

FROM QUARTER LIFE CRISIS TO 7 FIGURE BUSINESS WITH JESSICA NAZARALI

Welcome back! I am so excited right now because we are joined by the lovely Jessica Nazarali. She is the founder of the It Girl Academy. In this episode, she takes us behind the scenes of her incredible story of how she went from a quarter life crisis to starting a blog, not having clue really of what she was doing, and turning it into a 7-figure business. It's really cool to see behind the scenes the ups and downs of the whole journey. I hope you love this episode. Also, make sure you stick around right till the end so you find out how you could be in a chance of winning her Email Kickoff Goals. Don't miss it. Enjoy this episode.

Jessica, it is so good to have you here. Welcome to the She Means Business podcast!

Thank you so much, Carrie. I'm thrilled to be here.

I'm so excited. This is the first time we're chatting and I just can't wait to hear all about your backstory. I love hearing entrepreneurs' real stories, behind the scenes, sneak peeks — everything, including all the mess. We're going to do this a bit differently. We are going to pretend right now that there is a movie coming out and the movie is called She Means Business starring Jessica Nazarali. The movie is all about your entrepreneurial journey and how you've turned your dreams into reality. First, let's set the scene for everyone listening right now. What kind of vibe or feeling would go with your movie? What kind of movie would it be?

It will be really fun. It's going to be part documentary/part comedy of errors, I guess. I guess it's the behind the scenes of what it really takes to create a business, sustain a

business, have a business while still having a life and tending to all the other areas of your life. I want to have a successful business, but I also want a successful marriage and have amazing friendships. I think the movie would highlight that.

It's going to be very inspiring. I like it. The movie begins and the first scene starts to play and this is you right back at the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey. What is the story? Why did you decide to set off on your entrepreneurial journey?

The interesting part about this story is I wouldn't say I decided to become an entrepreneur. I decided to start a blog when I had a quarter-life crisis. I came back from a trip overseas with my boyfriend where he proposed. You would think coming back from that trip, I would be happy, excited, delighted and all those positive adjectives. While I was really excited to be engaged and to get married, I was feeling really down and out. The reason was because I wasn't feeling fulfilled in my career. I realised that it didn't matter that I had a great guy. It didn't matter that I friends and family that love me and I live a great apartment. All those things were amazing but ultimately, if you're not happy within yourself and if you don't feel like you're living your purpose, contributing and living your truth, then the other stuff is great and amazing, but you're going to need to be happy first. That's what I realised OK, for me to be a great wife, a great mother in the future, a great friend and a great daughter, I need to work on myself and work out what I want to do and what type of contribution I want to leave in the world. So, for about a period of 18 months, I was blogging. I started a blog because I wanted to feel like I had a voice and I had something share and something that would inspire other people. I had always been interested in health and wellness and personal development. I started a blog on that. About 18 months into blogging, I received a Facebook message from a woman who was a nutritionist. She said, "Wow, Jess, I've been following you for ages. I really love what you're sharing. I want to start a blog so when I finish my degree, I'll be able to basically use a blog and build a platform for myself to find clients." She asked if I would help her to do that. I said yes. That is really how I started my entrepreneurial journey. I was

making a little bit of money from my blog beforehand. I was getting sent cool products and tickets to events. That was well and good, but when I started coaching, that's when I would say my business took off. I started making enough money that enabled me to leave my full-time job. It all went up from there.

I feel like this movie is off to a great start. So many people are going to be able to relate to it. I know I had a quarter-life crisis. So many people do and it's not even when you turn 25. People are having crises all the time because they're not living their truth like you said. It literally weaves its way into every area in your life. Even though happy stuff might be going on around you, you feel such a disconnect and so frustrated because you're not where you want to be. I actually travelled to Australia in the hope of having an epiphany to try and figure out what the hell I was supposed to do in my life. It's the most frustrating thing in the world. When you're in that phase, the light switched is turned on inside you. It's the beginning of following your dreams. It's really an exciting thing, but when you're in that moment, it does not feel remotely exciting. It was just annoying.

I remember thinking "What is wrong with me?" I had a good job. I had all these things that I should be "happy" about. Then I felt guilty because, oh my gosh, there are people starving in Africa. This really is a very personal — I'm not living my passion. When you're in it, it's really painful. I think the more people who are living their truth and living their passion and then doing it make a positive difference in the world. I think the better the world is going to be without sounding super-corny. A lot of people go through that. It's really painful when you're in it like you said.

Yeah, but it is the beginning of a beautiful journey. It's like your birth, not your destruction. I like that. OK, you started your blog and you started to turn it into a coaching business. What kind of things were you feeling at

that point? When you were building a blog, were you excited? Were you really into it? Were there moments when you were like “What the heck am I doing? Where is this going?” A lot of people start a blog and then they think that they can put something together and people will arrive, which obviously isn’t a reality.

