

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Lauren 0:01

Welcome to the Launch Your Blog Biz podcast. I'm your host, Lauren McManus. I used to be a full time tax accountant and CPA with a whole lot of limiting beliefs and "I can't's" whenever I thought about starting my own business. Fast forward a few months, and I quit my job after starting and growing my first blog to six figures in just a year. This is my space to share and yours to listen and grow, about how to build and scale your own blogging business and design a life on your terms. Let's get started.

Lauren 0:35

Hey, y'all. Welcome back to another episode of the podcast. It has been a hot minute for me. It's actually been a few weeks since I recorded the last episode and so many things have been going on in my life since then. I've actually moved to Europe, to Cologne, Germany, and I've gotten married, I got a new apartment, it has all kinds of furniture.

Lauren 0:57

It's been a crazy, crazy few weeks. But I am super happy and I'm really excited for this next chapter in my life. One of the reasons is actually just finally having a home base. As many of y'all know, I travel a lot and have been traveling over the last few years, and I'm finally settling down after about four years. And, man, it is so much more than I expected. It's all really exciting, but I'm having to buy every single piece of furniture, new. I mean, I've been living out of suitcases for the last few years and everything from a coffee maker to potholders to the kitchen to furnishing everything in the kitchen.

Lauren 1:40

I'm actually recording this episode right now, on a box, a very large box. So I'm standing up, it had my mattress in it, and we don't have any chairs whatsoever in the house yet. So all kinds of things are going on but I'm taking a break to record the next episode. And I'm really excited to actually have a base, also to just have a bit of calmness in my life when it comes to doing work.

Lauren 2:06

So I have some really exciting stuff coming up in the next few weeks, I'm gonna have guests on the podcast. Things are going to be really ramping up here now that I finally have a space to be able to record and keep on schedule. But anyway, let's get started with this episode.

Lauren 2:24

In today's episode, I want to talk about theory versus practice. And what I mean here is really learning versus doing. Now we all love to read self help books, or you know, maybe you don't actually, but many people do. But it's a lot harder to actually do the work involved with changing ourselves. Even if it's not self help books, think about anything else, right? Doing a new course, starting a new diet plan, how good does it feel to actually start something new?

Lauren 2:56

It's really, really motivating and exciting, right? It makes us feel like we're on a good path, a better path. We are making changes in our life and we're starting new beginnings. But often,

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

there's some kind of fallout somewhere along the way, and my diet clients actually call it "falling off the wagon." And then this is that point where their motivation starts to wane. And they end up cheating on their new diet, and they're, you know, struggling to find the motivation and commitment to actually see it through.

Lauren 3:28

So why does this happen? Why does it feel so good to start something new, but we can rarely see things through to the actual end? I mean, it feels like sometimes for every eight to 10 things we start, maybe we actually follow through to completion, maybe one or two of them. And you know, I don't know I just made that up, maybe it's more like half but I know at least in the dieting world, you know, for every five or plus diets that people start, they generally don't even follow through on one of them in the long term anyway.

Lauren 4:01

I know that I felt this in many areas of my life over the years, but honestly, and what inspired me to create this episode today, was how it applies to my learning languages. So I've been trying to learn Spanish for goodness, like I don't know, for four years now, I've tried so many different ways to learn. But honestly, I was never really committed. I've gotten really, really good at ordering food and asking for directions. But as far as actually communicating with locals and making jokes with them, I've never gotten to that level.

Lauren 4:37

Now that I've just moved to Germany, I'm now starting to learn German. And I'm really trying not to make those same mistakes again, because this time around it's really important to me to actually learn this language and to be able to learn it in a way that I can communicate with locals and even joke with them. Because I've chosen to build my life here and actually settle this time. Honestly through all of this thought process about this language learning, I've realized that so many of these concepts apply to so many other areas in our lives.

Lauren 5:10

And one way that I see that pretty often too, is actually people taking courses. Taking different courses and getting somewhere along the way with the implementation, then often giving up and sometimes you even start a new course before you finish the old one. This implementation process and subsequently giving up or just not trying hard enough, not being committed enough, this can be so detrimental to our motivation, and our ultimate success and what we're trying to achieve.

