

S2: E111: Can Your Brand Thrive Without Social Media?

All right, welcome back. I am so excited to introduce you to our guest today, Kate Kordsmeier. Kate is a certified life and business coach and founder of Success with Soul.

She's leveraging over a decade of experience helping thousands of entrepreneurs build profitable, sustainable, and soul-led businesses without burning out. As a staunch advocate for justice and dismantling the patriarchy, Kate empowers her clients to achieve success through SEO funnels, feminist systems, and also focusing on sustainable growth without social media. So if you've been following me for any amount of time, you know that I also feel a lot of the same ways about these things.

So it's no reason, no wonder that I'm asking Kate to be on the podcast today. Kate, thank you so much for being here. So happy to.

Amazing. So we actually met a few years ago in a mastermind and we've stayed in touch and we got on a connection call a while ago and started talking and we're like, oh, we're like so much on a lot of the same paths and journey as far as, you know, used to be following all the rules and now we both, you know, we're doing so many other things. So I'd love to start out talking about that.

Like what is your philosophy? I call it being social media optional. You are just straight up not on social media, which is super awesome. So I'd love to just start there.

Yeah. Well, I think my philosophy as a whole is it's your business. So you get to decide what you do and how you do it.

And everybody is always says, you know, I should be there or you have to be there. And it's like, well, first of all, no, you don't, you can, you can do this however you want to do it. And it is 1000% possible to build a very successful business without social media at all.

I mean, I think I would say that I am, you know, social media optional for my clients. I just personally quit all social media cold turkey in 2021. And for me, it is more helpful for my brain to think very black and white about it than being sort of like in the gray, which is not normally how I approach things.

I normally like to live with much more nuance in my life, but I just found that when it was optional, I, it didn't stop the constant thinking about, should I post this? What should I post? How am I often should I post? Wonder how this post is performing? Like, did it get any likes? Is anybody, you know, commenting or sharing it? And just, I wanted that piece to just go away. It

was like, I just don't even want to think about social media anymore. So for me, I really had to say like, it's not, it's off the table a hundred percent.

And then I knew that like, it didn't have to be forever. I could always decide to go back later. It can change my mind.

Like it gave myself that permission, but it was just more helpful, I think for my brain to say, it's not optional. It's just not happening right now. And I will say that has freed up so much mental bandwidth and just energy for other things.

Now that I don't think we really realize how much space those bots take up in our, in our heads. Yeah, that makes so much sense. And especially when you have children, like we both do, or even if you don't, you know, you have a life, you have to be mindful of your time.

And so that makes a ton of sense. And then creating content, even if it's optional does take time. So I love that because it's, it really should be to each their own and what they resonate with.

And some people I know love social media and that's fine too. Absolutely. Yeah.

I always say if you love social media and it's working for you, by all means, keep doing it. I hated it every second of it. And it also wasn't working for me.

So that's like one of the first two questions I ask people is especially if they're really resistant to coming off or even doing like a short detox trial period from it is like, is it working for you? And most of the time, I mean, like 99% of the time people are like, not really, or I'm not sure. And it's like, if it was working for you, you'd know. And so if you don't know, it's probably not.

Absolutely. That makes so much sense. So if you listen to the podcast, often you hear me say all the time, a good brand disrupts, so we are looking to be a category of one disrupt our space and come in at from a different angle.

And that doesn't mean being harsh necessarily, because that can be a powerful word, but it actually means coming at things from a different angle and re-envisioning things and not following the status quo. And Kate has been really doing this well in her business. So obviously that's why we're talking here today, the business growth without social media.

So you've mentioned this, we went into it just a little bit about the fact you don't actually need social media, but I'm sure there's a lot of people that have just heard somebody like Gary V saying, oh, you're never going to grow your business without it. And you have to be on all of the

platforms. So how has it been for the past three years for you? And we kind of hinted at the methods that you've been using, but what would you say to somebody who's like, are you like, really, I don't need it? Well, I can say that in the first year that I was social media free, which was, yes, as you said, three years ago now I've been off, off 100% social media, not on Instagram, not on TikTok.

Like I'm in Facebook groups that I'm like a client in, you know, masterminds and things, but I'm not posting in there. I don't do anything for my own page or whatever. And we even moved our Facebook group for my programs to a Slack channel so that we could be social media free there as well.

You know, I don't post, I don't scroll. I don't have the apps on my phone. Like it is truly a complete cutoff from it.

And in the first year that I did that, my business grew 165%. So not only did it like, I didn't need it, but I actually was able to focus on other areas that were way more effective and aligned with my values and my energy than I was when I was trying to do all the things, including social media. And then of course the growth has tapered off a little bit since that first year.

