's like, "Well, I don't have any money." And I said, "Well, I'm going to go to the restaurant that I wanted to go to." Because Da Enzo was the place, the other place that I wanted to go to if I wasn't going to make this reservation. And so I'm like, "You should stay and eat by yourself." Because I'm like, "How could you have left without a wallet?" Maybe he didn't really didn't have the money, I'm not sure. So I get up, he follows out and he's like, "Can I have 5 euro for my time?" I was like, "Oh my gosh, dude, you hijacked me on the street, I wasn't even like seeking help or advice. I had my headphones in, I was listening, I was listening to a podcast." all this stuff. I said no because at that point it was just like frustrated because he was just totally trying to take me for a ride. You know, he spent a half hour of his time, you know, that's his problem. So I said no and all of a sudden I hear him hawk a loogie and he spit right into my eye and I was just like, "Oh my God." So I pushed him, probably said something, a swear word or something at him. But there was enough people around that I felt safe, and I just started booking in the direction of the restaurant that I wanted to go, and that's where I met Sasha and had a lovely diner.

But it is a good story and, it's also a lesson learned that sometimes you have to take risk in order to get to a place, because I probably would have never gone to Da Enzo, nor talk to Sasha. We had a great conversation, she gave me some wonderful recommendations for where to go Lisbon, which was my next trip after this, and it was awesome. So it's important that sometimes you have to take risks in order to kind of see what you can't see.

Lesson number six. Everyone has their way of doing things even if they say they don't. So this is a really important because we talk a lot about here about having systems in our business, and we all have our own way of doing things in our business, whether or not we think so. So, I mentioned this story, I was doing a masterclass a couple weeks ago all about this topic. I remember one of my bookkeepers, way





back in the day when I was in San Francisco, Lori, she said something along the lines of, she said like, "Tracy, you really need to like organize your business." or something like that. I'm like, "Well can you help me organize and help me set up systems in it?" She's like, "No, because if I set them up for you, you're never going to use it if it's not your way of doing things." Didn't really understand what she meant by that in the moment, I completely understand what she means by it now. We all have our way of doing things, whether it be how we stack the dishwasher or how we fold laundry, how we post on social media, how we write, how we make our jewelry, how we enter stuff into our accounting system. We have our way of doing things, and whether or not you think you do you, you do.

So really fun story, I got invited after this workshop that I was at in Riomaggiore to go to my friend's house in Antibes. She's has a beautiful home in the south of France, and I love the South of France. I have only been once before, and I was really excited to go back. And a couple of times she asked me to help with things or asked me to do things, and my friend does not, English is not her native language. So she speaks very fluent English, but occasionally sometimes there are words or the ways that she says things that are not, they don't translate the same way in English, because she's speaking in several different languages, she speaks in several different languages. So there was a time when she was like, "Help us prepare the food." and I said, "How would you like that done?" She's like, "I don't care, just do it." and then after she had instructions for how she wanted things done. Later she asked me to do something with laundry and help her out, and of course I was like, "For sure.", but I did it wrong because I didn't understand what she was asking, because she didn't share with me like her vision for that. And so things like that kept happening over and over again, so I started to learn to adapt to life her way of doing things, because I didn't know that, like you know, for instance like in her mind she had a very specific idea of when she wanted to leave, let's say to go to the beach. We were riding on scooters and so we had to carpool unless we wanted to walk.

So the first day she just popped and said, "Are you ready to go?" and I wasn't ready to go, so I didn't know that there was a time that we were, I was trying to get ready as fast as I could, but I didn't realize we were stuck on the specific timeframe of like just 15-20 minutes. So I learned to ask, "When do I need to be ready? Tell me exactly when you're ready to go." because she's a very timely person, and what I need to know in order to set myself up for success. And with that communication we all started laughing and she was like, "Okay, here you go." and we were able to get it done. And so it's just about setting expectations and letting the people around you know how to get things done your way. This is really important in life and business, and you can't expect someone else to know





how to do it your way if you don't tell them. So this is why documenting systems for your team and for your company is so important so that when and if you want to bring people in, they're prepared and it gets done the way you want it done. All the time, every time.

Alright. Let's dive into a lesson number seven. Creativity requires space. So before I left I was in a really bad place. I was feeling totally burned out, I was required to come up with all these creative ideas, and I had no inspiration. And so I basically just like frazzled my creative edge all the way to like burned it up, the candle at both ends, and wasn't feeling creative. It wasn't until I allowed myself to have some space that I actually felt inspired about a lot of things. So I mentioned earlier they didn't do much of my creative sabbatical, but by the end of it I was feeling so creative, and I was having ideas for a bunch of different things, including a whole slew of podcasts and I will be recording and ideas for my book, which I have transformed and transmuted, or whatever you want to call it, and ideas for collections and designs and different things that I'm working on. And so I want to encourage you and remind you, my mentors have said this, it's like you can't force creativity, you need wide open space to be creative. And so it's important to either block your days, and block out creative days in your week or block out creative days in your month or step away and actually take that creative sabbatical so that you can come up with your best ideas. Because it is truly my belief that highly visionary creative people will use their creativity to do incredible things in the world. And so this is why I really believe that creatives are the new nerds, because we're coming up with ideas that are outside the box and innovative, that help fuel companies and grow commerce and make things happen. We're the ones who stay ahead, so I really want you to focus on honing in that creativity that you already have, but really expanding on it so you can come up with great ideas.