Lauren 5:39

So in this episode today, I want to talk about theory versus practice, and how we can identify some of these traps and pitfalls that we often fall into and how we can combat these to do more in our lives. Now, first, I want to talk about theory. And when I say theory, what I mean here is generally just the learning stage, right? It can be information, so reading it, listening, watching, whatever way you're consuming that information. But this stage often is what creates the motivation, right?

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Lauren 6:15

We are reading new concepts, we're learning new materials, we're learning the what to do, not yet necessarily the how to do it, but we're learning the what to do. And when you think about it, this really requires pretty much no commitment. I mean, you have to actually spend the time to absorb the content, to let's just say, read the material. But really, at the end of the day, it makes us feel like we're doing something because we feel that motivation, we feel excited to make some changes and we feel like we're getting things done.

Lauren 6:45

But when you actually think about it, we're not accomplishing anything, just learning about something. It's not enough and it doesn't amount to anything, if you don't actually ever put this into practice and start doing something about it, right? So it can be dangerous to get stuck in this theory stage because it makes us feel good and it makes us feel like we are doing really great and new things. But without the implementation and the practice, we're not actually getting anywhere.

Lauren 7:13

Now, when we talk about practice, we are talking about doing the action, "the implementing" the theory that we have learned. What happens in practice is that it actually zaps our motivation and it can sometimes be demotivating, when we don't actually see results quickly enough. Sometimes this requires a bit of faith and trust, this area of practice is definitely a lot muddier and not as clear cut as the theory. This is why we often, I wouldn't even say really get stuck in this phase, we often just try it for a little bit and we just quit, right?

Lauren 7:55

Sometimes it's not even a conscious decision to quit, it's just that we don't prioritize it any longer and it begins to just fall off our plate. We start doing this thing, whether it's practicing a language, or working out right, we start doing it just a little bit less and less each day or one week, we have a lot of other things going on. So we don't prioritize it, and then it just disappears.

Lauren 8:19

Now I want to give you just a few different real life examples so you can kind of think about how some of this applies to your life and what you're going through. As I said, you can really apply it pretty much anywhere. For me, right now in my life, it's definitely the language that I am playing this the most to. And when it comes to language learning, you can learn the structure and the grammar of a foreign language, but practicing it and speaking it is a whole different ball game. So what ends up happening here is if you spend too much time on theory and not enough time on practice, you're going to be able to understand a foreign language fairly well, which I can with Spanish and even with German, but my speaking and communication skills are definitely lacking far behind that.

Lauren 9:03

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Another example here where you can really see the defining lines between theory and practice is when you learn about a new diet. Let's say you're switching to paleo or vegan/vegetarian. You're learning why it's important to change your diet but actually cooking the food and doing it long enough to make it habitual, is a whole different thing. What ends up happening is that you learn a lot about the healthy concepts, you know what's healthy, and perhaps why you should eat it. But you do simply choose to ignore this information when it comes to making better decisions about your food and about your health.

Lauren 9:37

Again, it can be a conscious decision to choose to ignore it, or it can be unconscious. When it comes to online courses. You can learn about what you need to do to find success, but then actually sticking to a schedule of creating content or posting that content, or maybe you are taking a course for how to create your own course and you start the planning of it right, but you don't actually actually start recording your very first lesson.

Lauren 10:03

Now what ends up happening here is you just don't end up getting enough results to be able to actually analyze, optimize, and improve. So when it comes to online courses, you have to do the lessons, you have to implement them and then you have to actually give it enough time to get enough data back to be able to improve what you're doing. So if you just do a few things here and there, and then you decide you don't want to wait around for these results, or you're not getting them quick enough. You then switch to a new course, and a new direction, you might end up as one of those people that dip their toes in absolutely everything and doesn't actually ever get good at anything.

Lauren 10:41

This is going to be the stage in your blog, where you just feel very scatterbrained, you're trying all kinds of different stuff, and you don't actually get solid results on anything. So that's the worst place to be in, because if you at least get a lot of results on the traffic side, you then have that traffic to be able to really work on the monetization side, or building your email list and this and that.

Lauren 11:04

And lastly, y'all in the self improvement area, I want to end with this example because this really covers pretty much everything. We're learning how to reduce negativity, declutter, destress, listen and validate your partner, work on your relationships, create better habits, communicate with your family better, work on your leadership and your management skills. Literally, the possibilities are endless. This can come in the form of books, podcasts (including this one), YouTube videos, courses, whatever.

