

EPISODE 91

[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]

[0:00:35.3] RP: Welcome back for another episode of the Creative Empire podcast. It's Reina here, and Christina's here with me. Today, we have Cathy Olson of Love Inspired, and we love Cathy so very much, and we're super excited to talk to her about everything brand and web, and a brand-new project that she's putting out. Cathy, we're so excited to have you. Thank so much for coming on.

[0:00:56.8] CO: Oh my gosh, it's like we're just chatting across the country, but I'm so excited to be here, you guys. Thank you so much for having me.

[0:01:05.2] RP: Thank you! Tell us, you have had such an amazing career so far, especially in entrepreneurship. Tell us like, the highlights of your career so far.

[0:01:13.4] CO: Gosh. You know, it feels weird. It's like when you've been in business for a while, you kind of change, and morph, and you become a different person, and it's interesting that your vision of success changes as you're in business like, over time. You're like, "Okay, if I just got this done, or if I just did that," and then once you get it, then you're like, "But I don't have this thing."

Then I feel like there comes a time when you're in business so long that you're like, "Am I even doing it right anymore? Am I doing it the old way? Am I a dinosaur?" Then you start looking to

what people are doing now, and so you got to like question yourself, I think, throughout the whole side of your business.

When I first started out in graphic design stuff, I worked with some really big clients and some really big businesses, which was amazing. I got to work with like, Disney, and Costco, and Best Buy, and some really big brands and big businesses.

What's interesting is I actually, when I started doing wedding invitations, I started working with smaller clients, and obviously, just two people, a couple. Not even businesses, and I think that for me, there was such a shift between working with bigger clients to working with smaller clients, and I noticed that I can make a lot more of an impact with the smaller clients, with smaller people, than I could with the bigger businesses.

I felt like it was just kind of a drop in the bucket and I couldn't really change anything. They have, like, the bigger businesses have a lot of standards and stuff like that, too, that they work from. That was really one of the things that really shifted me into small business as well. Once I started working with wedding invitations, I started working with wedding professionals, and then I still love this small business feel, and I just feel like you have such a greater impact on people that you can actually see face-to-face, and just have a part of their success.

Even though there is a lot of bigger things that I've done, I think it's actually the little things that I would say that are my bigger successes that I am more proud of. People that had an idea, just launching it from an idea to becoming this big thing. I think those are the things that I really am proud of.

[0:03:06.5] RP: You have been through so much in your business, and in your life as well. You're a mom of two littles, right? Your balance in all the things, and there's a lot going on behind the scenes. What does it look like day-to-day in Cathy Olson's world?

[0:03:21.3] CO: My gosh, it's a little crazy. Yeah, I mean, just like any — it's funny, because a lot of people say, "Oh my gosh, I'm so busy, but I'm not even a mom," and then you're like, "But you're a mom, so how do you do it?" I feel like you fill your cup no matter what. I think I actually probably worked a little harder before I had kids, because I did have my business before I got pregnant.

That way I would just work. There was no stop point, right? I would just work until my head hit the keyboard, like three AM, doing design, like listening to like the morning birds. I feel like anybody that's worked in the middle of the night like knows about the morning birds. Like they just wake up in the middle of the night and you're just like, "Hey friend, we're up again together at three AM," or whatever.

I think that I filled my cup to 100% or overflowing, no matter if I had kids or not. I think that you just figure it out. You go through these things, and having one kid was one thing, and then when I had my second one I thought I knew what I was doing, and it totally changed the game on that, too.

I think, you know, you have the capacity to do so much more than you even know that you can do. On a daily basis, I have a team, so I work with my team. I usually get up in the morning, basically my mornings are kid stuff. I just get the girls ready for school, get them out, put their lunches, throw stuff in a box, I learned to do PB&J's from those little plastic ones, because I was like, sitting there and making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and I'm like, you know what? Yeah, we're just going to buy peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Best invention ever.

I do all that kind of stuff in the morning, and then once I get to my desk, I start kind of figuring out my day and planning out my day, and I do a mixer of online, kind of online scheduling, and then physical planners and stuff like that, too, but yeah, I just work throughout my day. I have, like I said, I have a team, so we sometimes will have team meetings, other times we'll just be checking in with each other every day.

