

EPISODE 58

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:36.6] CS: Hello everybody! Welcome back to the Creative Empire Podcast. I am Christina Scalera, joined by Reina Pomeroy, and today our guest is April Bowles-Olin of blacksburgbelle.com. You guys may have seen her on Creative Live, you may have seen her on her blog, you may have seen her on all of her videos. Thank you so much April for coming on today.

[00:00:55.2] ABO: Thanks for having me. I'm so excited to be here!

[00:00:58.6] CS: Yeah, of course! I just touched on it a little bit, but you're really a video queen! It's great, because people aren't really embracing video yet. We have Instagram, we have pictures galore on Pinterest; a video is a platform that people haven't really embraced in the creative industry that we're in. So if you wouldn't mind, give us a little bit of your background, and tell us how you got into this so we could have a discussion today about what video looks like in your business, and how it's helped you, and how maybe our listeners can add it to their business as well.

[00:01:30.4] ABO: Sure. I love video, and one of the things that I have seen over and over again is that creative entrepreneurs are a little bit afraid of it. They're a little bit scared when it comes to video, and one of the reasons that I started using video way back when I started my business - I was doing it within, I want to say the first six months I was doing some video post - was really because it breaks down the barrier of you and the person who is looking at your blog

post, reading your blog post watching the video, whatever it is. It really breaks down those barriers and allows them to connect with you in a way that just doesn't happen when you are reading a written post. It's just different.

So that's the reason that I got started in video, and I started using it, and I found that it feels more like you're getting a cup of tea, sitting down with the person, and you know right away "I could be friends with this person. I like her, I could get along with her, this is great", or you also on the other hand could say "this isn't the type of person", and either way it's a good thing.

It's a good thing to bring in more people who really get you, and who enjoy being in your space. A video does that. It really is one of those things that helps you to connect with people in a way that you just can't any other way.

[00:02:51.9] RP: Yeah, that's so true, and there's something about the voice too, because no post that I have written ever has gained as much traction as any episode of our podcast. So whether it's voice- I think it's maybe something in real time that happens, so that's such a great point. What are some tips for people who are scared to even start in video, and what other side benefits have you seen from having done these videos?

[00:03:16.0] ABO: Okay, so if you are worried about doing video, there are two things to consider. One, would you feel more comfortable if you were doing something live, where other people are interacting with you? So doing something like Facebook live, where you can answer people's questions and chat with them at the same time. Some people find that less scary. Most people find that a little bit more scary, but I have across at least a handful of people that they're like, "Yes I can do that much more than sit at a camera, because the camera feels more robotic, and it feels like I am just having a conversation with myself".

If you are more comfortable thinking that "I can film myself, and I can edit it, and I could put it together and leave out the parts that I don't want", then I would say just get in front of the video camera and practice over and over and over again, until you are comfortable. One of the things that I did in the beginning- and I'll do it now sometimes - is my husband will be behind the camera, and so it doesn't feel like I am talking to the camera. Even though I am, but there's somebody there. He will talk back sometimes, and sometimes I'll include it, most of the time not.

But it will help me to feel like I am having more of a conversation, so if you have a friend that you won't feel silly doing it in front of, and she can come over and be there for you, and to let you know- I would say look at the videos that you are doing and don't put them up until you get comfortable. We can all tell when you are terrified, when you are sitting there and you're really scared, because it's obvious. So keep going until you get comfortable. It might take weeks, it might take many hours, but you'll get to a point where you are just talking like you normally would.

[00:04:52.9] RP: I think that that's so true. So this year when I started the year, one of my weird tangential goals was to get comfortable with video. I was terrified with the technology. Periscope was still around, and I was starting to get my mindset right for doing live or recorded video, and one of the things that was really scary for me was how the heck do I edit this? Where the heck would I post these things? Some of them weren't even actually doing the video, but the after-effects I guess.

And I was future-tripping on all of these crazy things, so maybe you can talk to us a little bit about the mindset of how you can get into the video mode, and the recording over and over and over thing.

[00:05:36.4] ABO: Are you asking how to do the other things besides just recording the video?

[00:05:40.2] RP: No, if somebody was terrified of doing video, how can they get into the mindset of, "Okay, this is why I am doing it, this is why it's important", that kind of thing.