Lauren 11:35

Now, what ends up happening bottom line is, we often just don't finish it, or we binge read or watch or listen, and we feel too overwhelmed to actually implement any of it. We don't know where to start, we forget, and we really can't do any of it enough to make it habitual. And, again,

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

you can really apply that to pretty much every aspect of your life. Now, I want to transition into talking about how do we stay motivated to accomplish more? How do we move from theory to practice, or more importantly, stay in the practice area long enough to actually see results?

Lauren 12:17

To actually get out on the other side of it, to not just quit somewhere along the way, in this practice area? How do we see things through to the end and remember that sometimes in order to stick with your practice, it has to become easier, or in more cases feel more habitual, but it needs to be easy enough that we do stick with it, right? If it's going to be horrible, hard work, every single day, then you're probably never going to make it through.

Lauren 12:44

And really the best way to make it less difficult and feel less like trudging through it, your mindset is one of the best ways that you can do this, and also the things that we're going to talk about in the next few minutes. So talking about doing more and accomplishing more. Let's now talk about planning and implementation. When we have theory, and we have practice, where does the planning lie in this, that planning and implementation?

Lauren 13:14

Well, when I was doing my notes for this episode, to me, it felt like planning and implementation lies somewhere between theory and practice. So somewhere between these two elements. I think that's what is really important here, because many people, including myself, do stick really, really hard on theory, and we learn as much theory as possible. So we feel like we have all the information at our fingertips to actually put this into practice and, if we do this, then we'll be more successful because we have learned enough.

Lauren 13:49

I think the danger here is that we do spend too much time on theory. I think it's because the practice is so much harder, that staying in a theory area makes us feel a lot better, right? It's more like a comfort zone, to be honest. I see this a lot with my students that are building their own courses. They buy our *Six Figure Blogger Course*, and sometimes they stay too much in the theory side and as opposed to actually diving in to, again, creating that first lesson and actually recording it, it's a whole different thing.

Lauren 14:22

I know that my students that have created their first course, their second, and third courses are infinitely easier for them, because they don't have all that fear and trepidation and all that staying in the theory side in the beginning, they just do it because they feel better about it. So I think that again, planning and implementation should fall somewhere between theory and practice. What I mean here is that it shouldn't be all just theory, bingeing, learning.

Lauren 14:52

You should learn some things and then start planning and implementing some of them. So start some of the practice and then go back to theory and then implement and plan and practice

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

some more, and again and again. I think that there is honestly this, or what there should be, this endless loop or this endless merry go round. And you don't get off this merry-go-round until you've reached your goals or until you feel comfortable enough with your level of results that you have made it past this initial fear, trepidation.

Lauren 15:25

This stage of actually, you know, struggling with motivation. Once you're past that, you can then kind of pick and choose how you want to do it. But until then, I think that that cycle is actually what is going to work best. And creating an actual plan will help you stick with your practice. Because when we rely on motivation to carry us in the beginning, it often does dry out at some point, or, honestly, we get distracted by the next shiny object. And because learning something new makes us feel good, we don't feel bad about quitting or giving up on the other thing, because then we just transfer our thoughts and our energy to this new thing, right, this new theory.

Lauren 16:05

So actually creating a plan along with a commitment and an intention for that or even an actual goal to achieve those results that you're seeking, I think that that is what is going to help you actually see things through to the end, at least one side of it. So creating a solid plan or outline for how you're going to actually reach that goal. I know that this is kind of tough for some people, I'm personally, myself, not a goal setter kind of person. I generally have very vague goals and it's more like I'm going to attack this thing until I finish it.

Lauren 16:40

And for some things that mean a lot to me, like mean the most to me, that does work. But for some things like language learning and things that are either A) a little bit harder for me to do, or my motivation to get it done just isn't as strong. Well, it's a lot harder for me in that sense, and I do actually need to set goals.

Lauren 17:01

I think what happens to me specifically is that I often have this goal, especially with language learning, that's just to be better. So just be better, like I want to learn Spanish to better communicate. But "be better" is not a clear goal. And bottom line is I didn't want it badly enough to set goals or to commit to it, and I ultimately let it go. This just isn't good enough.