We have a lot of rotating clients, so we're kind of looking in and going, "Okay, who needs to be working on what today? Here's all the things that I need to be looking at." I don't necessarily — I'm not in all of the messages, I let my team kind of run a little bit, too. They just kind of alert me when I need to be alerted, and then in the middle of the day, it stinks, but I have to pickup my daughter from school. She you won't nap at school. I have to deal with that.

I bring her home, she's actually home right now napping, and then when she's done napping I take her back to school, and then finish working, and then my husband picks him up from work.

Once they get home, there's absolutely — I cannot do anymore work. That is like my 100% stop point.

I really don't have a ton of hours in the day, which makes it really important to make it really intentional, and make sure I'm working on what I need to be working on, and I'm doing a really good job with everything.

[0:05:58.0] RP: Yeah. I know you said the word impact a lot in the last couple of minutes, and obviously, family is super important, too, and the work that you do is super important to you. I know, just personally, that you know that life is precious, and life is really you know, the days that we have are really important. Can you speak a little bit to what shaped a little bit of your identity there?

[0:06:21.2] CO: Yeah, definitely. I think when I'm kind of looking at my back story, and kind of telling my story to people, I think about the overall arching theme of my life, and probably a lot of the people that are listening, too, is just a story of refinement. It's like the whole idea of you have the big rock and it kind of — you whittle away a little bit at a time to create that diamond, and I think that I'm now looking back at my life, I've always been really creative, and I've always had — like, knew I was going to do something with art.

I knew that I had some other people in my family that did commercial art and stuff like that, too. One thing I didn't think about until recently was that when I was younger, I loved like singing, and dancing, and being in front of people, and being on stages and all the stuff, and I was totally outgoing as a kid, and I just loved being in the spotlight and being in the center of attention.

Then, somewhere along the line, I don't know if it's like when puberty hit or something, but that self-consciousness came in and really gripped me with fear, and I became completely — I had a really bad case of stage fright, and like all these things I love to do, I just couldn't do them anymore.

I totally stopped, and I stopped speaking, and I stopped being in front of people, and every time I got up to like you know when they say, "Hey, introduce yourself," my heart would start

pounding. Like little things, you know? You get so worried about what people think of you and what you say, did I say the right thing? Did I say the wrong thing?

I got really self-conscious. It wasn't until I was faced with the possibility of losing everything, and losing my voice, and losing my ability to speak, and share, and talk to people, and make an impact that I realized that life is too short and I needed to start doing that.

Basically, what happened, a few years ago, I was diagnosed with a really rare tumor. It was wrapped three quarters of the way around my carotid artery. The problem with that is that, I guess, the bad things that could happen is not necessarily death from the surgery to take it out, but it's actually having a stroke and being incapacitated.

That could mean I couldn't speak, or that could mean I would be like a vegetable, but it also was on the right side of my body, which controls all of your creativity, all of your personality, like all of those things that make me, me, right? Because I am a right-brained person.

When I faced the possibility of losing that, that's when I thought, "I can't be quiet anymore. I can't be silent anymore. I can't let that fear of what they're going to say about me hold me back," and so that's really when I was like, "You know, I need to speak. If something were to happen, I would lose my voice. Look at all these things I've been through, look at all these things I've learned, look at all these people that I've learned from, and they'll be silenced," right?

No one would be able to hear from me, I'll never have a chance again. When I did survive the surgery, and it was okay, and everything — spoiler alert — I'm fine. But — When I did survive it, there was a huge weight on my shoulders. Okay, you're here now, you have a voice, you made it through the other side, now you have that responsibility to tell, to teach, to make an impact.

It changed my business, it changed my life, it changed the way that I — that's when I started teaching. That's when I started speaking. That's when I started really designing intentionally. I will say, like, some of the websites that I designed right after that happened were some of the best I've ever done, because I put everything into them, right?