No.

How was it for you? I don’t know, maybe it wasn’t that slow, but maybe it was. What happened?

It was. I say this so often with entrepreneurs or bloggers or people who are pursuing a creative pursuit, they want things to happen yesterday. I am really impatient in general so I totally get it. I think it’s important to look at your business over the long term. When I was creating my blog, I didn’t know that it was going to turn into a business. I was smart enough to realise that if I had a platform, I could probably work out how monetise it somehow. From the beginning, I was selling an affiliate book and I had advertising, so I was making a little bit of money relatively quickly. I just kept on reminding myself that good things take time in building up an audience. In the back of my mind, my real goal was, when I have kids, I don’t want to be working in a job. This was when I was literally 24 or 25 and had just gotten married; I’m 29 now so I knew it was going to be a long way off. Backstory: I had been a nanny when I was at university. One of the women that I nannied for had her own business and the other one didn’t. I saw how much easier in terms of juggling logistics it was for the woman who had her own business. She didn’t have to ask permission because her daughter was sick to take her daughter to the doctor. I saw that and I was like “That is not going to be my reality.” My goal when I started my blog was I want to build something—I didn’t know what I was necessarily building—and my goal was hopefully, by the time I had kids, I can to the blog, be a mom and not have to work in a full-time job. That was really my goal, if I’m honest. I really had a long-term plan and it wasn’t until in my blog that I realised when, wow, things will be able to happen a lot more quickly. I probably would be able to leave my job sooner. I

think that's another really important lesson to realise: if you start something and you don't know the full landscape and you're not exactly sure how it's going to turn out, just get started because you'll be guided along the way. As long as you take the first step, the next step will become clear. That's essentially how my blog unfolded. I'm just so grateful I did take the first step because if I didn't, I wouldn't be where I am today.

I think that's just so inspiring for anyone who is in those first stages of turning an idea into a reality. Explore and the path unfolds once you get on it and start exploring and try to figure it all out. You also said something else that was really key. You said, "I knew if I could build an audience, I would be able to make it work." When I started the Female Entrepreneur Association, I thought the exact same thing. I didn't know exactly how it would make money. I didn't know where it was going to go. I didn't know at the time that I was going to start a membership site. If I can build an audience of people who are like-minded, who resonate and connect with this, who love what I'm doing, it will always be OK. There will always be a way forward. Unlike your story, I didn't have anything to sell for 2 years. I think a lot of that has to do with my own money blocks which I've talked about in my blog. You just don't know where the path is going. You just don't know exactly how things will work, but you know if you have a big audience, you can do it. You'll create success so it's cool to hear you say that, too. Hopefully for anyone listening, just build an audience.

Yes.

Once you got into your coaching business, how did that all start moving? What kind of things were you doing? Did you go with the flow because it happened organically? Did you start working with someone who could help show you the way? What did you do?

What I did was I started working with a business coach. What happened was I started working with that one client. That was a great experience. I remember working with her and going, “Oh my gosh, this is amazing. This is what I should be doing.” Back then, I was “blog coaching.” I was helping people set up a website, creating a content plan and then getting traffic and eyeballs to their website. I started working with a coach because I didn’t really know how to necessarily package or position myself. I figured I was going to be a coach, so maybe I should coach with somebody and just get a general idea of how it worked. I worked with her and it was really fantastic. She helped me put together a package and basically market it and get it out to my audience. Within a period of 6 weeks, I had blogged for 18 months and I built up an audience, I think I’d sold 20 blog coaching packages. It was 3 or 4 blog coaching sessions — they weren’t particularly long. I remember I’d sold them and I was like “Wow, this just really proves that there’s a market for it.” Then, my coaching packages got a little bit longer so I increased it to 8 weeks; 3-4 sessions weren’t enough so there was a 2-month package. I blog coached for probably about 9 months or so. And then I realised that as my skills were developing and as I was learning new things about online marketing, I had more to teach. It expanded beyond the blog, I guess you could say. I was covering things like email marketing, how to put together offers. As my business continued to grow, today, I really focus on advanced online marketing strategies for women. We have a big focus on using the evergreen model, helping women to consistently enrol customers and clients as opposed to having to do launches. It really has been a huge progression. I just really want to reiterate that I had no idea I would end up where I am today at all. The key really is to get started. I say this and I don’t know if you say this as well, Carries, but sometimes, people get really bogged down with “I need to know where I’m going to be 6-12 months time.” The truth is you probably don’t know yet because you don’t know what you don’t know. When you actually get in there, that’s when you’re going to figure things out. As corny as it sounds, the key really is to get started. You learn so much from working with people as well.