And a lot of other things in my business have changed, but I'm now three years social media free and I still have a multiple six figure business. So it's not like, yeah, I feel like people think you can't actually make money if you're not on social. And I'm not really sure.

I mean, clearly social media marketing, like their budget is strong because they have really convinced us that we need this. And it's so interesting because it's like, Instagram got big without Instagram. Like they didn't have their own platforms to use when they were first starting out.

And so, you know, it's just something that I think is, it's a myth. And I don't know why it's so ingrained in people's to think that they have to do things this one way, or like there's only one way to find success. Yeah, it's so true.

And I feel like myself too, for a long time, you know, I've never invested in ads or anything. It's everything I've done. The growth is organic and social media played a part.

I'll be transparent. When I first started my business, I got most of it off of Facebook. Now I'm never on Facebook.

I'm leaving Instagram pretty much, which we're going to talk about in a minute. And I do have success on LinkedIn and that's working for me. So I'm going to stick with it.

So again, you know, everybody has their own ways, but it's so interesting how we've kind of almost been brainwashed. And then especially there's so many people that think like to continue growing the business, you have to eventually invest in ads. And I have to admit, like that was me for a little bit.

I kept thinking, oh, I better do the ads. I better do the ads. But I've seen so many horror story of people investing like thousands upon thousands of dollars in ads and not getting a return on that investment.

Right. I mean, and then there's, I don't want to like throw shade on a hundred percent. There's always people who do have results and that's fine too.

That goes back to your original point. Yeah. But it is so interesting that it's just like this given that you have to be all over social media.

Right. I know. And to your point, I mean, I think everything works.

Does social media work or could it work? Yes. Of course. Could ads work? Yes.

Of course. Could all these other shots, like everything works, but what works for you? And are you willing to do what it takes for it to work? Like, I think for me in what I saw of people who social media was working for spent hours a day on social media and they were posting stories and reels and like following algorithm updates and all these videos. And like, I just wasn't willing to do that.

So, and I think most people aren't really willing to do that. And so, yeah, I think it's just figuring out, you know, what works for you and are you willing to, everything's going to be a trade-off and like, what are you willing to sacrifice to do it? And for me, I just wasn't willing to make those sacrifices. And when I first quit, I didn't quit with the plan to quit forever.

I just was like, I'm taking a break. I'm just going to delete the apps for 30 days and see what happens. And it was so life-giving and freeing that I just kind of kept doing it.

And before I knew it, I was like, oh, I've been off for a year. Wow. That went kind of fast.

And, and now, yeah, now we're three years later, but it's like, yeah, you just, I don't know. You can, there are so many other ways to grow your business. And I think it's time that we stop like pretending that there's only this one route.

Yeah, absolutely. Well, and part of it is too, like what did, like social media didn't always exist. So this is before social media.

So let's talk about one app in particular, Instagram, which I think in most circles, especially coaches and service providers and online things, of course, now TikTok is there too. And, and more people are going back to LinkedIn, but I think there's this, you know, especially this convincing, like you said, Instagram did it so well of like, you have to be on there. You have to have, you know, you have to be constantly on there.

And as a brand strategist, I really think in some ways, it's still important to have some sort of a presence. So somebody is Googling you and they go to your Instagram. If you're just not there completely, somebody might think, hmm, like, what is this person up to? Like they don't have anything.

And obviously you need a website and, you know, like some sort of presence. So this is something that I was really excited when I saw you doing it, because I've been thinking at it probably like almost two years, honestly. And it's just like, I'm always working on clients.

So I haven't had the time to like implement it for myself. So I just keep posting randomly or my team helps me do that, which is, you know, there's a way to be, have a presence on Instagram without actually like feeding, feeding it every day or every week. And so some people have probably heard of the nine grid already, where it's kind of like a static grid.

You don't actually keep posting and it can serve as like a mini sales page. So can you talk a little bit about that? And the cool thing is you have a whole shop in your business where you sell templates for this and a bunch of other things. Yeah.

Yeah. So I felt the exact same way. Like when I, so I quit in November, 2021 was like the first month that I was off social media and I just like disappeared.

I just stopped, you know, posting whatever. I was very sporadic and inconsistent with it beforehand. So I'm sure it took a while for anybody to notice, but regardless, I didn't do anything.

And when the new year started and I decided like, I think I'm going to keep not being on social. I was like, well, I don't want people to search for me and have it look like I died. My business is closed.

Like I am not a legit person that they can trust. You know, I did feel like having that presence was important. So I just decided to like my first nine grid wasn't pretty.

It wasn't designed to be like one cohesive graphic kind of thing. It was really just, I just put up nine posts that kind of explained the, like the top. So the first post, the top left post just said like, I'm not here anymore.