I just said, “You know, this is my talent. This is what I was put on earth to do. I’ve got to give it my all.” It really gave me a fresh perspective of that, but that’s why I care so much about people telling a story, and making an impact, and doing something different.

That’s why those are the clients that we work with best, the small businesses that are just tired of competing, you know? In a crowded space, and they feel like they’re screaming but no one’s hearing them. I really want to bring that in so I can help them make that impact that they really want to make. I guess it affects everything, what I went through.

[0:10:11.0] RP: Oh my goodness, Cathy, thank you for telling us that. I know telling your story in that way is really difficult, and even though this is like the second time for me to hear it, I’m like tearing up again, because just hearing it again in a different way. This impacted not only your life, obviously, but your business, in such a big way that you’re showing up in a completely different way, that you’re creating impact for this industry.

I’m grateful for you for being here, for you using your voice and choosing to spend this time teaching what you know, so thank you.

[0:10:43.1] CO: Thanks, yeah. I know you believe in the exact same thing. You’re nodding your head, and going, “Yes, yes, yes!” Because I know you’re big about legacy and making a difference, too.

[0:10:54.0] RP: I mean, I think that we all do what we can, right? This podcast is such a beautiful way of us being able to bring other people’s stories, and to be able to share our own, where so many women all over the world don’t get the chance to do this. We got an opportunity to do this, and responsibility, as you said.

Let’s shift gears a little bit. I think you were starting to elude a little bit to this fact, but you’ve been a veteran in this industry for a long time now. You have done a lot of different websites, you’ve done a lot of different work, you branded a lot of people, and there’s so many people out there who do what you do.

I think a lot of people, maybe yourself included, would say that this market is saturated. How does somebody who is starting to look for somebody determine who is the best person to hire, or maybe just like, how do I even discern what the qualifications should be versus somebody who just learned how to do Photoshop? Is that the thing to use? I don't even know, as a consumer, how to vet these people.

What are some of the things that you would recommend in terms of usability, and visuals, and all of that, to make a really beautiful, cohesive brand and web presence?

[0:12:00.5] CO: Yeah, that's a really good question. I don't envy people that are looking for someone to do their brand or website. There's both sides of it. I mean, one side is that there is a lot of good designers, but the other side is there's a lot of bad designers, and a lot of people will come to us that have been burned in the past, or that worked with someone that really didn't get their vision, or something like that.

There's definitely times when we work with people and we don't get it right either. I do think that it's one of those things where I think the best foot you can put forward is doing some work with yourself before. I know that instead of — people are really attracted to other people's stuff, you can say, especially with Pinterest and stuff like that. You'll be pinning someone else's brand and all this stuff is so pretty.

You're not really focusing on yourself, and you're not really focusing on the people that you're looking to serve. I would actually ask people to kind of back track a little bit before they even get to that place, and start really listening to who they're serving and how they're serving them, and also start thinking about how they can do it a little bit differently.

I think doing that kind of foundation stuff about thinking how people need to be served, how you can help, like where there's gaps in the market, like all of those kind of things is actually going to help you pick a brand designer, because you can pick to their strengths, just like anything.

Obviously, some people are stronger in other areas. If you really need like, really good SEO, and sales, and something like that, like conversions, and you really want a designer that is more

well versed in that, or if you want someone that can — maybe your clients really appreciate custom design and thoughtful details.

Maybe you're all about like high-end, holding their hand and taking them through the process, or something. You're going to want a designer that pays attention to those things as well. I think really, it's almost about — it's really about you, as a person, and not really about the designer, because I think, especially like us, we create all different kinds of designs.

We are not necessary — I would definitely say we're on the feminine side. We are more romantic, but some of our clients are really modern, others are like, very vintage, retro, so that's not really what you need to be looking for. You need to be looking for what are their strengths, and how do those strengths really build your business for what you're looking for your website and brand to do.

[0:14:10.9] RP: Yeah, I think something that you're really good at now too is not only how pretty things are, but to make sure that, especially with a website, that it's going to be usable. That people are going to be able to not just use it now, but kind of grow in to and continue to use in the future, right?

