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## Michelle Dale: Mother of Three Takes Her Kids Around Europe on a Ten Year "Laptop Lifestyle" Trip All Thanks to Her \$30,000+ A Month Online Business

Hello, this is Yaro, and welcome to the entrepreneur's journey podcast. Today's guest is Michelle Dale.

**YARO:** Hello, this is Yaro Starak, and welcome to an Entrepreneurs' Journey podcast. Today, I have a guest who is possibly the very first ever reader of my blog. [Laughs] Maybe, I can't quantify that.

Her name is Michelle Dale from [Virtual Miss Friday](#). And, I'm going to have Michelle explain exactly what that is in a moment. Michelle is actually been someone, I won't say been in touch with, but she's certainly surfaced many times over recent years because she was originally a reader of my blog and then she joined some programs, and she actually participated in coaching calls, so I remember hearing the name Virtual Miss Friday mentioned many times over the years. So, it's going to





be great to hear exactly how big that business has become, and meet the woman behind it. So, Michelle, thank you for joining me on this interview.

**MICHELLE:** Thank you so much, Yaro. I'm going to try and contain my excitement. I've already told you how excited I am to finally be talking to you one-on-one. It's an absolute pleasure to be here. Thank you.

**YARO:** Well, I'm happy to have you, and I really want to hear more about what you do, so I was just before trying to grasp all the different things you're doing so I could introduce you. And, I decided it was better for you to tell the audience exactly what you do, the different components of your business, and how much money you make from each one. So, could you just give us a summary? I'll try to contain you if you go too long. *[Laughs]*

**MICHELLE:** Yes, yes. *[Laughs]* I'll try to summarize this as quickly as I possibly can. Basically, I quit my job in 2005, and I decided that I wanted to leave the UK and start traveling. So, at that time I needed to be able to fund it, and the only way I could think at that time was through doing some sort of an online business. And, I actually came across your blog right at the beginning, very, very in the early days, and I really loved reading what you had to say, and things like that. But, I was never really the type of person that would go into blogging or selling products at that time because I was pretty clueless. I had come out of a very non-Internet environment to start this business.

So, I discovered virtual assistance. Primarily, that's where I started as just being a virtual assistant, and I started off with just a bit of freelance work and admin. And then over the years, while I was traveling, which was working out very well for me, I had started getting a lot of interest through the virtual assistant work that I was doing, not just from clients, but other people who wanted to become virtual assistants.

And, in 2010, I decided that it would be a good idea to maybe create a training program where I could just answer everybody's questions in one hit, rather than me just spend all my time answering all these different questions on a daily basis so, I could get turn people to the program. That's basically when I signed up for your membership mastermind and your Blog Mastermind. And, from there, it's going from strength to strength. I



launched my first product in January 2011, and I now have seven products in total, consisting of six different programs for people at different stages of their online service business.

And, also a subscription membership site for, you know, because you went through all these different models of the membership site, so I figured I'd just create all of them. [*Laughs*] So, basically I have those seven products now.

So, I still travel. I'm currently in Greece at the moment, and I still permanently live abroad. I never went back to the UK to live since 2005. So, a lot of my business is centred around the travel element, and the location independence, and lifestyle design, but I do it through online service providing, basically servicing entrepreneurs through my virtual assistant business.

I also sell programs on the side now for people who want to kind of create this lifestyle, create a similar sort of business, providing services online, and doing it so they have the capability of being able to travel. So, over the years, obviously, I started at zero with no clue and idea of what I was doing. And now, I've got a business, a service business, which generates around \$30,000 a month, and, on the side of that, which is, I call it my passive income business, which is the programs and the products I created from what you taught me through your program, because I haven't actually taken any other program other than yours.

I've managed to generate a really healthy income from that, and I do launches and revamps of my programs, and sales and things, a few times a year, and they can generate, sort of, around \$27,000 to \$30,000 per each time I do that. Plus, it also provides a monthly income through just the general sales that come in when I'm not doing promotions and things. So, it's worked out really well. It's been hard work.

**YARO:** Yes, I can imagine.

**MICHELLE:** But it's been worth it, definitely.



**YARO:** So, just to clarify, you started as a virtual assistant yourself by basically freelancing and offering these services, then everyone wanted to know because you were traveling, no doubt, that got a lot of attention, so you were doing that laptop lifestyle traveling around the world thing, which everyone wants to do. They wanted to replicate it, so then you decided to also teach people how to become virtual assistants.

Can you just clarify though, I get when you do a launch and you sell products you can make \$27-30 thousand from that. The \$30,000 you make from virtual assistance, is that you having a team working under you? How does that work?

