

FROM DAY JOB LAND TO FEARLESS LAUNCHING WITH ANNE SAMOILOV

Hello and welcome back to another episode of She Means Business! In this episode, I was joined by the amazing Anne Samoilov. She's the creator of Fearless Launching. It was so much fun to chat with her all about how she's built her business, from working with Laura Roeder to working on Marie Forleo's launches to creating her own programs. It's such an honest and inspiring interview. I really hope you enjoy it. Also, make sure you stick around until the end to find out how you could be in with a chance of winning Anne's Plan with Me Workshop where she'll show you how to create an amazing launch map.

Anne, it's so good to have you here. Welcome to the She Means Business podcast!

I'm so excited to be able to chat with you today, Carrie.

I am so excited about this. Obviously, we have done a couple of 10-minute master classes in the past. Everyone, hope you go and check them out. I'll leave them in the show notes. You've come and shared your amazing tips for launching and all of that good stuff. I'm really excited because now, we get to see behind the scenes of your business, see what it's like and how you built your successful business. I can't wait; I really can't wait. Basically, in this podcast, we're going behind-the-scenes of your story. We want to hear all about the good, the bad, the ugly but we're turning this into a movie. We're pretending that a movie's coming out called She Means Business starring Anne Samoilov. You are the star of the show. This movie is all about your entrepreneurial journey and how you turned

your dreams into reality. First, for everyone listening, we need to set the scene. What vibe would this movie have?

Oh goodness. If it were a movie, I like to think it's some sort of an Angelina adventure movie like *Tomb Raider* meets *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*.

Oh, I love that. This is going to be exciting then.

Yes. I like to think so, yes.

The movie begins. The first scene starts to play. You need to think hard about this one if it's going to be this kind of movie. This is you right back at the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey. What is going on? Why did you set off on your entrepreneurial journey?

I think I was born on the journey, to be totally honest, because I was creating shows and producing events from a very early age. Not even just doing a show for mommy and daddy, but full-on: I had a project plan, I had a clipboard, I got my sisters involved, and everything was very specific. I was making shows and event-type things from a very early age and then even going into high with crazy things. I put together this African dance workshop, which is crazy. If you know who I am, you'll be like "Really?" I was the actual teacher of the class. It was a huge event at our school. I was the teacher. I just did a lot of different things. I got some African drummers to play for us and that all led me to film school where, of course, I was creating new things. The overarching theme during this time was "Create something out of nothing and share it with people." I think that theme has continued even now with the work I do with different types of entrepreneurs who are launching and creating their things out of nothing.

I love that. It's so cool. Isn't it such a fun life to be surrounded by people and to be doing that yourself?

It is. I've got to say even though I was doing these side little projects, films, I produced and recorded an album and did all these crazy things, at the time, I was working at just a normal day job. I didn't see it as an entrepreneurial life just yet. I only really saw that after

I had my daughter and I hooked up with Laura Roeder who lived close to where I lived, for a short period of time. I didn't realise that it was an actual path that I could take for a real long time.

How did you start on samoilov.com? How did you decide “OK, I’m going to show and teach people how to create successful launches”?

I spent many years working like I said the “day job” where my job was really the project manager or the producer, the person who was hand-holding a director all the way to launching their film, their product, their video game, their commercial or whatever it was. But I ran away from that. I had my daughter and during that time, I was just at home with her that very first year. I discovered some really inspiring people online like Laura Roeder and Marie Forleo. It just so happened around the same time, I connected with Laura and she needed someone to work with her. The very first project we did really showed me that all that time I spent trying to run away from my previous life and my day job, that same skill —that producing, that project management— all of that was leading me to a giant launch, which was what I worked on with Marie Forleo and Laura Roeder. That was the B-School project. They started that out of nothing. It was a blank Google doc. First, it was an outline. Then, it was fleshed out into modules. Then, it developed from there. That's how I got into it. That was the very first big launch we did as a contractor with Laura.

That's so cool that you were there for the first-ever B-School launch and putting the new pieces in place.

Yeah.