[0:14:26.7] CO: Yeah, I'm totally — if you've ever seen me do like any videos, or when I was on Periscope, or doing live stuff, I'm always talking about the future. I think it's because I've been in business as long as I have, that I've seen things change, that I'm so obsessed with the future.

Of course, obviously, now matters, but you always want to grow into what you're creating. You want to create a website and a brand that's a little bit bigger than you are currently, because — a little bit scarier than I guess you're ready for. Because that way you will fill in that space even faster. Obviously, you don't want to have to waste your money kind of doing it twice, and stuff like that, too.

I do think that it's really important to be thinking about what your end goal is, how you're going to be creating for people, and a lot of it has to do with listening. I think that people think they have to guess. A lot of people are like, "I think that that maybe they'll like this," or, "I think that they do this," or, "I think that here is the colors that they like."

Really, you don't have to guess. You can test, and there's several things you can do if you have a website now. There's things that you can test out, like how people are using your site, and what things are they clicking on, how do they get to their process, when do they get lost, when do they get confused, and those are the things that you just really base on actual evidence of how people are using your website, and really fine tuning it and making it better.

One of them that I love is SumoMe. Have you used it before?

[0:15:41.4] RP: I've heard of it, I haven't used it before.

[0:15:44.5] CO: I love SumoMe, because it shows you actually like, hot spots on your website. It will show you like, who is looking at it live, right now. It will say like, two people are looking at this page or whatever, which is kind of cool. You're like, "Oh my gosh, hurry, stay on!" It's like this live thing. It also shows you hot spots of what people are clicking on. One of the cool things that I noticed about our website is there's a few places where people will click that wasn't a button. I'm like, "Oh no, they thought that was a button, and so now I need to make that a button," you know? Stuff like that.

There's no way I would ever know that unless it's like you're sitting there watching someone use your website, because you can see how far did they get down the page. Did they click away? How long did this stay on the page? A combo of that using your analytics, but yes, SumoMe, the hot maps are, I think that's what they're called. They're amazing, because you can just kind of see how people are using your site and what's connecting with people.

You can also test too, you can test several different pages and see which ones are performing better and stuff like that, too. That way you're really not, it's not guessing anymore, and you're not wasting your time doing something and just hoping it will work.

[0:16:44.6] RP: Oh my gosh, that's such a cool tool. I had no idea that it had such capabilities. I knew that it would — you know, SEO/web related, but I hadn't really heard what it could do. That's really cool.

[0:16:54.6] CO: Yeah, it has some really cool opt-ins, and pop-ups, and all kinds of stuff, too, that you guys can check out, but yeah, the hot map thing is really cool.

[0:17:02.8] RP: Awesome. We'll definitely have to check it out and we'll link to that as well.

[BREAK]

[0:17:06.9]CS: How would it feel if someone laid out a business plan, a road map, or some kind of strategy that would get you started and get you closer to the goals that you dream of accomplishing in your business? Well, Reina and I actually have done this. All you have to do to get this totally free resource is head to creativeempire.co and click on free workbook. We will deliver to you 50 of our most potent, powerful strategies and proven tactics to getting our businesses visible, booked, and profitable.

If you would like to have this in your business for totally free, you can grab that at creativeempire.co. We'll see you there.

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[0:17:50.6] RP: One thing that you said a little bit earlier was when you're hiring somebody, before you even like get to that place of creating your Pinterest board or whatever, to do a little bit of the thinking about you, and stuff like that, and doing some of the internal work, I'm guessing.

I think for me, as I'm looking at people to hire, the people who are more established, have their systems in place, they know what questions to ask me, and that's really attractive to me as a consumer, because somebody who is newer, they're maybe not going to be able to draw out — I don't know what the word is, maybe like the essence of my brand or something like that in order to kind of capture it visually.

Whereas, I kind of know in my brain what it looks like, but I can't really translate that to you unless I've done a little bit of that thinking, right? I wonder what has been your experience in

terms of growing out your systems, and asking the right questions, and just sharpening that part of your business?