**MICHELLE:** The \$30,000 a month I make through services is basically the gross income that I can generate through my service business, servicing clients, and also I have a team of virtual assistants. But, it's not a massive team. There are generally around about 14 or 15 people servicing clients at any one time. Basically, I work now as a consultant because throughout the years, obviously I've studied a lot. I've done a lot of trial-and-error. I've failed a lot, and I come out at the end of it basically with a really decent, sort of, consulting business.

So now, what I do primarily is I do consulting with a client and then, we put a plan together for their administration, their online business, their social media, or their website, for example, and then I delegate that to my team. And, we basically have clients who come in and do one-off projects with us, and we also have clients who work on a retainer, where we service them, every single month. So, out of that gross income, that 30K, I do have to pay people in my team, so basically, after that's sorted, I take home the rest.

**YARO:** Okay, so you've kind of got this business where you're offering the services yourself, and you're teaching other people how to become service offerers as well.

**MICHELLE:** Yes. I kept my service business running. Basically, the program side of the business, which is the membership sites and things like that, it's all my side line. It's the result of what I do with my primary business, which is, you know, servicing clients. So, I maintain the clients, and I maintain the service business. And, I work really, really hard to



always try and optimize what I'm doing in the virtual assistant business, and then what I do is every year, I put a schedule in place to revamp and update my programs, so people are always getting the latest information for their own virtual assistant businesses.

So, it works out really well that way because if I stopped doing the virtual assistant services, and I just devoted my time to creating products within a year or two, I think my products would be out-of-date, and so would I. I wouldn't feel like I was giving 100% or 110% value in my products if I wasn't actually living the virtual assistant business still and servicing clients on a daily basis.

**YARO:** Yes, I can see how that works. Just like me, I need to still be a blogger in order to teach people how to make money from blogging, since it's very linked.

**MICHELLE:** Exactly.

**YARO:** Now, it sounds to me that your kind of growth, and this is, I guess you could say, a typical story, was doing a lot of work yourself for other people as a freelancer, and that was growing. You probably were a little snowed under with work, and you were thinking I'd like to make a bit of money when I sleep, as well, in the sense, that I don't always want to be exchanging some work for like an hourly or contract basis, so I'm going to learn how to take what I've now learned how to do. And since I'm getting so many questions about it, create products that can be sold while I'm sleeping and have a, not a passive-income, like you said, it's kind of passive. There's a lot of work to create them, but once you have the products, they can keep selling. Was that the kind of idea that you were thinking, "Well, I don't always want to be a paid for services person, I also want to make money without doing work at some point."

**MICHELLE:** That definitely is my thinking now, but was it my thinking back then? Probably not. I never considered myself the type of person that would have the ability to be able to generate a significant amount of money from products. I mean, I followed you and I loved all your advice, and everything like that. And, I tried to apply this kind of entrepreneurial mindset into my virtual assistant business, which wasn't happening at the time.



Virtual assistants, at that time, were pretty much non-existent. And, the ones that you did find, they weren't entrepreneurial. They were sort of like work-at-home moms, who just wanted to earn a bit of money on the side. It was a very different time back then.

And, when I started initially it was literally because I thought to myself, it's taking me too much time to answer these questions and I need another outlet to be able to do that, and maybe it might be nice to make a little bit of income from it as well. So, that's where it all started, but did I have in my mind back then that I would be this person who'd be able to produce these programs and make \$27-30 thousand in a launch. No way, that never even occurred to me.

And, as I started producing the programs, my very first program I produced when I did my launch, I was completely outstounded and astonished by the results from it. And, at that point, when I launched that first program, I was kind of a little bit hooked on seeing what else I could do in terms of programs alongside my virtual assistant business. Because it's hard to juggle because you put a lot of time in the services, and you don't want to compromise your time with your clients or your services with your clients to create the programs. So, you have to find that balance. But, yes, really it was the first launch where it was a shock for me what happened.

**YARO:** Can you paint a picture for – I'd love to, I guess go back in time, as well. Before we do that, since you mentioned doing a launch, and I know a lot of people are thinking, "Well, how did you get customers? What was the product? And, how did you create the product?"

Could you paint a picture, I'm sitting, thinking here, you're sitting, you're in Greece with your laptop, you're servicing clients already, so you got your bases covered for making an income, then you're thinking, "Okay, I'm going to teach people how do this, as well. Now, I've studied Yaro's course, so I understand I have to create a presence online with some sort of blog or a website, grow a newsletter, and then you're launching a course, and doing a launch process, where maybe you create the first module and then you go and sell it, and then you build the rest of the course around the people."