That is really cool. So you did that. Obviously, that must have been an amazing experience. How did you feel throughout that phase, especially if you've already stumbled across Marie and you really loved what she's doing? Did you feel like “Oh my gosh, what am I doing?” or did you feel confident? How did you feel?

Honestly, I did start AnneSamoilov.com around that time. Fearless Launching didn't start until 2 years after I've done 2 big B-School launches and really got to know those people in that community. I got more confident with myself and realised that was something people needed help with. Before that, AnneSamoilov.com started as this fitness/lifestyle/productivity/very general site.

Wow!

I'm rethinking that now, but I haven't really removed that content from the site. You may come across a muffin top madness video of me showing how to do some Pilates moves to whittle your waist or whatever I said — I don't remember. During the time that I was first working with Laura, it was long story to tell. I was teaching Pilates. I was trying everything out just to avoid going back to day-job land. I was teaching Pilates. I got to know Laura. I saw what she was doing. I saw her marketing online. I started doing YouTube videos. I started the blog to get more clients. I was like playing and practicing, but I wasn't really confident that that was what I wanted to do long term because I was so good at getting the tech together. I was really great at putting together some sort of project, but the content wasn't exactly right when I started. Plus, I wasn't really speaking to any certain group of people. The message was getting diluted and no one was really paying attention. It really turned around only when I decided that I can help people launch. I can show people how to do this. This is what I take for granted and this is what I need to do. Even that took awhile.

Sometimes, you can't see the woods for the trees when it's your own thing and you're in it. It's hard.

Yeah. Carrie, even when I did realise that that's what I wanted to teach, I still didn't even dare to create something. It took me 6 months before I even said, "OK, I'm doing this." And before I even did it, I asked for permission practically. I remember emailing Laura because I worked with her at the time. I was very dedicated and devoted to LKR Social Media and that company. I said, "Hey, maybe we should do this launching product." I gave it to her first because I felt weird going off on my own and doing it. As soon as she said,

“No, I don’t really want to create that for this company.” I’m like “OK, then I guess I will.” And I did.

That’s so interesting. I always find it so fascinating when you hear behind the scenes of what it really felt for someone to get going with something, the start of the journey kind of thing. It’s scary, isn’t it? You don’t have all the answers. For me, especially at the beginning, I hardly had anything figured out. And it’s crazy how we do feel like we need permission from people to actually go for it.

There are so many things that you just said that I was like “Oh yeah, that’s right.” Fearless Launching wasn’t even the first thing that I launched under AnneSamoilov.com. The first thing is actually something that since then I’ve re-released because I’m like “This is good. Why did I just drop it by the wayside?” It was actually just an ebook *The White Space Solution*. I’m actually developing it into a whole product suite, just a little side thing that I’m very passionate about. The whole productivity theme is back, but it’s a little bit more clarified for entrepreneurs now. But at the time, that was my very first launch. I thought to myself “OK, I know what I’m doing. I’m going to launch this. I’m going to do this right.” It actually did go very well, but I just didn’t follow through with it. It had an amazing launch and then I let it go because I wasn’t sure what to do next with it.

A lot of people end up feeling like that. I know after launches for me, I always feel I go into this weird lull and I feel the need to hibernate or something. You feel so beat emotionally to get your head around it after you go and put yourself out there. It literally feels like “What shall I do next?”

Yeah, I think that’s common though. I think it’s common because even now, I’m thinking I went to all this trouble. Of course, I’m flashing back to even further back. Remember, I told you I recorded this 4-song album. Before that, I actually recorded with these Grammy-winning producers. I didn’t do anything with it after I actually did the single. I could have pushed it, but I didn’t know what to do next. I think that whether you’re a

creative, you're an artist or a performer or you're a teacher or you're creating products online, I think it's just really hard to know what to do next with something. You make these amazing connections with people and you do nothing with it? The reason that's fresh in my mind is because I recently just listened to those tracks again and I was like "Oh that was really good."

Especially for entrepreneurs, I think so many of us can relate to the idea of wanting to have someone there to hold our hand and show us the way through. We're doing something and we finally figure one thing. Then, it's on to the next thing and we're pushed right back outside of our comfort zone again. We've got to figure out all the confusion and the overwhelm. How the heck am I supposed to do this again? Ugh.