[00:05:50.9] ABO: Okay, got you. So one is if you don't feel like you are your true self when you are writing your blog post, if you still feel as if you've got that kind of grade school manner when you sit down to write your blog post, doing video is going to help you break away from that. Lots of people say be yourself, be authentic, all of these types of things, but it can be really hard to do that when you're writing. It's very difficult for a lot of people to do when they're writing.

So if you feel like that, and you feel like there's that disconnect, video is one of those things that will really help with it. So if you tell yourself, "This is going to help me connect with my audience,

it's going to help me. I can just be myself. I could have a friend over, and we can chat, and then I can take the parts of the video that really sound great and are just me.”, and it allows you to not have to do as much writing. If you hate writing and writing blog posts, then doing video or doing a podcast, or doing something else, go for it! Because you need some way that you're creating a content on a regular basis.

If you despise sitting down and writing, video is one of those things that's going to open up a whole new world.

[00:07:05.3] RP: Yeah, I totally agree, because a lot of our listeners are very visual people, and they're probably like, “I'm not a writer, why would I write a blog post?” so they put it off forever, and then they're like, “Oh I'm supposed to write a blog post.”, and so what you're saying is it doesn't have to be a blog post. It just has to be content, right? So I guess, what's the value in sharing content that's unique to you, if we can start there?

[00:07:29.5] ABO: If your brand is something that is coming out of you, you're an artist, or you're a consultant, or you're a coach, or you are doing something where the person needs to connect with you, then you've got to be yourself. That's going to help you stand out among everybody else out there. A lot of us grow up, and I think that we suppress who we really are. We don't want to stand out, we want to fit in. We want to fit in at school, we don't want to get picked on.

Even in day jobs, we want to fit in. We don't want to stand out, we don't want to be the weird person, but yet, that's the cool thing that people relate to when you run a business, and when you have your own brand. Creating content that's really you is giving people a way to connect with you, and a way for you to stand out when there is so much going on. It's going to really attract the right people to your blog, or your videos, or your YouTube channel, or your Instagram stories, or whatever it is.

[00:08:27.9] CS: Yeah, it definitely does, and it definitely helps, and I love that you guys are talking about the relatability and the way that it helps you stand out from the noise. But creating videos isn't necessarily the easiest thing to do. There's somewhat of a barrier entry. What are the challenges that you see when you're either working with clients, or when you're creating, or

when you first started doing videos; what are some of those barriers to entry, and how do you get over those so you can do this on a regular basis?

[00:08:55.0] ABO: Lots of people don't create videos because they think that they need a lot of equipment. They need a video camera, they need a lighting kit, they need a tripod, they need a cool background, whatever it is they get in their heads about they need this specific stuff to make it happen. When I first started doing video, I was using a camera that I got for less than \$100. I forget what it was called, but it was it was one of those cameras that had one button on it, and all you could really do is record yourself.

There were no options and I didn't even have a tripod. I had a stack of books that I would put it on. I didn't have a lighting kit, I just used really great natural light, and I filmed videos when the natural light was available. So you can start a lot sooner and a lot faster than you think you can. You don't need all this stuff to get started. You could even start doing some live videos with your smart phone and start that way. People aren't paying attention usually in the beginning, unless you have this huge audience and you've never done video before.

But often people aren't paying attention to you in the beginning. So you can make lots of mistakes and learn along the way, and nobody is going to be pointing them out, and you'll learn so much from it. I learned so much from just using that less than \$100 camera and no lighting equipment, all those kinds of things. Now I have more of that stuff. I have a video camera that was about \$300, and I'm about to upgrade it again. I have a lighting kit that I got off of Amazon for I think about \$150.

I have a tripod that I actually picked up at a flea market that works wonderfully well, so even now, I haven't spent tons and tons of money on it, which people think that they have to do. They see people like let's say Marie Forleo with these really professionally made videos, you don't need that. You just need a way to connect to people to show them who you are. That's it.

[00:10:52.7] CS: Yeah, and I think you said something that applies to any content, and one of the things that I see when a new entrepreneur has contacted me is they're so afraid to get out there. Not because they're afraid of their product or their service, they think that this amazing audience is just going to suddenly appear overnight and automatically judge them, and it's so

funny, because anybody that puts up a YouTube video for the first time might be scared to put it out there.

They're being vulnerable, they're being themselves, but then to watch the five people trickle in to actually watch it is a different piece. So I love that you said get started, get it out there, because your audience probably isn't as big as you think it is. Especially if you have never done video before.