Was that what you did basically sitting in some island somewhere? Like, how did this all happen?

**MICHELLE:** [*Laughs*] Okay, well, like I said, it was back in 2010. I was living in Spain at that time. And, I've been doing my VA business. I mean, I started my VA business in 2005. I hadn't really seriously been doing it and making a serious income from it until about 2007.

So between 2007 and 2010, I was just virtual assisting. And, then like I said people started contacting me on my website. So, I've been following you for a while, and I just decided that I was going to create a product that would allow me to answer these questions, and I had no clue, no idea what to do, no idea how to go about it.

So, I joined your Membership Site Mastermind and your Blog Mastermind, and then, you know, basically you teach about how you have to, the pre-eminence thing really stuck with me. Because I thought to myself nobody is going to buy from me unless I can somehow prove my value, prove my worth, to the people who I'm hoping that will buy from me.

So, I started off with a blog, and I started blogging in, it was the end of August 2010. I started the blog, and then I decided right, I'm going to launch my first program in January 2011, so I allowed myself those few months to kind of get it started. And, because I had no experience whatsoever in any of this, I felt like – I had no list, I started from scratch, nothing. And, as soon as I started blogging, I started realizing that I was getting some followers. It was tiny. It was really, really tiny. I had a sort of an email list that people started subscribing to.

**YARO:** What were you giving away on the blog? Were you just teaching people how to be a virtual assistant by writing articles about that?

**MICHELLE:** I was writing articles about virtual assistance, yes. Basically, how to set up an office, how to become a mobile virtual assistant. You know, it was really kind of basic stuff, and it was all based on the questions that I was being asked, which a lot of the answers were inside the program. But, I kind of took the ones that were really simple to respond to and I started basically answering people's questions on my blog, and that's how I



started gathering some followers. And, I had a list of maybe a few hundred between the end of August and October.

**YARO:** How did they find you? Was there any marketing going on?

**MICHELLE:** Just through Google. I mean, I was quite good at that time in getting my website out the ranks in Google for virtual assistant and things like that. So, as soon as I added a blog, I just kind of made sure that it was visible in Google as much as possible. And, people started finding me through that way. Also, I had a sort of a basic following on Twitter. You know, I had a following on Twitter and Facebook and things like that. Not massive but enough that I was able to basically tell people about my blog and start getting a few hundred visits a week.

So, as soon as that happened, I started getting subscribers, and I would say that when my list got to around 500 or so subscribers, what I did was I emailed the list and then, I said that I was going to be launching this product. And, I ran a competition for people who would apply to become beta-testers for free.

So, I wanted to test this for free before I actually sold the thing. So, basically, a lot of people applied actually. To me it was a lot of people, especially at that time when I'd never done anything like this before, and I think there was probably about 40 applications or so. And, out of those people I short-listed 34. I took on, I think, at that time, it was about 7 beta-testers for free.

**YARO:** Alright, so what did you offer them? Just time on the phone with you?

**MICHELLE:** No, I offered them the entire programming, and in the programming included the website build as well.

**YARO:** So you already created the program?

**MICHELLE:** I was in the process of creating it. I hadn't finished it, but I had all the layout ready. I knew what I was going to teach in the modules, I knew how I was going to offer the website build, because I provide





services, as well. What I wanted to do was incorporate the services I offer inside the program as well. We also built their websites.

Basically, I put out this competition that people could apply to get seven spots on the beta testing, and people did apply and they got those spots for free, and the program wasn't ready at that time. This was in October, and I launched the program in January 2011.

But, basically I thought to myself, "Well, I can start making this program, but if nobody has an interest and no one wants to join, what's the point in seeing it through until the end." So, I kind of did that a little bit earlier on, and then I put my all into it over the next few months when I realized that we were going to have people in the program testing it.

So, that's what I did basically. So, there were 7 beta-testers, and I actually had a list, a very small list, of 34 people who were short-listed, who didn't get the free option, but I just put out to them to say, "My courses are \$1,000, if you want to join on the beta-testing, you're welcome to purchase it."

And, I made \$19,000 out of 34 people, so I was surprised with that really. *[Laughs]* Yes, it's really hard to describe how shocking that was. So, yes, I had these 34 people. I sent it out to them. I said, "This is the beta-testing. I'm sorry you didn't win the free competition, but you know, if you want to join us, it's \$997 for the program."

