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Episode #158:

BOOK UPDATE (+ A SECRET EXCERPT FROM MY BOOK!)

Sam Vander Wielen:

Hey there and welcome back to the show. Today is a very exciting episode because today I'm giving you not only a little like behind the scenes sneak peek about what's been going on with me writing the book, but I'm actually going to read a little sample of it for you. I've read a couple of these on Instagram here and there before. But, you know, and people always are like, oh my gosh, I can't wait to read it. So it's really fun for me to share, but it's also a living, breathing document that keeps changing. So I have no idea how much of this will end up in the book. It's not all up to me. There is a big, big publisher that gets to decide about a lot of that.

So I just think it would be really cool to share this with you as I go along because I don't know about you, but I do not know anything about what it was like to write a book. And I'm going through the process right now and I still don't know what it's like. I'll tell you in the end, but it's definitely different than I thought. So today, I'm just going to give you a little bit of like update on kind of how things are going so far. And then also just give you this little snippet.

So, okay, how are things going so far? Things are going really well. I have really enjoyed overall the writing process. I will say like I feel like I have a particularly unique situation with how everything went down. Because if you listen to my last book update, you know that I got the offer for my book the day my mom died. So it was literally in the afternoon and then my mom died at night. So it was not only a really horrible day and bizarre day and so many ups and downs and all this kind of stuff. But also it was like I got that book deal and then all of a sudden it was thrown right away into being like, okay, so now go write a book, you know?

And it was good at first to like throw myself into writing it and kind of distract myself from what was going on. But then it's also hard sometimes because I have hard grief days and you don't exactly feel super creative,

but you get these like -- so it kind of depends on -- let me break this down because I would not have understood this. So once you get your book contract, the publisher tells you what date the manuscript is due.

So apparently some publishers and some editors who you work with at those publishers, they'll just say like, here's the day it's due. Have a nice life. Like, see you when it's due. Right? Other people will set deadlines along the way and ask to see parts of it, like different sections of it. I thought my publisher wanted to do that, and I thought that was a great idea because I thought the idea of writing something for six months without anyone seeing it and not knowing if you were on track or not was really scary. So I was like, they wanted four chapters at a time in chunks. I was like, no problem, let's do that, right?

So when you're listening to this, I've just handed in my first set of chapters, the introduction and the first three chapters. And then basically from there, they'll be editing and commenting on it and sending it back to me. I'll be doing more work and editing on those initial chapters. But then the unique thing that is happening now is that I'm writing new chapters because I'm writing the next set of chapters while also going back into editing.

So this will be my first time going through doing both of those. Whereas since I got the book deal to today, I've just been focusing on writing new chapters and haven't had anything to edit. So it's a really interesting process overall and there's a lot. I am lucky that I have a very nice and collaborative and interested editor who wants to be involved and I can ask her things and we can get on Zoom and talk things through, and she can look at stuff. So it really depends on like who you get. I've heard different stories from friends who have had book deals with different people or different publishers. So that's kind of been my experience on the formal side so far.

I would say like in general, I just thought it was so funny that when I got the book deal, I think if you've ever wanted to write a book, maybe you've been like me, and you really built it up in your head. And I expected that when I got a book deal or I don't even know what I expected, but I think I had something in my mind that someone was going to roll out like a golden

document for me and be like, here's the golden document where you write your book in.

And instead, they're just like, okay, start writing. And I'm like, so do I just literally start writing? Like, I just start a Google doc. Like that's it. Like, just any old Google doc doesn't have to be a special kind of Google doc. Like it doesn't have a special label. I just feel like it's so substantive. I was like, looking for this like, is someone going to send me this magical document? No one sends you the magical document. You create it on your own. It's like very uneventful in that regard. It's kind of funny. I don't know what I was really expecting, but also just didn't expect to start a Google doc.

I also was saying this to a friend the other day that I think it's really interesting writing a book for the first time that this has been the first time in my entrepreneurship career and journey that I'm doing something that I'm going to get very serious, significant feedback from somebody on who's actually qualified to give it. So it's like, yeah, I get trolls commenting on something or I get a nasty person once or twice a year writing back to my emails being like, you suck, stop emailing me and all this.

I don't get constructive feedback from experts, right? Like people who are masters at writing and publishing books. And so that's a really cool experience. I'm really seeing this as an opportunity. Like I said, I haven't gotten the edits back yet so maybe talk to me in a couple of weeks. But I am trying to go into it with a positive attitude of being like, well, I think it's really cool that I'm going to be able to hear some feedback. I hope that my writing gets better from this process. If I come out of this a better writer, that's an incredible gift. I hope to be like pushed and challenged, just learn new things. Even just having to write so much I think is just the exercise of that is really helpful.

So I'm really looking forward to that and the feedback part. I'm sure there will be moments when it's tough to hear. But I also think it's interesting because I do think in online business and you're primarily writing on social media, you're kind of used to just being able to do whatever you want. If I want to send out an email about this topic, if I think it's a

great idea to write this way, it's just a great idea. Nobody calls you on it, nobody says anything. So it's kind of interesting to have more parameters within that regard.