[0:18:42.7] CO: You know, all of our clients are different. Some of them know exactly what they want, and they're like, "I want this color, I want this font, I want it to look like this, I wanted this point," they know everything, and then other ones are just are somewhat confused when they get started with us. They just kind of — It's like they've got a dream and they're ready to go for it.

They don't necessarily know what that looks like, and then we just kind of go through it together. I think wherever you are is fine. I don't think that you have to have — a lot of people when I talk to them, like we do our initial client call, they start apologizing for not having it all together, "I'm sorry, I don't know what this looks like, and I don't know what colors, and I don't know what patterns," and I'm like, if you did know, then you wouldn't need me, right? That's what I'm here for. I'm here to help you with that.

For me at least, I guess I can't speak for everyone, but for the way that we work, I really work on stories. I feel like I'm fueled by stories, and intention, and all that stuff behind it. You can have as little or as much as possible when you come with a designer, but I think the story and why you're doing what you're doing, and how you're helping people is really the number one, and that's why I say that should be the place to start. If you have that, then that's all you need, really, in my opinion.

Because I think that all that other stuff is just kind of fluff, just making it look better. It definitely matters of course, design matters. I think that if there's no substance behind the design, it's going to break apart, and it's just not going to stand up to this test of time or any of it, right?

[0:20:08.5] RP: Yeah, for sure. You just said substance, and I think it made me think of two things. One is the stories, like you just mentioned, but also the usability, and the fact that you wanted to be navigatable, and people purchase from it, or have the conversions from it, or whatever. One thing that I know that I want to talk to you about is the brand-new YouTube channel that you've started, and the launch of your Shop Site School. Can you tell us a little bit about what is going on in your business besides the custom work that you are doing right now?

[0:20:36.0] CO: Yes, so the idea behind the YouTube channel is that I do speak at a lot of conferences, I go to a lot of places, and I meet a lot of people, and there's such a connection when people hear me. I don't know what it is, I guess it's more personal or something when we're face-to-face, and of course, with nowadays we get in our little cubicle, in our little offices, and we just don't have that personal connection.

I felt like a lot of that was missing from our brand and from our website, so when I would meet people, I would finally get a face-to-face, explain what we do and how we do it. So YouTube is basically me being vulnerable in front of people, and telling people what I know, and helping them as much as I can, but just being a human face and not like a blog post. I love blogging. I love all that stuff, but for some reason, there's just so much more of a human connection when you can see a person and you can see their face.

There's just an authenticity there, I guess. You feel like you know them, and I want more people to know me. I want more people to connect with what I have to say, because I know I can help, and so I think for me YouTube is really about just serving others. But in a way, and a fun way too, and just helping out others. Getting people to know me a little bit better. It's more of a relationship thing. I don't know if that makes sense, but it's really about building a relationship, a personal relationship with people.

That's really what YouTube is for. It's not really to send anybody to like my list or something. I mean, eventually, that will get there, but right now it's really just relationship building. I just want to talk to people in a way.

[0:22:13.4] RP: Yeah, and I think so much of what you said is exactly what you did for me on Periscope. We had a relationship, you didn't know it.

[0:22:21.3] CO: Yes, I miss Periscope.

[0:22:23.1] RP: I know, you were always on it, and just seeing your face right now, I'm remembering how much I miss it, and how much of a personal connection I did feel, even as I was just typing and you were talking. So I think you're right, that YouTube, and just videos in

general, has a way to be able to support us in having those relationships with people, even if it's a little bit one-directional. First of all, you guys should go and subscribe, and second of all, tell us what kind of content will you be sharing, besides having good relationships?

[0:22:51.7] CO: Yeah, so not one, but there's two businesses, basically, that I'm sharing on there too. The second part of the question that you asked me is just Shops Site School, so I will quickly talk about it. Shops Site School is for product businesses that are in that awkward in-between phase. It's for people that maybe they started an Etsy shop, or they're selling online, or something like that, and they started making a decent income at it.

They're starting to make some money, but they're not anywhere near that phase where they're totally pro, looking for a totally custom e-commerce shop, really robust, and inventory and wholesale, and all that good stuff. So there's a huge gap in between the two of those, and they're very, very different, and there's so much you have to go through to get from one place to the other.