And here's why. And here's where you can find me. And then the other post, I kind of just thought of it like a mini website of like, how can I tell them here's who I am? Here's how I can help you.

Here's what problem I solve. And here's how you can work with me. And a couple, you know, maybe one post, it was like a free resource or something to help them get started.

So I just did that in early 2022. And I kept that up for two years. I didn't touch it.

And it just allowed me to feel like I could step away. I never posted again anything, but it was the, you know, was somebody landed on my profile or searched my name. They would see that in the last post they would see was I'm not here anymore, but I'm still legit.

Like come check me out over here where I am. And so it worked really well. And I took a six month sabbatical actually at the beginning of 2024.

And when I came back from that in the summer, I had made a lot of changes to my business and felt like things were really different. And so I upgraded my nine grid to kind of reflect where my business was now. And when I did that I created a whole course and templates for other people where now they can have this really eye, like attention grabbing kind of show stopping grid that when somebody lands, you know, each of the images flow into the next ones.

And so it really stands out, which I think also helps people to see, oh, she's doing something here. And like, I need to look at each of these posts or at least like click into one of them rather than if they just landed like my old nine grid, I think it wasn't clear that there was like a message for them left there. It was sort of just like, I don't know, did any of these graphics catch my attention and maybe I'll click into them.

So yeah. So now we sell that in the shop and we've got a special coupon code for your audience. So I think you're going to put that in the show notes, but yeah, I would love for people to check it out.

It's been, we've had probably, I don't know, several hundred people go through the course now and do their own nine grids. And it's been so cool to see like the same couple of templates

re-imagined by different people and how different they actually can look even just by changing out colors or fonts and your pictures and stuff. And so it's, it's really fun to see.

Yeah. So amazing. So for those of you listening, you're like, okay, what's my, what could I do to just start this journey? I mean, you can go cold turkey, like Kate talked about if you feel called to, but I know for me, I've been thinking about this for a while, so I'm actually excited to share my nine grid.

So I'm going to also link Kate's profile and my profile in the show notes. So you can check out what our nine grids look like. And then as Kate said, you can also use the coupon code and grab your own nine grid.

That's 30% off coupon code. So that's super exciting. So it's \$30 and you can get all set up.

That's a great, great first step. So on top of that, there's other, you talked and alluded to, there's definitely other great ways to grow. So obviously I know you teach this in a deeper way, but can you give us a high level of like what you typically, like what you've been doing and when you suggest clients do as well? Yeah.

What I love about this question is the number one question I get asked is like, well, how are you getting clients and how are you growing your email list if you're not on social media? And when I ask other people, well, what are you doing besides social media? They usually rattle off a handful of other things that they're also doing. I go, yeah, I'm just doing more of those things and less social media. So it's not like I have some big secret of like, if you just do this, you can replace everything.

I just have chosen to double down on things that I feel like are more sustainable or more effective and seem to just work better for my personality type in the way that I like to show up in the world. So for me, that's been SEO, which is search engine optimization and basically just producing free content where people can find you through Google search or YouTube search or Pinterest search. Those are all search engines.

So that could be a blog post. It could be a podcast. It could be a YouTube channel.

But some kind of free content that you own that is findable through search engines. That's the number one thing that I've done as sort of my like long-term strategy. And what I love about it is I still get new email subscribers from blog posts that Google's sending me traffic to that I wrote these blog posts years ago.

So it's not like Instagram where you have an hour-long shelf life or something ridiculous. It's like these things can be working for you for years after you do them. So it's much more sustainable.

This year, I've gotten really into participating in bundles and summits. And it's been a really great way to grow my email list really quickly with pretty quality leads and doing it. And it's free.

It costs me nothing versus like running paid ads or something like that. And it's a really quick injection of new subscribers to your list versus like SEO is more of the long play. So I like doing that for kind of the more short-term goals.

And then there's lots of other things that you can do for visibility like going on people's podcasts, speaking in people's groups, guest posting, or being featured in the media. We have a course called Painless Publicity where I kind of go into a bunch of these other strategies that I use for growing without social. And I was going to say one other one, oh, which is affiliates.

And so I love partnering with other business owners or people who, whatever your niche might be, who are usually either adjacent or really complimentary to what you do. So like Tiffany and I make great partners because we don't compete with what we offer, but my people, like we work with the same people and we help them in different ways. So I think that can be a really good way also to borrow other people's audiences to grow your own.

Absolutely. I love that. And it's so funny when you think about it, because I think people are just like, oh my gosh, how can you not be on social? But it's like you said, it's just doing the same thing everything else is doing except for that.

Yeah. Yeah. And I have more time and energy to do on those things than I did when I was trying to do all of it.