I've also been thinking a lot about the fact that what I'm writing has a lot more lasting power, or I should say I want it to have a lot more lasting power. So like, I want this to be a book people can read for months and years to come, not like posting something on Instagram that somebody's going to see for the next eight hours and then it's gone, right? So that makes you think about your content a lot differently. And that's been really interesting and refreshing to be like, oh, I don't have to write about this trendy thing. I can write about bigger picture things.

And like what I've said about why I like podcasting too is I can get into the nuance. I can go deeper in things. That's been really cool about writing the book because I feel like I don't have to be so giving you just a quippy thing in seven seconds that makes it bingeable. So you can really get into stuff more in the book. And it has me thinking like because I'm able to go into things so much more, I'm able to also think about how is this helpful, right? How is this helpful to you?

Because I keep -- sometimes, I'll write something or I'll tell a story about something that's happened to me, in my business, somebody I know. And I'm like, but how is that helpful to you? Right? If it doesn't have a value lesson for it, for you really in it, then I really don't want to be sharing it. So, there are a handful of things in there that are just like entertaining. But I'm like, but how is this helpful?

So my friend Rochelle said, my book coach who helped me with the book proposal, Rochelle, said, it's about you, but it's not for you. And I think that's a really good way to think of it is like, yes, I'm using my story as a way to teach you lessons, but the lessons are really for you, right? The lessons of things I went through, I already messed up and learned better from, I'm trying to carry on to you. So that's kind of my gist of like the book update. I would love to read you an excerpt of the book if you're open to it. It's got a hold it up here.

Okay. So the part that I'm reading to you is coming from -- I'm just going to give it context since I'm not going to read you the whole thing. But the part that I'm reading you is from a section where I'm talking about how I was a lawyer, and then I left being a lawyer and I started a health coaching business. And then I realized I didn't like that, and it didn't go so great. And I wanted to start a legal business. And I was feeling like I was pivoting and failing.

I felt like I failed by leaving my career, my education behind. I felt like I failed then by starting a coaching business that wasn't really for me. And I was just like, man, I've just been failing, right? And I'm talking in this chapter about how your life experiences, whether they're different than mine, they are so valuable, so kind of picking up in the middle of something. But I'm going to talk with you about this part. Okay. So here it goes.

My "failed" business experience was so necessary because I learned so much from my mistakes. You might be approaching your business building venture, hoping that you'll never make a mistake along the way, or you might even be holding back on or completely holding steady, taking any steps towards starting or growing a business because you're so afraid that it could go belly up. But it's best to make mistakes on a lower stakes venture on or early on in your business when the stakes themselves are lower. Making mistakes is inevitable when you're starting or running a business. It's whether we're open enough to notice them, pivot, and update for the next iteration, that's really a mark of a good businessperson.

You'll want to plan for those mistakes by remaining open to learning. Learning is, in my humble opinion, one of the coolest parts of the entrepreneurship job, and it's one you should get comfortable with quickly. My job is to help you avoid some of the mistakes that can be the most costly, painful, and business deadly so you can instead focus on your business and its future growth.

Second, most of your past experiences, failures or not, will become your greatest assets in your life and your business. Starting a business before my legal one gave me a dry run. It's starting, building, and growing an online business that would directly contribute to the nearly immediate

success I had with my legal business Sam Vander Wielen, LLC. What I didn't know then that I definitely know now is that every mistake I made with Hygge Wellness was like a practice run for Sam Vander Wielen, LLC. By the time I got my legal business up and running in 2017, I was able to get up and running so quickly and much more efficiently because of those experiences and learned mistakes. Without them, my legal business might have been one too.

I'm not saying you have to start a business and let it fail before you can start a successful one. But I do think it's important to know that if it does happen, it's okay. And maybe for you, it wasn't a failed business or a grainy photo food blog, but maybe it was your career, relationship, schooling, et cetera that you might see and think of as a failure that I hope to convince you was everything but.

Everything you've been through before has led you to now. And if it hadn't happened, you wouldn't be here today. Maybe in order to start the business you have on your heart and mind, or to grow the one you're already building, you needed to have those experiences. Maybe you needed to pick up this book to realize that what you really want to create, offer and sell might actually be possible with a business you didn't even realize could exist. It might not feel like it right now, but one day it will become clear to you why you had to go through what you went through. So as you're hurtling through in past challenges in your life right now, please have the faith and the strength to know that it's all going to be part of your story one day.

So that's that. That's one little segment. I've read different segments. So I tried to pick out something that was different that I don't think you've heard from me yet on Instagram if you follow me there. But I hope that you liked this little snippet. I hope you liked hearing about what's going on with the book. Please do me a favor and like, cheer me on. It would be so helpful. I need it, you guys.

I'm telling you, writing this book and going through the level of grief that I have been going through, having lost both of my parents, I am struggle busing, like on a personal level, right? I'm doing fine with the book, but like on a personal level, I am really having a hard time and it

just makes my day when I hear from you and you tell me like, I want to read this book. I can't wait to read the book or keep going. It's just really helpful. So please send me a message. Let me know you heard this. Let me know that you're excited to read this one day. It's going to make this feel very worth it. So I appreciate it. I appreciate you. I appreciate you being here.

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