If you haven't done it before, and you're just so uncomfortable, what are some things that you can do to help yourself be a little more comfortable? Should you wait, and maybe try a different platform? What are some things that maybe someone who's shy could try?

[00:11:47.3] ABO: I would start with really short videos; less than a minute. If you do that over and over again, you'll get more comfortable. So maybe even just doing a 10 second Instagram story where you aren't even the main part of the video. You are sharing the art that you made, or your space, and you're just scanning through it and showing what you have done that day, or what your space looks like, or something like that.

You can even start by not showing yourself if you're super shy, and try really short videos where you're showing yourself, or you're talking. If you're sitting in front of the video camera, whether it is a live video, or whether it's something that you are setting up your video camera and editing and putting up on YouTube or whatever, try really short ones. The more you do it from start to finish, the more confident you'll get, and you'll see, you'll improve really quickly. You really will. And your editing- you'll say, "Ooh maybe I shouldn't do this", or "that doesn't look quite right" when you watch it back. You'll learn so much, and the more you do it, the better you get, just like with anything else.

[00:12:56.0] CS: You brought up editing. I have to ask, what are some programs that you are using to edit your videos, and do you have any tools where you recommend- like at what point, I guess, do you recommend outsourcing that? I guess, very selfishly, if you found a good platform to outsource your video editing to, what might it be? If you are comfortable sharing that. I am not asking you to reveal it if you're not comfortable sharing that.

So if you're just getting started out, maybe what can people use to edit their videos? Should they edit them? Should they do Facebook Live? Or if you are further along, what are some of the things that you might consider doing to improve your videos, and possibly even make the process a little easier for yourself?

[00:13:36.4] ABO: Sure, well I use iMovie, and I've used Adobe Premier Pro before. There's this steep learning curve for programs like that, and so I just went back to iMovie, because I can do pretty much everything I need to do within that right now. I'm at the place where I want to start learning more about it- well, I will take a step back. I'm at the place where either I want to start learning more about it, or want to start thinking about getting somebody else to do it for me, and I haven't decided that yet.

So I'm still with iMovie at the time being, and you can find tutorials online that will help you get started with something like that within 30 to 60 minutes. Once you do it a few times, you'll know exactly what you need to do as far as editing. Right now, I'm at this point where I don't know if I would feel comfortable having somebody else edit my videos, just because there are things that happen when I'm editing videos that- necessarily, I want to be the person seeing it, not somebody else seeing it.

Which sounds strange; I'm not doing really weird things, but you trip over your own words, or something happens and I curse, or I'm telling my dogs to lay down and stop barking, or whatever it is that I feel comfortable doing it, but I don't know. I don't know, it just seems like one of those really personal things that I would have to feel comfortable with that person.

However, my business best friend from Heartmadeblog.com, she recently started working with somebody because she is a newer mom. She has a baby girl who is adorable and recently had her first birthday, and so she doesn't have as much time. So she recently started working with somebody who comes, films like four or five videos in one day, and then edits them for her, but it's the perfect match. She has worked with multiple people that film and edit videos, and we've work with a crew together that has filmed and edited videos for us, and it's such a good match because this person gets her brand.

[00:15:42.1] CS: Yeah, you guys did a B-School launch together, and you guys had a great video. That was very you.

[00:15:47.6] ABO: Yeah, well Mayi edited that video actually. She was the one who edited that video, but I went to Panama- she lives in Panama. I went there, and we worked with a video crew, a professional crew, that filmed a bunch of videos for us that we did when we had a side project together. That was really fun working with a professional crew. All we had to do was show up and do the video together, and then they made it look amazing.

But they still even weren't the right fit. They did an amazing job for us, but they didn't really understand our vision when we were out running out in tutus and like, weird workout gear. They were all looking at us like, "What are these girls doing?"

[00:16:30.1] RP: Maybe not the best fit?

[00:16:31.7] ABO: Yeah.

[00:16:33.4] RP: So they don't jive with you, I hear that. She's got a big personality too.

[00:16:37.5] ABO: Yeah, exactly, and the person that she is working with now will even give her ideas like, "Why don't you try doing this", or "Why don't we try this?" She's the one who, you guys follow on my Instagram, she puts up these short versions of her video, and that was her videographer's idea. To do these short videos to tease them, and she gets tons of traffic from it and tons of engagement from it.