Again? Wait, I have to do that again? OK.

With your business, obviously, you then decided that you're going to create Fearless Launching and get that off the ground.

Yeah.

What were the steps that you took to turn that into a success? What were the things you were doing? Obviously, you're working with Laura and you're working with Marie. Did you have any clients that you were working with? Also, how were you building up your own platform so that you could launch your own programs?

If I look back at that time, honestly, I told you that I had this very — I don't want to say it was bland. I still look at some of those blog posts and I'm like "That was really good. Don't feel so bad, Anne." At the time, I realise I wasn't speaking to a clearly defined person. Once I decided, OK, I'm going to create Fearless Launching. I outlined what the modules were. The timeline really was I was writing these very basic productivity/health/fitness posts up until January 2012. I flipped the switch and decided I was just going to start talking about what I wanted to talk about related to launching. February was the

month when I did 4 blog posts about launching, I announced the webinar, and I opened the cart just like Laura had been doing for all her stuff. I really felt I knew the process already. That's when the first batch of Fearless Launchers came in and people started buying at the time. Leading up to it, I feel like the only thing I was doing to build my platform really was getting to know the people inside B-School, the Facebook group, and Laura's group for Creating Fame. I was just getting to know that audience and they were getting to know me. Laura was starting to talk about me openly. "Oh, this is Anne. She's my director of operations. This is Anne, she does this." So when people would see me, I would actually just start helping people. I wasn't pushing, I wasn't promoting in any of those groups, but I was talking to people. That really is all I started to do.

It's so powerful, isn't it? Just that simple active trying to help people and build genuine relationships with people. The people who do that are the people that make Facebook groups and communities really work for themselves.

Yeah. Leading out of that first launch, which I really feel like was mostly to those 2 communities because there were a lot of folks, a lot of women who came in from Creating Fame. There were definitely several people who were overlapping B-Schoolers as well. I created my launch toolkit opt-in right after that first launch. I focused on list-building. I was doing guest posts. I was interacting even more in that group. I was giving as much as I could time-wise, probably over-giving on purpose to that initial group of Fearless Launchers. I think we called it our Launch Layer or the Cave — like the bat cave or something. It was a very special group of people and I gave them excessive amounts of private sessions with me just so that I could get really clear of what they needed, what they were struggling with. Continued blogging literally for 2 years straight — I think the word "launch" was in every single blog post title. By the end of it, I was like "OK, I'm done doing it." It took that amount of time to help people see. It takes awhile before people are like "Oh you talk about launches, don't you?" Yes, every single day for the last 2 years. It took awhile.

It just goes to show how consistency makes such a difference. It's not necessarily an overnight thing. You consistently put in the work to try and raise awareness of your expertise day in and day out for years.

Yeah. At the time I was working with Laura, I only was working really with Laura. Laura's team was working with Marie so we were working altogether on that B-School project for 2 years. Then, Laura decided she didn't want to do that anymore. So, I stopped working on it, too. I really just continued working with Laura for another year-and-a-half or so before I left. That whole time was really interesting, Carrie, because I remember I did 4 different rounds of Fearless Launching —2 a year usually— while I working full-time with Laura as her director of operations. I was trying to schedule launches so they wouldn't overlap with her launches. As you know, launch dates sometimes change. Sometimes, they were happening right at the same time. It was becoming too unmanageable, but more so, I was like I don't think I'm going to be able to grow Fearless Launching anymore if I'm constantly trying to fit it in. I can say this now because I'm not there anymore, but I remember I was struggling with this for way longer than I think Laura knows, that I was letting on. Should I leave? I feel like I'm not giving really my best to either right now. Maybe I should just totally focus on Fearless Launching. Honestly, in the end, she really was the one who said, "Hey, I think based on what I'm seeing you do and how well you're doing with Fearless Launching, it sounds like you want to go and do that. I want you to go and do that, if that's what you want to do." She had to say it. "Yes, I do."

That's really good that she did. Once that happened and you could then focus fully on Fearless Launching, how did that transform things?