So Shop Site School is for that awkward phase. It's for that place in between, where you're starting to make money and you're still doing it yourself, but you really want someone to just hold your hand and walk you through it to get you to that other place a lot faster. So there are classes and other things that help shop site owners really create a custom shop and be really successful. It's not just design and website stuff, but actually running it, and the behind the scenes and stuff, too.

So the YouTube channel is, I guess, it has to work for both, because I didn't want to do two channels. I knew it wasn't going to happen, but I do think that they crossover a lot, because we do have e-commerce clients, too. We have shop owners and we do create e-commerce solutions on Shopify and WordPress and Squarespace.

So because we do custom shops, the information, I think, is good for anybody, and I also think that a lot of people that are maybe service-based entrepreneurs are turning into product-based entrepreneurs, or doing a mixture of the two. So I felt it was better to keep it altogether, so yeah. The topics are really just anything that people are looking for help with, but not — I mean I do some tutorial type, stuff but I think there's a lot of that already on YouTube.

I really want to up level a little bit and just make it, “So what do we need to know, what are our first steps? How do we get started?” Really be encouraging and say, “Hey, you guys can do this. Just get started. It’s not as hard as you think.” Just be really real with people, and just get things moving. So I guess it’s a little bit of motivation, a little bit of theory, a little bit of tech, just all the things, cutting through what I think people should know.

[0:25:09.7] RP: Awesome, I think like I said, go subscribe. If you haven’t already, I think Cathy always offers a dose of encouragement, and the “you-can-do-it-ness” that we need. I suck at tech, so it’s nice to always have your face, telling me that I can do stuff.

[0:25:24.3] CO: You-can-do-it-ness. You-can-do-it-ness needs to be a word.

[0:25:29.1] RP: So when you told us about Shop Site School a while ago I was like, “Yes! This is awesome!” because I know so many people who are in that awkward — like teenagers.

[0:25:39.9] CO: Yeah, it’s like puberty for your business.

[0:25:43.6] RP: You are so right, but the kiss of death for Etsy shop owners is when somebody says, “Hey where did you get that cute bra?” and you say, “Oh I got it on Etsy.” There’s no brand affinity, or loyalty, and Etsy, I’m sure you know a lot more about this than I do, but I feel like a bad consumer when I don’t know where I bought something. Just the other day, I realized that I had bought a print off of Etsy in 2012 from Jen Sprinkle, who is now my friend.

I did not know, and I went back to my Etsy, what I had purchased in the last five years, and her shop was on there, and all these years I’ve been saying, “Oh, I got that off of Etsy,” and I had no idea who it belonged to. So can you speak a little bit to that? What can Shop Site School do to alleviate that, “Oh I bought it off of Etsy” thing.

[0:26:38.3] CO: Absolutely, yeah. The answer to all the Etsy problems is to transition off of Etsy. I love Etsy, and I hate saying anything bad about it, because obviously, so many people that I know of got their start on Etsy. It’s a great stepping stone, but I think any serious business needs to understand that if you really want to grow your business, it is a stepping stone. It’s not

a destination, and so it should always be that's how you get started, and then eventually you want to move over into your own shop.

So Shop Site School is really just to support that transition, too. So a lot of people are just freaked out about it, and that's the whole reason, and I think the biggest reason that they're afraid to get off Etsy is Etsy has a training wheel situation, where they bring in all the traffic. So people are worried about opening their own shop, because how do you get people over there? I think that's probably the biggest thing that I've heard before I started Shop Site School was "how do I get traffic?"

In Shop Site School, we talk a lot about traffic, but really just doing SEO, and even brand building, and that answers your first question about Etsy, is that you can start brand building on Etsy. You don't have to only just open your own shop and then start over there. It is a transition, it's just like with the training wheels. You've got to learn on the training wheels before you go full on, so it's the same way. You can have both shops open simultaneously.

There's little tips and stuff that you can do to get from here to there, but really building up that brand, getting people to use your name more. One of the things that I suggest is actually making the things on your website a little bit cheaper, or having deals, or having package deals. Basically, once you get that client from Etsy, you want to get them over to your site as soon as possible.