So if you are working with the right person who understands the vision that you have, it can be great. But I think that needs to be the right fit. Just like website design, you've got to find the right person for that kind of stuff.

[00:17:15.0] CS: Finding the right person is so hard! I am tempted to go- because we work with so many people in the wedding industry, I am tempted to go to the people that create these beautiful wedding videos, but regardless, it's really expensive to hire somebody. So if you're interested in hiring a crew to do a video for you, maybe you're not just sitting there in front of the

camera, but someone is actually filming you going through a process, what are some good situations that you would consider investing in that video and hiring?

[00:17:46.9] ABO: So I would say- yeah, I would say with a sales video that you are especially- if you have something that's expensive, and you want people to buy, something that's a \$1,000, \$500, \$2,000, something that's an investment, it is an investment to then hire a video crew to help you create that sales video, but it's usually very worth it. I know of multiple situations with different creatives that I know that hired somebody to do the sales video, and it helped immensely.

Maybe they had done their video before themselves, and then they hired somebody a year later, and it made such a huge difference to their sales and all that kind of stuff. So with that, or maybe an intro video. If you want something on your homepage where you're introducing yourself and your brand, and it's a short video where you're just trying to show what you do to new people who are coming to your website, that could also be a great place to invest in something like that.

[00:18:47.2] RP: I love that.

[BREAK]

[00:18:50.1] RP: Hey guys, Reina here. So we want to hear from you. A couple of months ago we got together in Atlanta and had our very first meet up, but we're going to be having our first online meetup. It's going to be focus group style. We want to ask you questions; how you think that the podcast has benefited you, if you have any suggestions, anything like that. We want to hear from you! So November 29th at 11:00 eastern time, we are going to be getting together. If you want any more information, go to creativeempire.co/focusgroup. We can't wait to see you there!

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:19:26.8] RP: I think that as we're starting, I just go back to where I was a year ago, and thinking about how scared I was to share anything about me, because I think vulnerability is,

first of all, hard, and second of all, doing it on camera is like documenting it forever, so I had a lot of hang ups around that. I appreciate you telling us about how easy it gets with practice, and I say this all the time, that when you try something that scary, it becomes less scary when you do it over and over again. Can you talk to us about, say for instance, somebody is, I don't know, a wedding photographer. How can this play into their business, and how they might grow their audience?

[00:20:10.3] ABO: Using video on a regular basis?

[00:20:11.8] RP: Yeah, or just sharing content in general I think.

[00:20:15.1] ABO: Sharing content in general, okay. So I would say that when you are sharing content on a regular basis, you are bringing in the right people, especially if you are sharing content that really shows your work and the type of person that you want to work with. You are creating content for that person. It pulls in the right people. If you are a wedding photographer, and you maybe even hire somebody, or have one of your assistants take some video of you shooting the wedding, or talking about the wedding, and showing photos, that's going to show a bride much more than just showing the photos.

It's going to help them feel more calm and more confident in their decision, and all that kind of stuff. Once you have been following somebody for a while, you get to know them. You get to like them, and then you trust them, and you're more likely to buy from them. People always say "Know, like, and trust: it leads to sales", and it really does. It leads to sales. So creating content on a regular basis is going to help pull in people, and then give them that opportunity to learn more about you, and your business, and your brand.

[00:21:23.1] CS: Definitely, I couldn't agree more. One of the things that we started doing with the podcast that's been really helpful is having our transcripts posted with each podcast episode to the show notes, and the reason we did that was because, why not? I think for \$40 extra per episode, we could have a great SEO boost, and so that's even something you could do. I love that earlier you were talking about if blogging, if writing, if creating that kind of writing editorial calendar isn't your thing, then maybe the video blogging is where it's at.

And then turning that into a blog post, even with a transcript that you just clean up and add to each blog post so that you still get those SEO results. I'm wondering, if somebody wanted to do maybe a collaborative video, there's lots of platforms out there. You are on Creative Live, which is clearly a lot more exclusive, you have to be invited to teach there. It's not just a free for all, but if someone is creating an online course, maybe on Udemy or Teachable, or maybe they even want to work with someone like people that have open applications. I don't think Creative Live does, but I know Brit + Co does.