Yeah, that's why I think the key is getting started and keeping on going. I used to have a quote on my wall that said "Successful people hang on when everyone else has let go." I knew if I could just hang on, I could be the person that would succeed. You do not have to have any more figured out other than that — hang on. We can be that person that hangs on — it's a choice. It's why personal development and mindset are key to actually becoming a wildly successful entrepreneur because there are so many challenges and obstacles that you have to overcome. So often, we see online, on Instagram and all these social media platforms that it looks like the most dreamy life in the world. There are so many challenges and obstacles going on in everyone because it's the reality of business. You set yourself a new goal and guess what? Obstacles pop up because you've never done it before. You haven't got a clue what you're doing. You have to go through that phase all over again of feeling overwhelmed, confused and frustrated. It's cyclical and it happens all the time. As you grow to the next level, there's always going to be some element of growing pains with that growth. So, have you found the same things and do you have a personal development routine? Do you do anything to help you with your mindset to help get you through it?

Yes, I definitely do. I can't think of anyone who says they haven't had any challenges, ups and downs or moments where you're like "Gosh, this is really hard. Why am I doing this?" They're probably lying or they haven't been in business long enough. When I set up my business, it was challenging because I was learning so many new things. This time last year, there were so many challenges because I was up-leveling. There were so many challenges around team members. I hired someone and they didn't work out and it felt kind of messy. I always find that when you're going to the next level, you kind of cruise along. It's like you master Level 1. "Oh yeah, I got this." Then, you do something new and all these new challenges come up. "Oh my gosh, why am I doing this?" You finally master that and then, there's another challenge. Not to deter people for them to think oh my

gosh, it's never-ending, I think it's good in a way because you are constantly learning; you are constantly growing. If you do have a practice that allows you to look inward and reflect and remind yourself that hey, this is not the end of the world. It really is just a business at the end of the day. It's not my health; it's not It's not a friendship or a relationship, that always really helps me to get things in perspective. I do things like I journal every morning. I'd wake and I list things that I'm grateful for in my head. That helps me get in a positive mindset. Instead of thinking about "Oh my gosh, I have to do this today" or "I hope this issue has been resolved." OK, what am I grateful for? Then, I journal. Sometimes, when I'm journaling, I journal about things I'm really annoyed about or —

To get it all out.

Exactly. I was finding that if you don't, it has to come out somewhere. It could come out yelling at your husband or you have a team meeting and you're really annoyed. I find journaling helps me to get clear on what's really going on. Am I really annoyed about this or is it a deeper issue? I journal about other things as well, like what I'm annoyed about. I don't want to say I meditate every day because the truth is I don't. It's a bit of an up-and-down roller coaster. I would say I meditate 3-4 times a week. I am in Australia so I have a lot of calls quite early in the morning. Sometimes, I just want to sleep in a little bit more. But I know the days when I meditate, I am in a much better frame of mind. So I get up a little bit earlier.

I love those different things. I find when I journal, it's like I'll be talking to my little diary about the issues going on or the frustrations. As I write and write and write, it's like intuitively, I already know all the answers. To get it out there, I find it really, really helpful. In fact, I wrote the book She Means Business and a lot of it was based on my journals. I kept a journal before I started the Female Entrepreneur Association and then I started one when I began the Female Entrepreneur Association. On the front page,

it said The Diary of a Female Entrepreneur 2011. I thought to myself right there and then, “This one day is going to turn into the basis for my book.” I had no idea that I was actually going to write a book, although I knew it was something I wanted to do. I kept it up and I used my journal entries in the book. That’s like the raw feelings when you’re in it. You’re feeling those things as an entrepreneur. I think it’s really good to talk about the challenges. It’s liberating. If it weren’t for the challenges, we would never be forced to up-level and grow as people and individuals. For me, it’s definitely the hard times and the challenges that have forced me to shape myself into a better entrepreneur. If I hadn’t gone through those experiences, I don’t think I’d be able to cope now with the scale of everything. It’s really helped me to develop my mental stamina. I don’t think there are really quick wins. You can’t avoid the pain. It’s like being good at anything though. If you want to become a top athlete or you want to play an instrument, there will be times. When I was younger, I learned to play the clarinet. I used to want to bloody throw that thing to the wall. I hated it at times. It’s crappy. I couldn’t do it and I couldn’t play the scales and whatever else. But then you push through the discomfort and on the other side is this amazingness where you’ve become an expert at something. That’s why it’s important for us to all talk about the crappy side because we all experience it. It’s good. I like hearing all of your stories. Obviously, you’ve built a really successful coaching business and everything you do. What do you think have been the key things that have enabled you to really scale, to go from having a quarter-life crisis to starting a blog and trying to figure it all out, to then starting your coaching business to being where you are now? What are the key things that you have done that have helped you to scale?