Lesson number eight. Sometimes we really need to relax our body and do nothing. So if you're anything like me, you are not very good at resting. Like I can barely even sleep. In fact I sometimes only sleep like five to six hours a night. I know that's not good, but I like to move and get stuff going. I get exhausted at the end of the night, but I also know that... Or are at the end of the day, I should say, get exhausted. But I also know that when the morning comes, like I'm always awake before my alarm goes off, which is so annoying to me, because sometimes I just I really do want to sleep longer, because my body knows it's time to get up and that so many exciting things are going to happen. But sometimes we just need to do nothing, and I'm one of those people who, I'm the first person at the gym, I'm always active, if I can walk, I'd rather walk than take a car or a cab. I'm always like this. I've always been like this. And so sometimes we need to step back from that and just let our body relax and do nothing. I'm not really good at it, and I





had planned on listening to all these audio books and doing a lot of things with my time there, I had so many plans, none of the plans happened. Which brings me back to lesson number two, right? Actually lesson number three.

So what I ended up doing was not listening to the audio books because my cell phone was burning out and I didn't have like a strong enough spare battery to charge the phone for very long, so instead I just ended up laying there and just enjoying nature and having a glass of rosé here and there. That was great because like I didn't do anything, I didn't have a big agenda. I was just cruising back and forth and enjoying everything that was in front of me. It allowed me to really experience and be in the moment, which is something that I really need.

The number nine was to be open to something better. So, this was a big one for me because I was getting really down on my self that I wasn't getting the stuff that I planned done on this creative sabbatical, and it was hard. It was hard to feel like I had failed, I really wanted this space away so I could work on some creative projects. I didn't do anything. But what I realize is that I was supposed to do nothing, because I needed that space to actually refresh and rejuvenate myself, and that was the best part about it. I think that being open to something better, one of the things that I really did spend time doing, even though is that keeps saying I did nothing, was evaluating what I'm doing in my life, what is important to me, why do I value it, how are the relationships supporting the bigger vision of what I want to move towards, and are the relationships that I'm actually like engaged in or involved in, whether it be love relationships or friendships, are they really supporting what matters most to me. And some interesting things happened. You know, I've been able to have some really difficult conversations with people in my life, to talk about the way a relationship is going, it's too personal right now, so I can't really talk about it, in a certain respect which may or may not even move forward.

Some people from my past have resurfaced, which has been great, because I had lunch with a friend, dinner with another friend this weekend, this past weekend, who I hadn't seen in a long time. One of them I hadn't seen in three years, the other one I hadn't seen a year, and they were really good friends of mine who I spent a lot of time with before. They both live in New York City, so there's really no reason, it's just that life got busy for all of us, and our priorities shifted temporarily. But it was so good to see them both for different reasons and catch up, but I think sometimes, like it puts things into perspective that being busy and active all the time isn't really the answer, it's more about enjoying the ride and enjoying what's in front of you. So this create a sabbatical allowed me to really take a step back and evaluate what's important to me, so I can continue to move in that direction. I know that working all the time is not what I value





anymore. I've been working on setting up my businesses in a way that really support what it is that I should be doing, and which is speaking on stages and getting my message out there about creativity and how really creatives rule the world and how visionary leadership is evolving and how visionaries really need to be supporting themselves with the right people in order to reach their goals or else they're always going to feel stifled. So if you ever felt that way, trust me, I hear you.

And at the end of it all, lesson number ten is really that there's no place like home. I ended up extending my trip by four or five days because my friend mentioned to me that there were some sales in Milan and I didn't want to miss out on the sales, because I get serious FOMO, and that although the design houses were having 50% off of everything that they do. Well that was sort of like not the whole truth, because everything's a little bit less if it's a European brand and you're buying it there because you get the VAT back, and also there's import tax for importing things in the U.S. and it ends up being, I don't know, about 10% less on the front end, and then you get the VAT back, which ends up being about all in about 20-25% less. So that's good, that's for regular priced items. And for the sale things, not everything was on sale, but I wanted to go, because you know, how awesome would it be to be at this first Saturday sale that they start in Milan and be there when it actually happens. So yes, I did score some deals, I did score some other stuff that was not like as great of a deal, and I'm happy I stayed, but I was so ready to go home at the end of it. And I realize that there was really just no place like home.