It definitely was different. The year that I left, I really tried to set myself up. I was leaving mid-year so I've got to make sure that I have clients that I'm going to work with, just one-off coaching clients. I have some coaching sessions all scheduled through the rest of the year. I wanted to make sure that I had that buffer and had clear plans before I took that leap. It was amazing, actually. I think that was the first 6-figure year for Fearless Launching. That was a huge milestone. Once you get there, you're like "Oh, this is really

just a job.” I was making more at my day jobs in the past offline than I was making in Fearless Launching. You know what everybody says about 6 figures, but come on. We all know how many expenses you have as an entrepreneur. Since then, it’s just grown. At first, I thought I was just going to focus only on Fearless Launching but since then, I’ve been able to work with a ton of people that are so exciting and have helped me grow in different ways, sometimes, just being their sounding board, honestly. I didn’t really go back to managing launches. I’m more as the person that people call to as a confidante during their launch, somebody who can be their sounding board, somebody who knows what’s going on in launches. Honestly, the first launch that I’ve worked on in a very long time is just recently. I’m working with Marie Forleo’s team right now. B-School is actually happening now. I’m in there. I’m able to act as a mentor for the new students and help Marie behind the scenes because I have a little bit of history there. What’s happened is that I get to work with really amazing people since then. I sometimes entertain the idea of working with Laura again in a different way. It was so difficult to leave her because I loved working. She just has a great way that she creates teams. It’s so much fun. You take so much ownership so it doesn’t feel like a job at all.

That’s a really good skill to have as well. It’s come like full circle then with working with Marie.

Yes, it has definitely been interesting for sure. It reminds me that yes, I still don’t want to work a day job. I’m still in boss mindset. I definitely like to be the number 1; I don’t ever like to be the number 2 in any kind of organisation. But I also love the team environment and I love that there are so many devoted people who are just professionals, that are just as excited about making a project great as you are. That’s now where I am. That’s who I need to find — those people. Not just hire a VA or a graphic designer or the one-off things that I have in place like a podcast editor, though I love Daryl so much. He is such a good editor, if he ever hears this. It just goes to show you that having those people on your side is so important. That’s what it’s shown me, going back.

It is so true about having a really good team in place to help you. Has there been anything throughout your entrepreneurial journey that you didn't expect to deal with? At the beginning, you said it's going to be a little bit of dramatic movie. Any of those drama pieces?

Well, there have been a few inside Fearless Launching. There have been some customer dramas where you realise people aren't who you thought they were and you have to be the protector of the group and take some sort of dramatic action. I never thought I would be removing someone from the course and just wanting them completely out of my space and out of their space — being the protector and being the guardian. Also, what I didn't expect is that I thought "You know better, Anne. You know this. You know everything." But I still make mistakes and I still take on too much work sometimes. I think that's the thing that was surprising — I take on so much sometimes that I don't need to take on still. As far as the *Tomb Raider* reference, that's really because I dressed up like Tomb Raider one year for Halloween and I had to put that in there. *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* is my husband and my favourite movie, but I'm like "We're not like them, Dennis." Some of the other things that were not unexpected were just the amazing people that I've been able to meet as a result, not necessarily work with but unexpectedly having my closest business allies be people who came in through Fearless Launching.

Yeah, it's so nice when that happens.

How did that happen? You're just the most amazing person and now, I want you as my friend. I guess that was exciting. There haven't been a ton of negative things that have happened.

I think it's a good thing though. Someone really asked me in an interview what my biggest failure has been. I was really struggling. Obviously, I mess up and fail all the time. I don't really see it as a negative. I think it's part of my entrepreneurial journey. So many of us actually view things that way because I think if we didn't, we'd never get anywhere.

I think I said this to a friend and she put it in on Instagram right away, of course, because it's a great quote. "Things aren't happening to you — they're happening for you." If there's an unhappy customer, it shows you "OK, what do we have in place that really makes sure we're taking care of people? What could we have done better next time?" I'm never looking at things like it's a huge failure. I always look for the way out or the way up and out of it. The one thing that I probably need to rein in is I do get caught up in a little bit of the "testing out" things because I do feel it's my responsibility. As someone who's teaching about launching, I better try that piece of software that everybody is talking about so people don't go down that rabbit hole if they don't need to, but then I end up going down the rabbit hole myself.