A lot of people buy repeat things, and if they know, "I got a 10% off code, but it's not on Etsy, it's a 10% off on their site." They're going to go straight to your site, and that's when they start remembering you, because there's a whole thing about you have to see a name like seven times or something like that before you remember it. It's the same thing, once you get them over to your site, you can get them signed up to your list, you can get them into your Facebook group.

You finally have access to them, whereas Etsy acts like that gatekeeper. You really don't have access to those people, besides through Etsy messages, which of course they're watching and all this stuff, too. It's a little creepy but yeah, once you get them there, then you start shifting

them over, and so that's really the strategy that you want with all of your Etsy clients, and I'm sure Etsy doesn't love that, but you still have to.

That's the way you've got to do it, or otherwise you're bringing traffic to Etsy. That's one of the things that makes me so mad about it. People don't think about Etsy. Like they go, "Oh, I get all of my traffic from Etsy," but I'm like, "But you're sending them your traffic." Any traffic you had from Instagram, or Pinterest, or your blog, all that hard work, you're sending them to Etsy. You're building up their brand, and like you said, "I got it on Etsy," you are building up the Etsy brand.

So it's funny that people are worried if they don't give traffic to Etsy anymore. Go the other way, and send them to your site, and start building your business and your brand, and once people start going over to your site, that's going to help with your SEO and all that stuff too.

[0:29:40.5] RP: Yeah, I love what you just said there, too, and I think that obviously, you can't tell them to just go to your website from Etsy, because they're probably monitoring that, but people are building, like you said, Pinterest and Instagrams off of their business and their brand loyalty. What tips do you have to build that brand as a whole, rather than a piecemeal, like what Etsy forces you to do?

[0:30:04.6] CO: Yeah, that's where I really would think about what — and you're almost thinking about you're building your business as a whole, because you're thinking about what other products can I create for them? So when someone buys from you, let's say they buy a planner or something like that. They will buy a planner from you, you've got to think about, "Okay, what other things can I offer these people? Where are they in their life? What do they care about? Who do they love? Where do they shop?"

All of those things, and then you start going, "Okay, well if they like planners, they like stickers, and they like pens," and whatever. You think about things, what are the next level products, like in marketing, so what is the next level product? How can you help them next? What's something else you can sell to them? And that's when you shift it over. So maybe they're not buying another planner anytime soon, but there's other things you can help them with.

So like I said, with creating the brand, but also creating the business around repeat sales, and bringing people over there, and having them share, and building a community too. So it's about community engagement, like doing giveaways, and having people share your stuff, and doing just gift wrapping. It seems so simple, but if you offer gift wrapping around Christmas or something, it can make people's lives that are already so busy so much better.

So there's little things you can think about, actually how you can take care of people, and how you can help them further, and those are the things that are going to grow your business as a whole, because that growing, that word of mouth, people are just going to love you. They're just going to fall in love with you, because you get them.

[0:31:30.6] RP: So good, that brand loyalty is key in getting people to come back, and to refer you, and to just continue to get lots of awesome business from. Oh my gosh, I feel like you have dropped so much knowledge on us, Cathy. This is awesome. So tell us, if you were to go back to day one Cathy, like so many years of learning that you've done, what would you go back and tell yourself, if you were to go back and build your creative empire again?

[0:31:55.5] CO: Oh gosh, what would I tell myself? I think I would tell myself to just build more community. I think earlier on, when I first started my business, I really did it by myself and I kept all my secrets, because I guess you're looking at what you're doing as — I guess what I'm trying to say is when you first start your business, a lot of times you are thinking about business, and it's the dollar amount, and it's about the money.

So you're thinking, "Okay, how can I make as much money as possible?" and so I think that one of the things that I would tell myself is to let go of that faster. I know a lot of people are talking about community and stuff now, but back then, it was not such a big thing. But I think that not only that, but just reaching out and connecting people, and not being afraid to ask them to connect. I was really, really fearful to ask people for things.

