



## EPISODE 010 – Planning for 2016

You are listening to the Fun and Profit for the Active Entrepreneur Podcast Episode 10, Planning for 2016.

Welcome to the Fun & Profit for the Active Entrepreneur podcast. I'm your host, Paula G. Join me as we explore what it takes to get you out from behind your desk and endless to-do's so you're feeling more vibrant, alive, and engaged in your business and in your life.

Welcome. It is mid-December here. I'm excited to talk about planning for 2016, **planning intentionally**. In fact, this process, for me, begins in the fall, really proactively thinking about what I want to create. Today, what I'd like to do is to walk you through, at least at a high level, a process that I go through to make each year very intentional and as successful as possible. You see, once I hit December, there's a lot of wrapping up for 2015 going on. There's the holidays. Then there's the most important holiday, of course, which is my birthday. I always like to make a big deal about that and spend some time off enjoying and savoring that. Part of what I swore when I left corporate America is that I will never, ever work on my birthday again. There you have it.

For planning of 2016 – and you can apply this every year, of course – I want you to **do it with intention**. By that, I mean I want you to think about the year ahead,

*How you most want to feel?*

*What do you really want to create?*

Not someday, not one day when I make x-amount of money or have x-amount of clients or the sun and moon are perfectly aligned on some cosmic once-in-3000-year on the Earth axis sort of alignment. You know what I'm saying. I want you to do it now. I want you to do it by not only being intentional, but if you bring the most important pieces into your planning first, you're **guaranteed to have more success.**

What you'll need to do this exercise – and it won't take you forever. In fact, this is the perfect time of year to do it. If you're too tied up in the holidays or you're traveling, first thing in January, take a planning day for yourself, a planning afternoon, and do this. In fact, I will be doing some of this in December myself, which is actually a little late for me, but I'm going to be doing it in December. Then I'm also going to be taking a half-day in January to flesh it out further.

Here's what you're going to need. You're going to need a quiet space, feel comfortable. Of course, you want some good water, maybe celebrate with a glass of wine, whatever you like. Just be comfortable. And a snack so you don't get hungry and desperate. Get yourself a printable calendar, that may be a calendar you pick up in Staples, an inexpensive calendar. Alternatively, the way I do it is I print from the internet a free month-at-a-glance calendar. I will put a link in the show notes to the one that I use, but there are many of them. I literally print a page per month. This, to me, frees me up. I can three-hole punch it and put it in a binder. I can just clip it together. If I find that dates have changed during the year for some of my intentions, and, let's face it, dates will change, I can just throw it out and recopy what's new without feeling like I'm making a total mess on my calendar.

I'm one of those neat, orderly freaks. When I was in school, I'd get my notebook and I didn't want to get it dirty or write in the margins. Conceptually, now I live more outside the lines and to heck with the margins. When it comes to my papers and stuff, I'm still pretty orderly. That's what you need, that and a couple colored pens or stickies if you want. You can keep it simple, or you can make it as creative and visual as you like. It depends on what will give you that feeling of completion and inspiration. Pretty markers and stickers might be your style, or just a few colored pens, which is more my style.

## **Step 1**

What I want you to do first is mark off every holiday that you will not be working, Christmas, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Memorial Day, etc. Then I would like you to write in any other time off that you want to take. This is what you want. This is your opportunity to start claiming it and setting the path in motion for what you want. For me, for instance, I will go through the calendar and I will mark off on every Friday between mid-May, maybe even early May, and mid-September. To me, in the summer, that's what I do. It's all about biking and hiking and being outdoors and catching my breath. I schedule it all in. If you want to take a week off in October, pencil it in.

If you do not know the exact week, because maybe you're waiting on a spouse or waiting on some plans: Gee, do we want to go to Italy? Do we want to go to the West, the desert, to hike? What do we want to do? I don't know the dates of this. That's okay. That's why we do it with throwaway paper. That's why you've got the opportunity to change it. I want you to put it around the time that you think you're going to go. I expect to go back to Maine in August. I will put a week there. It doesn't need to be exact, but you want your intentions on there, because you want to start to understand where you're taking time off, and how the container known as your workday, work month, work year is going to look.

## **Step 2**

Once you've taken and entered all your time off – this is all time off, time away from business – now it's time for you to go through and write in any time that you might already be going to a speaking engagement, a conference, a mastermind, a retreat. You may already have it scheduled, or it may just be what you intend, but write that in next.