If they wanted to do something like that, what are some ways that they could, I guess, present educational material in a way that connects with their audience, but isn't so dry, and maybe even elevates them to the next level of their business, where they are approaching at least the place where they might be considered to teach at Creative Live?

[00:22:47.6] ABO: Yeah, sure. So when I was first starting out, and first started with video, with the less than a \$100 camera, all that kind of set up, Etsy invited me to speak at their first Etsy Success Symposium Conference. Those videos, when I look back on them now, I squirm on my seat and say, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe this. It's horrible", and I can't watch them. However, I still got an invite from a company that is huge, and that put me in front of thousands of people.

That was live streaming, and so many people saw it, and brought so many more people to my website, and my business, and all that kind of stuff. So I would say think about what you are looking to do, and try to do it at least on a smaller basis. So if you want to be invited to speak at Creative Live eventually, then you should be putting up content where you're teaching, and show that you know how to talk about the topic, show that you know what you are doing.

That's what's going to get them to invite you. They don't necessarily really care about if the quality isn't the top notch. They care whether you are going to be able to use your information to teach. Creative Live cared when they came and looked at my website. I'm sure that they cared more about "Does she know what she's talking about? Can she really help people? Can she talk about a topic?" Gosh, the first course was, I don't remember like 18 hours of content or something. It was a crazy amount of content. "Will she be able to fill this amount of content?"

So think about those things. What companies will look for, and that's what you want to do. On a smaller scale, obviously, because I don't have Creative Live sitting here in my living room. So I can't do exactly that, but I can show them that I know what I am talking about, and that I can help people, and that I would be a good fit.

[00:24:46.8] CS: Definitely, and this is a tangent, but I love the story that you shared when I first met you, which is you made a conscious decision to start blogging. It was every single day, or was it just 30 days in a row?

[00:25:00.9] ABO: I did blog. There was one year that I blogged every single day almost.

[00:25:06.8] CS: Wow, and you got featured on Design*Sponge.

[00:25:11.5] ABO: Yes, that was in- I got featured on Design*Sponge. I pitched them. I sent a pitch to them when I was reading their Biz Lady series, and that was about six months in, and at that point, oh my gosh, if you guys could even see my website at that point, you would be laughing hysterically, because it was atrocious. But that's beside the point, but I did send them a pitch, and one of the things that I could show them is that I had guest posts other places. Much smaller sites, but they could see my writing, and how I could then translate that to their column that they had.

So I think that it's important to show that you can do whatever it is that you want to do by having examples of it.

[00:26:00.4] RP: That's the beauty of doing guest posts, right?

[00:26:02.5] ABO: Yeah, definitely.

[00:26:05.2] CS: It's funny, I realized that to get featured on places, they don't necessarily care where you have been featured before, it's just if somebody did it right? And so everybody has - and I did the same thing when I first got started - I was like, "Oh guest posting, okay. I'm going to go to Huffington Post, and I'm going to try to upload my article". It was just a disaster, and then when I wrote an article for- I don't even remember where, which is somebody's blog, and

then the next time I pitched it to a little bit bigger blog, and then a bigger blog, and then it just built on it from there.

And by the time I pitched three or four times, not a ton, it was so funny because it was just, “Okay, great. You’ve been published before, no problem. We’ll publish you this time”, at places that before never even got back to me. There’s a huge power in just putting yourself out there and trying, and I don’t think video is any different. I feel like it really is the wave of the future in our industry, just because of that perceived higher barrier to entry. What other trends, and what other things are you really excited about in the next year or so, that you are seeing pop up? You are so good at trend-spotting, so I have to ask this question.

[00:27:15.5] ABO: Well, one of the things I love is live video. I really do. I think it’s so much fun to be able to interact with people live like that, and if you can start doing it now, then you’re going to be much better at it as more and more people do it. I think live video is going to become more and more popular, and something that is the norm, not a small percentage of people are doing it, but most people are doing it. I hope so at least, because I love live video.

[00:27:48.8] RP: There’s so many people using live video, especially Facebook Live right now. I think I just saw a video of NASA from a satellite, streaming Facebook Live? That’s crazy! I mean, that’s not a very good example for creatives, but I think that there are so many different ways of using live streaming to connect with people in real time, rather than this fabricated overly done up way of communicating with our audience, which the creative industry is really well-known for.

So I think live streaming is a great way so that the production cost is a little bit lower, or maybe just lower barrier to entry like we’re talking about.