And like I said, like, I mean, it sounds almost like cliché or something or like it loses its meaning, but it's so true that they just work better. And so I just go, well, Instagram wasn't growing my email list, no matter how many times I posted there or the ways that different strategies that I tried, Instagram is designed to keep you on the platform. It's not a traffic driver.

It's really hard to get people to leave the site to come somewhere else. And so it's like, well, what if I just stop trying to force a square peg in a round hole and yeah, just double down on things like, but it's really easy to give a free product in a bundle and get hundreds of new leads on my list tomorrow. Yeah.

And I see that. It's interesting that you mentioned, I just did a bundle myself and it was really, really, yeah, it worked really well. And summits too.

It's funny. Summits have had like, they used to be all the jam and like these huge summits and then they kind of went away. And now there's like, I've been in a few micro audio summits, which are nice.

They're not as like intensive and overwhelming. So it's kind of fun to watch how things have like shifted slightly, but the tried and true things that have worked in the past are still working and work. So I think we just forget that.

And now there's AI too. So I've been following, you know, I do a lot with AI and it's interesting that search engines too, they say that soon that chat GPT will even surpass Google in people's searches. So that's a whole nother thing.

Like, okay, now I got to figure out how to do show up and chat GPT results. And, but to your point, like I use AI, so I have many chats set up on my Instagram also as part of my nine grid. And the way that that works is like, it's one of those, you know, comment the word beyond to get access to our beyond this role free challenge.

And now I don't have to be there to respond to the DMS. They can just comment that. And my little bot will come in and send it to them.

And I also have it set up so that like anytime anybody comments or sends me a DM, it auto replies to them. That's like, Hey, I'm really not here. This is my bot.

If you need to find me come here. So I really can truly step away without feeling like, but what if somebody tries to reach out? It's like, well, they'll get my note that says, don't reach me here. Here's my email address.

It's so true. Amazing. Well, thank you so much for all of everything you shared today.

I think it's just going to be such a powerful gift for a lot of my audience who, you know, I've been talking about it and my journey and I've slowly been detaching myself. And so I think it's really powerful to hear from somebody who's like, no, I went cold Turkey. It's working really well.

So again, check out in the show notes, there's a coupon code for the nine grid. And then also Kate mentioned her four day challenge. And do you want to talk a little bit about that as well before we wrap up? Sure.

So Tiffany, we're just saying this before we got on to, or hit record like that, the nine grid, I feel like is kind of step one in the leaving social media. It's like, for me, it was the way to, I can leave

social media and know that I still have a presence there without needing constant updates or really any updates. But steps two and beyond would be like what to do instead.

And so that's kind of what we get into in our free challenge, which is called beyond the scroll. And it's just four days and it's all audio. So you can listen on your podcast player.

And yeah, it was the first day actually. So maybe, maybe the nine grid is step two, step one is sort of like figuring out why you even want to do this, doing like a bit of an audit of your own social media. So you can see like, am I getting an ROI from the time and energy and money I spend currently on social, and we'll help you kind of write a manifesto for yourself of like, why you want to make this change, even if it's just temporary.

So that's sort of day one, then this is the nine grid. And then there's kind of the other pieces to what to do instead. And so, yeah, it's a great place to get started if you're just curious and interested in, you know, learning more about how this might be able to work for you.

Perfect. All right. So once again, check that out in the show notes.

And then I cannot not ask about legacy since we're here talking about our legacy brands. So to close up today, what does legacy mean to you and why is it important? I love this question. I think there's something that you said in the beginning about like legacy and disruption.

And that just resonates with me so much because I do think that we're all, most of us who are starting our own businesses are doing it because we don't want to just fall in line with the status quo and we want to create our own way and do things on our own terms. And so for me, I think legacy is about really living into that ethos and, yeah, and doing things differently and not being afraid to try things like, you know, I just tried going without social media. I didn't have to make this permanent decision that I could never go back.

But now it feels like something that I wasn't doing for like the publicity of it. I was just doing for my mental health, really. And now it does feel like this is going to be part of my legacy.

And it's not so much about like, oh, because Kate hates social media. It's more so like the messages that I get from people saying like how permission giving it was for them to just do anything in their business their way and not to have to just always follow the rules and especially a lot of rules that are based in like old patriarchal norms and things that really don't aren't designed to serve us. So, yeah, I think that's my answer.

I love it. Well, thanks again for joining us. I can't wait to continue the conversation in the future as well.

And remember, if you're not consciously building a legacy, you're building your brand unconsciously. I hope this discussion with Kate inspired you to take action. And if we all focus on making an impact, the ripple effect we can have together is going to truly make a difference.

We'll see you next time.