## **Step 3**

Once you have that in, I want you to consciously create some time, at least quarterly, and a little bit of time monthly, to work on your business. These are days or half days where you do not do client work. In fact, you don't even do a lot of nitty-gritty work in your business. You want to think strategically. You want to get done a special project. You want to review your metrics. You want to take and put your finger on the pulse of your business. That's what that time is for. That way you can course correct, you can change, you can step back and see: How are things going? What are my bona fide results? How am I feeling? Am I happy with my business? Do things need to change? This gives you the time space and psychic space to do it. If you plan it in your calendar, even if it needs to get adjusted a bit along the way, you're setting that intention of being a CEO in your business, to think like a CEO, to think like a business owner instead of just thinking like an employee, a taskmaster.

## **Step 4**

Now you've got all your time off and all your time on, meaning working on your business and on yourself in your calendar. Now I want you to enter the major milestones for product launches, book launches, any major thing that you're hoping to launch and do with your business in 2016. You might be writing a book and launching a book. You might be launching a course. You might run quarterly or monthly webinars. You might be launching a membership site, offering a new product line, offering a new service. Mark that into your calendar. This will allow you to see if you've given yourself enough time to actually promote these things. They always say that the best time to promote

your upcoming book launch is six months before the book launch. The best time to promote your course or event in a few months is now.

This calendar will help you see if what you have in mind is reasonable from a time to market it, time to fill it scenario. This calendar will actually help flow into or can also become – that's where these other color markers come in -- can become your marketing calendar, your social media calendar, and from there you've got your thematic arc to the month, to the year, to the quarter.

## **Step 5**

Really, once you've done that, you've got most of 2016 intentionally set for yourself. You know what you're intending and what you want. You may also want to mark in the calendar, if it's not already obvious to you, what your business hours are. So I see clients on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday; do this on Wednesdays; take Fridays off, but in the off season when I'm not taking Fridays off, I'm doing this. Voila! You can do this in just a few hours. The breathing space of half a day, a day is nice, especially if you're not clear on what you want to launch and what you want to do and what conferences you might want to take. You might want to span two half-days. In the short amount of time, you've got an intentional picture and the start of a commitment, because you've written it down in pencil and marker, in the container known as 2016.

There is no magic to doing this. It doesn't have to be hard. If thinking out a year freaks you out, don't let it freak you out. You don't have to have big goals. For me personally, I've adopted more of an experimental model. When I look at my 2016 calendar, I'm going to probably put in little timings around experiments I'm going to run, whether that's an experiment I'm going to run regarding marketing or regarding a particular class or offering, it's not set in stone. It gives structure and rhythm and intention to not only what you're creating in 2016, why you're creating it, why you want it in the first place, and that you have the time and the container for it to happen.

Without that, it's not going to happen, or you're going to realize you don't have enough hours in a day to make it happen. Or you're going to realize, like some of the folks in my 30 Days to Project Complete Program right now, people who are like: Yeah, this project was supposed to be done, this website was supposed to be launched, this book was supposed to be done in July of 2014 and July of 2015 and months ago and it hasn't happened. There's no shame in that, of course. If you create the space and the time and the timing, you're much more likely to have it happen.

Most importantly, I want you to think of a theme. **What is your theme for 2016?** Allow that to ring through all of what you do here. For me, I'm going to continue to simplify, simplify, simplify. Continued theme of profitability, profitability, profitability. Creating space. With that lens, I can run every decision, every bit of actions that I do through that lens and see: Am I reaching that? Am I on intention? Am I going in a wrong direction? And by creating space in your calendar to reflect upon this, both the qualitative "How am I feeling?" and the quantitative. On a regular basis, you're going to have far more success, far more awareness, and be a far more bona fide, serious business owner. You can be serious about it without being "I'm deadly serious about what I do." Not dry and painful, but take it seriously.

With that, I invite you to do some planning. Please, let me know in the comments how your planning is going. I want to know. I want to hear. If you've listened this far to the podcast, I thank you. It's exciting to be through ten episodes. Please head on over to iTunes and rate and review the podcast. In this way, you help other people find this content. If you're finding it useful, I want you to help others find it, too. With that, I invite you also to have a wonderful holiday season, whatever holiday you celebrate, whether you celebrate it big or just celebrate it quiet, or just simply bask in the turning of the seasons and the solstice and the changes we see in nature.

Thanks for listening. Happy planning. I'll see you on the next episode. Always remember, in the meanwhile, to create a great day.