Lauren 17:28

Now one thing that you can do to help yourself create goals, is to just simplify a little bit in your life. I am a big, big fan of simplification, you'll probably hear me talking about it a lot. I talk a lot about focusing on one to two of the most important things that are going on in your life or you know, in your business specifically, that are the most important to you and letting everything else just go for now. Now sometimes this does require a bit of self evaluation. For me in my life, I have identified that learning German is really the most important thing for me right now, I also have work as secondary.

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Lauren 18:04

But again, it requires some self evaluation. Because sometimes for me, work feels very effortless. We're making money and I know what to do next, I'm in the zone, and when this is the case, I feel so good about work that I have so much extra capacity to focus on other areas of my life. But then other times, like now actually, our revenues are a bit lower, and I don't have a lot of immediately pressing projects or things to do. So I'm left kind of wondering what's next and my motivation is kind of all over the place. I really just feel like my business needs more of my attention right now.

Lauren 18:42

So being able to identify that those are the two areas of my life that I believe need the most attention for me right now. Once I've identified that, I want to think about my approach to how I'm going to tackle these things, right? How I'm going to achieve my goals in these areas. Once you've identified these things, how are you going to prioritize them? Is it going to be a sprint or a marathon? What kind of person are you? What do you generally gravitate more towards? And the thing that you're doing honestly might also dictate this.

Lauren 19:17

So for me, I think I've identified that, I don't think I can have learning German be a marathon, because I don't want to take a year. I would rather just take a few quick months, do some intensive courses and just learn it, just like rip off the band aid, right? But it really might depend on what kind of thing you're doing. I mean if you are working on your relationship with your partner, I think that's more of a marathon kind of thing. You might have smaller sprints in there where you really hardcore work on certain things to you know, communicate better with your partner.

Lauren 19:52

But generally you have to expect that that stuff does take time and working on that at smaller chunks probably makes a bit more sense. So think about what you're trying to achieve, and which of these ways the sprint or marathon is going to help you achieve that. And really what is going to be the most sustainable way for you. Because if you are not a sprint kind of person, and you're trying to do it in a sprint, or vice versa, you may not end up being able to actually stick with it. And y'all don't be afraid to try both.

Lauren 20:22

But if you do, try both to make sure that you are paying attention to the results of your efforts. So if you try one approach to be better at something, and it isn't working, well try the other approach then. But make sure you analyze those results and actually decide, you know, how much have I accomplished? What can I do better? How can I do this better?

Lauren 20:44

I think that when we start to give up on these things, and we feel ourselves gravitated towards other areas of our life, we need to just take a look back and be very honest with ourselves that, "You know what I didn't measure up here, I didn't achieve as much as I wanted to," and actually

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

admit to like, those fears. Is it because I'm scared? With creating an online course, you can give yourself all these different excuses for not getting something done.

Lauren 21:12

But when you think about it, a lot of it boils down to, "I feel like I'm not ready and I'm a little bit scared," you know, "I don't know what I'm doing, or I'm afraid about the feedback I'm going to get or I'm afraid of speaking." You know, all these things. And once you identify that, it's like, okay, you can deal with it, you know, you've identified it, and you can deal with it.

Lauren 21:32

Now, moving on, the next thing that I want to talk about that can help you do more is, consider paying for information or an actual plan for implementation. Sometimes taking this all on ourselves can be very difficult. And I've been doing that with language learning, especially with German as well. I've been bouncing around between two or three different courses and methods. And I've been learning a bit, but I have decided I need to do an intensive course.

Lauren 22:00

It's going to be about four hours a day for the next couple of months. And I've heard it is pretty brutal, right? I mean, it's a very mentally exhausting activity, and then I need to work on top of that, but I've ultimately decided that that is what's going to be best for me, because I don't trust myself to do the learning on my own. I have so many expenses right now with this new place and furnishing a new apartment that it really kills me to pay money for courses when I have a few courses already and different materials that I didn't pay for.

Lauren 22:37

But I think that I need to and this goal is that important to me. And actually speaking of goals, part of the point of this is that I'm not good at setting goals. I've had the experience now with language learning to know that I want someone else to create the goals for me. So when you're taking courses that either give the goals for you or break it down into specific pieces that you're supposed to do at specific times, it will help you then implement those things. So free information is great, and we do all want to save money. But we do generally give more attention and place a higher value on things that we do pay for, because we don't want our money to go to waste.