[00:28:25.8] ABO: And there’s so much trust with live streaming, because you can’t edit it. You are there, and so if you want to become somebody who is an authority or a well-known authority, doing live video is going to show that you really know what you are talking about. Somebody can’t ask you a question, and then you go research it and try to find what somebody else has said about it. You’ve got to answer the question right then and there. So it’s another

thing that builds trust, because there is no hiding in live video. You can say, “Oh I don’t know this”, that’s totally fine, but it’s one of those things that there is no place to hide. It’s just you.

[00:29:03.3] RP: What are- maybe for somebody who’s never done a live video, never recorded a video for their business before, what are some very practical ways that they can do one this week?

[00:29:13.7] ABO: Okay, so I would say if you have a Facebook group, where you have however many people in it. Not everybody has a Facebook group, but let’s say you have a Facebook group. You could go in and do a live video within that group if you’ve never done it before. It’s a little easier, because those people know you. I think that that’s going to be a little bit easier. So if you have that option, I would say go with that, but if you don’t have that option, just do something short.

Come up with what you’re going to talk about ahead of time, and if nobody joins live, if nobody is watching, it’s okay. Keep going, talk about the thing that you were going to talk about, wrap it up, and move on. Do something really short. Plan on being on for two to five minutes to talk about something. Something you know really well, and know that you’re probably going to be nervous no matter what.

The first time I did a Periscope live video, I was so nervous, which didn’t make any sense because I’ve been on Creative Live in front of thousands of people speaking before. It just didn’t make sense to me why I was so nervous! But I was still nervous, and so I did a live video with my husband, and we talked about getting your spouse’s support in your business. It was helpful that he was there with me and that we were chatting.

So you could even do something where you are chatting with somebody else if that makes you feel more comfortable, but try to do something short. Know that you are probably going to be nervous, and that’s okay. Work through it, keep going and wrap it up, because again, you’re going to have more confidence the second time you do it, and then the third time you do it, and don’t let yourself keep putting it off. Don’t say, “I’m going to do it next week. I’ll get to it next week. Oh I don’t feel comfortable. Oh I’ve got a snuffle.” Do it! Just do it! It’s never going to get easier, just go for it.

[00:31:05.2] RP: I love that.

[00:31:05.7] CS: Guilty as charged. I guess it's like anything else, you need a plan and a strategy, and maybe an editorial calendar with maybe some topics or a list of titles. I don't even know, but is there an organizational tool that you use that's more helpful for you than just saying, "I think I'll do a live stream right now"?

[00:31:27.1] ABO: Well, I was doing Periscope videos a lot before Facebook Live, and before Facebook Live started taking over everything, and usually, I would just talk about something that was happening right then and there in my business. When I was teaching a Creative Live course, I did a live video every day during that boot camp to talk about that topic, or if I was posting a blog post that day, I would talk about that blog post.

The other topics I got were usually from people who would email me, or comment, or say something on social media that got me thinking, or if I saw something that really irritated me. And people love this. They love it when you rant about things, and you have an opinion on something, and so if something is really irking me, then I would go on and talk about that topic. People can feel your passion, so it's easy to talk about that kind of stuff when you have a strong opinion about something.

But usually it was either something I wanted to talk about, or something that was happening in my business at that point in time. I have seen other creatives do different things with it. Random Olive, Olivia from Random Olive is a great example of somebody who use live video so well with Periscope. She does brush lettering. She would get on and show how to brush letter different people's names, or she would go through a work sheet that she has up on her website that is either for purchase, or is a giveaway, or whatever. She was doing really well with that. I don't know if she's done Facebook Live or not, but she was doing live video.

So it's a way that if you are an artist, or you create work, you're a jewelry designer, or whatever, you can show yourself creating that thing. People get really excited about that.

[00:33:13.7] RP: Yeah, I think I've seen a lot of videos recently, probably just in my Instagram feed, with videos of brush lettering handwriting. I am so addicted to it! So if you are artistically inclined, which I am not, go ahead and use video. I would totally encourage that too, and live video has been such a great source of traffic for me as well. I do live streams from my Facebook page as well as from my Facebook group, and the Facebook page, nothing gets as many hits as those videos. I don't know if you found that too, April.

[00:33:48.0] ABO: Yeah. It's hot right now. That's another reason to do it, is because it's what's in.

[00:33:54.6] RP: It's En Vogue!