I think number one, it really comes back to not giving up and just sticking at it. So many people have potential, they hit a roadblock —and it would such a small roadblock like

they put up a Facebook ad it doesn't get results—and they're like "Oh, I'm so upset! The Facebook ad isn't working." Do you know how many Facebook ads I've put up and haven't worked? So many! OK, you tweak it, you change it and then it works. In general, I'm very persistent and consistent. If I have a schedule, I'll get up and do it. I don't procrastinate. I think that has been the keys to my success. Oh my gosh, I have just forgotten the second point I'm going to say.

It's OK. I'm glad I'm not the only one who forgets what I'm saying. If you remember it, just let me know because I have another question I want to ask you and then I'm going to go back. Now, it's the pinnacle part of the movie. Your dreams have become a reality and life is amazing. What does life look like for you now? What's your business like?

Today, my business has multiple streams of income. I have a variety of different products. I do very limited one-on-one coaching, which I essentially phased out. This year, I'm no longer offering it. I'm really getting more into the digital products space. I have a program called Business Mastery, which is all about how to sell using the evergreen model, selling without launching. It had a really great results and people really enjoy learning that. For anyone who has been through a launch, I think we can all relate that it can be quite a stressful experience. I have that program, I also have a high-level mastermind for the more advanced, and I have some entry-level products. My husband also works in the business. He has a digital marketing agency as well. What has been really great is having the ability to work together and also having somewhere to send my clients if they don't want to be running their Facebook ads or if they want help setting up their backend funnels. It's been interesting how that has unfolded.

That's really cool.

Yeah, it's really cool. I could do a whole other podcast on working with your husband and not getting divorced, but we're at a really good place now. There were definitely challenges in the beginning. Now, we both know what our roles and responsibilities are

and how to communicate in a way that is productive for the business. It's been a big learning experience, that one.

I think it's really amazing. I love the fact that you have gone from a quarter-life crisis to building this really successful business. Did I read it right from your website that it's a 7-figure business?

Yes.

So it's phenomenal. It just goes to show what's possible. Time and time again, you basically referred back to the fact that you just keep going and stay consistent. It's so true. I think people over-complicate it. If you just break it all down, keep it simple and keep going, the most wonderful things can happen. It's inspiring because it's possible for every single one of us. To end this movie, let's end it on a profound note. What has been the biggest lesson you've learned throughout your journey?

Oh my goodness, where to begin? OK, probably the biggest one would be around hiring team members. What I have realised is because I really see the best in people, sometimes, I can give people too many chances. Now, I'm getting to the place where it's like OK, if certain things are happening, you really just have to let people go if they're not hitting the mark on a certain area. I have let people stay in the business for too long and that has really impacted results because I don't want to hurt people's feelings and I really like them as people. But the business had grown to a certain place where it has changed and we need a different skill set. Now, I'm trying to be less emotional when it comes to hiring, changing people's roles or letting people go. I guess making certain decisions quicker and not letting somebody stay in the business who they really should have moved on 6 months ago. Oh my gosh, managing people is just a whole other can of worms. Probably the managing people part has been my biggest area of growth from starting the business. I went into it not thinking about managing people, but it's a by-product of having a business ultimately.

Yeah. It's one that a lot of us find hard. I know I'm an absolute control freak when it comes to my business. In the rest of my life, not so much, but with my business, no. I want things done the way I want things done. Sometimes, it can be difficult to let go of that and allow someone else. Thankfully, I've met the most wonderful people that I don't even have to think twice. It's been absolutely marvellous. I have worked with people where it's not been the right things and it's awkward. Yeah, you're right. You have to develop the ability to be honest so that you can grow your business. I have loved your entrepreneurial movie. I would go and see it in the cinema any day. Thank you so much for coming to share it with us. It's really inspiring for anyone out there who has a dream and for all of us on our journeys, there have been some amazing reminders of things like "Just keep on going." I absolutely love it, Jess. Thank you so much for coming and sharing your story with us.

You're so welcome. It's been so much fun.

I hope you have all enjoyed it, too, and loved listening to Jess' story. On a very, very exciting note, if you want to be in with a chance of winning her Email Kickoff series, Jess, you want to say a little bit about what that is?

Yes. If you are ever concerned or worried that you're not welcoming your email subscribers onto your list in a way that is building a really long-term relationship with them, if you would like to have more engaged subscribers, you really need Email Kickoff because it is a 7-part series where you're going to write your welcome sequence. You'll be welcoming email subscribers onto your list, they're going to get to know you and what you have to offer. It's a great way to start building a relationship with your people. Like Carrie and I were talking about, building an audience is really vital and keeping your audience. So, I am looking forward to giving that program away to a lucky winner.

Very exciting. If you want to be in with a chance of winning, all you need to do is head over to the blog. Leave a comment and let us know what your biggest take-away has been from this podcast episode. I will see you next week for another episode of She Means Business.