Lauren 23:19

I know it's also a really good accountability mechanism, for me, when I pay for online workouts or yoga subscriptions. When I just randomly search for free video content for my workouts, I don't tend to actually do them on a set plan, I just do them randomly when I feel motivated. But when I actually have an online program for working out, even if I pay for it, despite the fact that there's all this free information out there, I actually devote a lot more time to it and do it on schedule. So bottom line, when you're serious about something, consider investing in it.

Lauren 23:53

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Alright y'all. We're starting to wrap up just a few more tips here. So when you're reading books, and finding inspiration, whether it's in a podcast or wherever, consider doing it in smaller chunks. As I said, really don't binge watch or binge listen to too many things, because you can't read an entire self help book and then decide to implement it. You just can't. There's way too many things. Sometimes it's just a simple sentence that resonates with us, and we're like, "Oh my gosh, that makes so much sense." We'll stop there, just stop and implement that.

Lauren 24:27

Work on it, make some actual changes in your life and then pick up the book again, when you feel ready to. For me when I'm reading those kinds of books, I tend to only read a chapter or less per night, I don't allow myself to read two chapters. Because different chapters generally focus on something different, some new concept, and I haven't yet implemented the one from the previous chapter. So don't allow yourself to have this information build up and then you're unable to implement the small things that end up making the big changes.

Lauren 24:58

Try to take one principle away and then practice it until it requires less effort to do so. And of course y'all, those books or podcasts or whatever, read them again, listen to them again. I mean the same episode, take that course, again. So when you feel yourself slipping away or whatever, you just need another boost, start that course over again because you will pick up on different things and it does renew your motivation.

Lauren 25:27

Alright, y'all just a summary, try to apply these few steps whenever you are learning something new and trying to do something about it, trying to make changes in your life. Number one, decide how important it is to you. The more important something is to us, the more likely that we are going to see it through to the end.

Lauren 25:47

Number two, set a goal or intention for what you actually want to achieve. This can be very specific, or it can be pretty vague. But the vaguer it is, the more likely that you're going to end up falling somewhere short along the way. So just consider that.

Lauren 26:04

Number three, set a timeline for these results if it's possible or applicable. Sometimes it's not but generally, even if you can set a timeline for something and if you buy that timeline, you haven't actually achieved your results, it forces you to then think about why you haven't achieved it. And think about where you've been spending your time, what maybe is working or not working. But just setting that timeline can help give you the accountability to actually analyze your results.

Lauren 26:34

Number four, remember to mix theory, practice, planning, and implementation. Remember that endless cycle from theory to planning and implementation to practice and then back to theory again. Remember to add a little bit of everything along the way.

Episode 17- Theory vs. Practice

Lauren 26:51

Number five, set intermediate goals along the way if necessary. So because you're going through this cycle of these different things, it might be important to set smaller goals first. A) it can help with motivation when we're actually achieving these goals but B) it can just help you really stay on track. So using an outline for this can really help. For instance, in our *Six Figure Blogger* course, where we teach about creating your own courses, we teach to create an outline first, because then you're just tackling one piece of the outline at a time.

Lauren 27:23

You're not just building a whole course, from scratch, like day one, you're just ready to go right? Because that's really difficult. First you create an outline, and then you tackle each bit, piece, by piece, by piece because you never bite off more than you can chew.

Lauren 27:37

And then lastly, remember that you can go back to theory when your motivation is waning. So if you're not seeing the results, go back to that course, go back to that book or whatever and find that motivation again. Make sure you don't stick too long here and remember to identify when you feel like you want to take a new course, when you're drawn to something new, and actually do a self evaluation. Think about is this because I'm ready for something new or is this because I'm scared or bored of this other thing that I just kind of gave up on. So make sure to think about that.

Lauren 28:12

Alright, y'all. This ends our episode on theory versus practice. I hope that this helps you to implement some of the things that are important to you in your life. I will see you on the next one.

Lauren 28:28

Thanks for listening to the Launch Your Blog Biz podcast. Don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss future episodes. And please share the love by leaving us a review if you loved this episode. If you want to learn more about how you can launch and grow your own blogging business, make sure to check out our website at CreateandGo.com