By the time that I left that sabbatical, I was really ready to sleep in my own bed, I was ready to come home and embrace my city of New York and ready to come home and just be here. Then 10 days later I had to get on a plane again to go back to L.A. But at the end of the day, you now, home is where the heart is, and all these lessons, whether you're thinking about the work now that you're doing that will pay off later, you're thinking about how to build a culture around your business that will help your team like really raise up in step into the roles, and whether or not you have a team yet, it's really about creating that company culture. Knowing that when you have a plan, sometimes it might get side railed, and you know, it's good to have one, but nothing really works out as you expect it to. And remember that meeting new people inspires new ideas and makes you really think differently about the world and gets you outside of that framework that we get ourselves stuck in.

Another great lesson is that sometimes you have to take risks in order to get to the other side. I'm so grateful for that crazy story in Rome and how that led me to meeting this wonderful person. And that everyone has their own way of doing things,





including you, so it's important to get those things documented so that you're setting people up who come and encounter your business, and you're setting yourself up for success to make things run a lot more smoothly, so that your business can continue to grow. That creativity requires space, you always have to remember that lesson number seven, super powerful. And I'm diving into my self care moment here that we need to relax our bodies a lot and do nothing. So if you're someone like me who's go, go, go, getting so much done, or you're running around chasing your kids or whatever it is, take time to just do nothing every single day. Whether it's 30 minutes to meditate, shavasana, or yoga, whether it is, relax. Relax, don't do it. Just kidding. Do relax, I'm just joking.

Anyway, no matter what you put out there, if things don't go your way, I want you to always think about being open to something better, because this is the most important rule of life, that if not this, it's something better. We can make wishes, we can make affirmations, but what we really want is the best case scenario, so we can live our best life. Right? And then remember, there is no place like home. So cherish the home you've built, cherish the home that you're born in, and keep that going.

Alright. I am so excited that I got to do this creative sabbatical. It was one of the most awesome vacations I've ever taken, and I say even though I was just in Europe, I've been to Europe so many times, sometimes when I go back I'm like, "I'm going to Europe again, I'm not taking this adventure into some new land, but that's okay." I'm okay with that because sometimes we need to go back to places that we feel a connection to, and I don't know if you know this, but I was European Studies major in college, and so this is really bringing me back to a lot of the stuff that I studied back in the day, and kind of brings it back home for me.

So anyway, I want to wrap up this episode reminding you that your job as the visionary of your company, if you think of yourself as a chief visionary officer, is to be working mostly in your creative zone of genius, and to be fostering that creativity over and over and over again, and building and using that creativity to continue to build your business. And you do that by setting your business up the right way, so if you haven't checked out our Multiply Your Profits course, you might want to take a look at it, and by surrounding yourself with the right support.

I'd like to invite you to our Live event here in New York City. We have just a few tickets left. We are about to close ticket sales, because we're almost sold out, and it's an amazing event. It's happening September 26th and 27th here in New York. We have an opportunity for people coming to do a maker video shoot, we've





coordinated production on that, if we haven't sold it out by the time that this podcast airs. Last time we sold it out in just a couple of days. We've already sold out the first day. So if you're interested in a maker shoot, just follow us over at FlourishThriveAcademy.com website and reach out to us and we can hook you up. But also come to our Live event, it's amazing. It's a two-day event that really focuses on helping you build connection in your business and using that connection to attract the perfect clients over and over again.

The main focus of the conference this year is all about, as I mentioned, connection, but using your website as a tool to connect not only to your perfect clients, but to create messaging and brand story that connects your brand in the bigger space of the world. And so the day will be structured with a bunch of keynotes, me teaching, we're having breakout sessions with our amazing contributors and sponsors, we have several panels happening. One of them is an influencer panel, which is going to be so amazing, and I'm very excited to announce influencers on the panel, I'm just waiting for the contracts to get signed, so that we can seal the deal. And by the time this episode goes live, I'm hoping that I have something to report. Then we have some great speakers including Sabina Hitchin, Susie Moore, Ingrid Heilke of Profits First, she is going to be talking about how to get your business profitable, Robin Kramer, my co-founder over here at Flourish and Thrive, of course me, and so many more. So I really want to encourage you to come, it's going to be an amazing event.

Alright, and I want to thank our sponsor, Accounting for Jewelers. If you need help with your bookkeeping and/or want to get your Zero programs set up, definitely reach out to them. We'll have links to show notes for all this stuff. Head on over to FlourishThriveAcademy.com/episode163. This is Tracy Matthews signing off. If you like the Thrive by Design podcast, I would be so grateful if you wouldn't mind just popping on over to iTunes or wherever you're listening to this podcast and give us a little rating and a review. This really helps us know that the content that we're delivering to you is stuff that you want to hear about, and we'd love to just hear from you, anyway. So if you want to pop on over to our Instagram and send us a direct message, we're at [@Flourish_Thrive](https://www.instagram.com/Flourish_Thrive). We love hearing from our members, and make sure that you follow us if you aren't already doing so. Alright, I'll talk to soon, guys. We have a great episode coming up next week. See you later.