I just thought, "Oh, they're so much better than me," or, "They're so much higher than me. They'll never want to be my friend," or whatever. I think that if I could have gone back and told myself to stop being afraid of those things, like in an earlier time, I guess, then I would have

done a lot more. Because now, when I look back, it was those leaps of faith that I took that I was scared to death to do, those were the things that made the biggest shifts in my business.

In the beginning and the middle, even now, every time I go out and take that leap of faith and do something that I am really afraid of, I can see a track record. Literally, I can look at all of the things that I've done and I go, "Okay, that's when I made that shift. That's when this happened, and because of this, this happened," and a lot of the people, my business besties right now, I wouldn't have met any of them. They all stemmed from one time of me stepping out of fear.

For example, the first time I ever spoke at a conference was at Inspired, and it was in 2013, I want to say. I was literally scared to death. So scared, it was in Nashville, and I had to fly there and I don't like flying already, and I had to speak in front of people and I had never done it before, and I was friends with Amber. She's like, "Do you even do this? Do you even speak?" and it was a big deal. I remember I almost didn't get on the plane, and I don't think I've ever told her this story, but I was really, really afraid because I've never done it.

I told you about my stage fright thing and all of that, and so it was so scary. I did it anyway, and I can tell you, there's so many things that have happened in my business because of that. Because of me going out and speaking, because of me flying out there, there's friends that I've met, there's things that have happened, all the pieces fell into place, and if I would have just given into that fear and have not gone, none of those things would have happened.

Some of my favorite moments in my life would not have happened if I wouldn't have gone on that plane, and so I think that you've just got to get over the fear of doing things. It's almost like you've got to do one thing you're afraid of, like a month or something. I don't know if you have that many fears, but maybe one thing a year. But just get over those fears and actually do things, and connect with people, and reach out to people, and build that community as soon as possible.

[0:34:57.6] RP: Yeah, the quote that I love by Susan Jeffers is, "Feel the fear and do it anyway," and I think that there's a reason why we fear that thing, but there's a reason why we also want that thing, and so when we go out and do it, you continue to grow. Like you said, like the

business besties you have come as a result of you stepping out and doing the thing that scared the heck out of you.

[0:35:20.0] CO: Yeah, totally, and just so many opportunities, and just travelling and seeing things. So many life things have come out of just certain things, but every time, it's been something scary. I don't think there's anything good, like really good that's happened, even my daughters, right? I had to go through childbirth. Everything that I just have to show for, I guess things that I just love in my life, they always came after me going through something really, really hard.

[0:35:45.3] RP: Yeah, amen to that.

[0:35:47.3] CO: I would say I'm thinking does anything come easy? I don't know. Probably not.

[0:35:51.3] RP: Nothing worth really like, celebrating and having, right? I think all of those things that come so easily to us aren't the things that we cherish the most. So I don't know, I think that's such good wisdom. Thank you for that. So where can everyone find you?

[0:36:05.6] CO: Yeah, so our website is love-inspired.com, that's where we work with clients, and on Instagram [@loveinspired](https://www.instagram.com/loveinspired), and on YouTube at Love Inspired. That's the newest little baby, and then for Shop Site School, it's just shopsiteschool.com, and you can get connected over there. One thing that I didn't even mention, but when we do work with e-commerce clients, Shop Site School is included. So I have them take the classes so they get to the place where they're ready to go, and then we do the custom site.

So it's even better doing it that way, but yeah and just around, right? Like at different conferences and stuff, too, I would love to connect with you guys in person if you're going to a conference. I have on our website, I have a page, love-inspired.com/learn that you can see what conference I'm at, or where I'm going to be, either attending or speaking, and I would love to give you a hug in real life.

[0:36:57.5] RP: So fun, well thank you so much for coming on the show, Cathy, and we love it. I know that the audience is going to get so much out of this, and hopefully convince people to get

off of Etsy, or have double Etsy-non-Etsy sites, and hopefully go build their creative empires.
Thank you so much for being on.

[0:37:15.1] CO: Thank you guys.

[0:37:16.6] RP: Go build your Creative Empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:37:20.0] 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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