[00:33:56.8] CS: Yeah, it's sounds like Facebook, from what I can tell- I mean, I hate Facebook. There I said it, but you know, it sounds like it's really rewarding those posts as well by putting them at the top of people's newsfeed. Especially if it is getting any kind of engagement. Have you seen a lot of growth since you moved over from Periscope?

[00:34:16.2] ABO: I haven't been doing as much Facebook Live since Periscope, and that's mainly because of the things that I have been doing in my business. I've just been super busy with a website redesign, and I launched a membership program, and so I want to do more of it. So I can't say that yet, but I want to get back into it, because I enjoy it so much.

It was something that when I would hop on Periscope and chat with the people that would join me; because it was my most loyal people that would join on something like that and stay for the whole time and chat. It's fun. It's fun to talk to the people who love your work, and want to hear from you, and that kind of stuff. So I want to get back into it. I've just been super busy.

[00:34:57.8] RP: I so hear that, because it takes time to sit and be live with people at the right time, so I hear that. One thing too, I wanted to say for somebody who has never done one is that if nobody shows up, just pretend that you are talking to the re-players, because I got in my head about, "Oh there's nobody here. I'm not popular enough", and all these things, and it doesn't really matter. For me, it was like, "I have to get practiced at this". Do you have any other tips like that?

[00:35:25.6] ABO: Yeah, absolutely. Imagine people are watching the replay. I love that. If you want to make sure people are there, tell them beforehand. Let them know, maybe even if you want to email your list, and you want them to jump on with you, let them know when you're going to be on. It's more likely that people will join you then, but in the beginning, when I first started using Periscope, I wanted less people on. I wanted to get comfortable with it first, and after I did the first five or six, then I started telling people, "Join me at this time, I'm going to be talking about this." I wanted to get my bearings a little bit before.

[00:36:00.2] RP: Yes, so maybe inviting your cheerleaders, your friends to be on it at the same time.

[00:36:03.7] ABO: Definitely.

[00:36:06.6] CS: And going forward, April, as you continue to grow and you do this site launch, do we know when it's roughly going live? Can we reveal that information?

[00:36:14.5] ABO: I actually don't have a set date yet. I would totally tell you if I did, but everything has been taking longer than I thought it would. I've never done a website redesign from redoing everything. We're doing every single detail and rewriting all of the copy, everything is getting redone, and so we're at that place where we're getting really close to the finish line, but I don't have a set date yet. I'm hoping that it's going to happen before 2017 hopefully.

[00:36:48.2] CS: Yeah, I've been anxious. I remember I was in Las Vegas airport and I got one of your emails, a video actually, and you eluded I think to your graphic designer and your new site and I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is going to be really good!" So I am excited whenever it does come out. I'll be waiting for it. Over the next couple of years, though, what's your creative empire look like? I mean you've done Creative Live, you've been on Design Sponge, what's next?

[00:37:09.4] ABO: I am really focused on the membership site that I am building right now, and that's where all of my time and attention is going. I want it to be the best membership site for creative entrepreneurs who need sort of accountability. I work really well with creatives who tend

to procrastinate, tend to have squirrel syndrome like, “Ooh let’s go work on this”, or “Let’s go work on that!” I tend to help those kinds of people really well.

I want to have that be the place for them that they can stop procrastinating and it gives them the kind of kick in the butt they need to get the things done that they need to get done. So I plan on spending most of next year just really focused on that.

[00:37:53.2] RP: That’s awesome, thank you.

[00:37:54.9] ABO: Thank you.

[00:37:55.9] CS: Where can everybody find you and your website? Are you still on Periscope? Where can they find you on Facebook, all the things?

[00:38:02.4] ABO: You can find me at blacksburgbelle.com, and then on every social media platform, I’m @blacksburgbelle. So just search @blacksburgbelle, and you’ll find me pretty much everywhere.

[00:38:14.0] CS: And that’s Blacksburg like Virginia and Belle like a southern belle.

[00:38:16.9] ABO: Yes, exactly. Thanks.

[00:38:19.3] CS: Thank you so much for coming on April, this was wonderful and we really, really appreciate it. All the amazing knowledge you have contributed so generously here today. I hope all of you will take the time to go checkout April’s website. She has even more valuable content there, I promise. For all of you listening out there, go and build your own creative empire today.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:38:39.0] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co, where you

can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

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