I do the same thing. I go down rabbit holes all the time.

The adventure part of this movie is that I feel like I've moved too many times to count, like multiple states away or half the country away. It's just ridiculous. There's always something happening in my real life. Some people are like "I don't know how you're doing this" and I don't even share half of the crazy stuff that's happening in my real life.

I think that it's really cool as a by-product of being an entrepreneur and not working 9-5 that you can travel and move and still be building your business. I think that's one of the things I love about being an entrepreneur. It gives us so much freedom and flexibility.

Yeah. We were selling a house last year and finding a new one to purchase. I don't even want to share what's happening this year. Anyways, last year while we were in the process, I couldn't have handled all the pieces because I was the one negotiating the deals, getting all the paperwork, doing all the running around and preparing everything from the current house to the new house. All of that became a launch for me.

It's so amazing what you have created. It's so nice to hear your story. It's so nice to hear people's behind-the-scenes. I will definitely dig up those posts on your website.

That's so funny. I'm going to actually have to send you a link to one. Laura Roeder actually reached out to me. She's like "Oh my gosh, I just saw your Pilates video on YouTube." She thought I was going to be embarrassed and I said, "Well, Laura, what were you searching for?"

That's funny. You definitely have to send that my way and I will stick it as a link on the show note for everyone to watch.

And get in shape.

Yeah. To close out your amazing movie, it would be good to end with a profound statement or maybe just the biggest lesson you've learned throughout your journey. What would it be?

The biggest lesson and it's something that I feel like I'm in the process of really getting right now. I always thought if I can just have this business no matter what my life is. Now, I'm looking at my life first. It's weird. I'm not an entrepreneur first. I have a life first. Now, I'm deciding how I want my life to be first, and then deciding how the business fits into that. I think that's so much more important. Otherwise, I'm just a workaholic over here.

Yeah, I think that's such a good lesson and it's so good that you said that. It's so easy to get sucked up into it, isn't it? Before we know it, we've lost our lives to this chaotic business mess. We're just existing every day through business, not actually enjoying life like we should be, which is ironic really because I feel like one of the reasons we start our businesses is so we can live an amazing life.

But we forget to live!

Yeah, exactly!

If you don't see things on Instagram from me for a few days, it's because I'm building things with Legos my daughter or we're at the park or some place or just travelling. Sometimes, I forget to even share what I'm doing, but it's because I'm living.

I'm exactly the same. My Instagram account at some days has loads of stuff and the next week, there's nothing.

"That's not very consistent, Anne." I'm like, "Well, so?"

It's been so amazing having you here and hearing your story. Thank you so much for coming to share it with us.

You're very welcome.

On a very exciting note, we are doing an amazing giveaway. You could be in with a chance of winning Plan With Me. It's not plan with me — it's plan with her. She's going to help you create a launch plan. Anne, do you want to share a little bit of what that is?

Yeah. Every year twice a year, I do a different type of Plan With Me class. Really, you are planning with me. One of those that I've recently done — I actually did it last year but we're going to do it again— you get a complete workshop laying out how to plan your launch, including the tools and templates that I use inside Trello and Asana and Google Apps. I try to cover a few of the different ones that I really like. Not only would you get that recording and all of that material that currently exists, but we're doing the class again in May.

That is very exciting. So, if you want to be in with a chance of winning, all you need to do is head over to the website FemaleEntrepreneurAssociation.com and leave a comment on this blog post. Let us know what your biggest takeaway has been and what you loved the most from it. We will be picking a winner. So, definitely keep a lookout. Obviously, people can find you at AnneSamoilov.com. All the links will be in the show notes. Is there anywhere else they can go and find you?

You know what? Everything is over there, honestly. I think that's the best slot to send everybody.

OK, perfect. Everyone, go over there. Check out her content and all of her stuff. Go and search for that funny video that she's got on there.

I'm going to go take it down right now.

Thank you again so much, Anne, I really appreciate it. I hope you have all enjoyed this so much. I will see you next week for another episode of She Means Business.