And yes, I made \$19,000 from that. I launched it into January, and I had such incredible, amazing feedback from it that I just became addicted after that. I thought to myself, "All right, what can I do better, what can I do more?" And, it all sort of stemmed from there, really. And, over the years, obviously the blog's grown, and the program's grown, and things like that.

**YARO:** I'm curious. There's a lot that goes into doing a launch, and creating the product. And, I understand you had the technical expertise coming from your virtual assistant background to set up a membership area, and the Wordpress blog, so that would have been somewhat easier for you, but, you know, things like how much to charge, how did you create your sales page? How did you do all these things? I'm curious, did you take away a lot



from my training programs and directly apply it? Because you said, I find this incredible, you learned every single potential model I taught about creating information products, and you applied them all, which I don't think anyone's ever done. I haven't even done it. [*Laughs*] So, what's your secret there?

**MICHELLE:** [*Laughs*] I've applied them all over the years. It really started off just with this one product, and then, basically, from off the back of that one product. I mean, yes, I did have some knowledge of how to set up a website and a blog, and things like that. But, I didn't know the sequence of events that I had to go through until I took your program.

I actually went into your membership site, and I watched all the videos, and everything like that, and when I had questions, I attended the calls. What intrigued me the most, and it's actually interesting because you were doing, you were talking about, Rich Schefren, how you went into his membership site, and how you took the knowledge from the content, but you also looked around to see how he was doing it, and what he was actually doing in there. And, I did that with yours, and I looked around and I thought, "Right, you got these modules, you've got this forum, you've got this."

So, I just basically piecemealed something together as best as I could based on the information that you shared inside that program and also based on what you had inside that program as well. And, some of the things worked for me, and some of the things didn't.

Basically, from there, I followed the pre-eminence thing. It was very, very hard. The sales thing was really hard for me, and it's still hard for me because I'm not really a salesy person, so I kind of relied a lot on getting as much feedback, and testimonials, and success stories, and proof really that my stuff works.

I would say that the biggest contributors to my first launch being a success was because I published on my blog, my little blog, a set of invoices from the month of business, in my business, and basically I published those invoices. At that time, I was making probably about \$19,000 a month from services, and as soon as I published that, people started to pay attention and take notice because nobody really understood or could of, sort of, quite



comprehend that a virtual assistant could make \$19,000 or \$20,000 a month.

And, that's how I started really developing a name for myself. So, although the sales copy and the sales pages, and everything like that, I followed your advice throughout those, it was really the pre-eminence and the credibility thing that changed it for me. As soon as I published that, and I showed proof, and I showed people I'm not just talking the talk, I'm walking the walk, as well. That's when, you know, conversions just started to happen. And, I realized, at that point then, that you don't have to be fantastic at sales to be able to do this, you just have to be fantastic at what you do. Share your best information with as many people as you can. And, that's another thing that I learned from you about sharing your best content, and things like that.

**YARO:** Moving the free line, if I remember that one.

**MICHELLE:** Yes.

**YARO:** And that's such a good point too. Like, you don't have to do long sales pages, and have pushy sales material, you can just go out there and show that you're good at what you're good at doing. Like you said, in your case, your proof is you're making money from the services business. For another person, it might be, you're good at helping people lose weight, so you just show all these clients you've helped in the past, before and after photos, or whatever the case may be. And, that's enough to build the trust necessary to make the sale. And, it sounds like you really benefitted from that, and you just had to, correct me if I'm wrong, send an email to a shopping cart page and people bought from you. Is that kind of what happened?

**MICHELLE:** It's yes – that's basically what happened. I spend a lot of time building relationships with people. I mean, back then it was easy because I only had a few subscribers. But, I spent a lot of time building relationships with them and showing, sort of, that I was a human being with human qualities.



There's loads of people out there doing this sort of commercialized part of the sales and business programs in the Internet, and I think it's fantastic that they do that, but it was never me. I'm far more down to earth. I'm quite shy, really, in terms of being able to put myself out there.

The best thing I could really do for myself is just prove to people on paper, and on the Internet, that I was doing what I said that I was doing, and to also just basically engage with people and to show people that I was just like them.

I'm a mom. I have two children. I'm pregnant with my third. You know, I'm not some sort of massive, unbelievable, highly qualified person. You know, I left school at 16. It's really all about putting your passion into what you do. I think as long as you do that, and you do it with sincerity, and humanity, and honesty, for some reason, I think, it just contributes to the whole part of it. And, having a certain degree of sales and knowledge, and things like, is important, and that's why I joined your program because I knew that already. I knew that I needed those skills.

But, I think it's the person behind it, it's what people buy. It's the person who's actually out there delivering the content and saying, you know people relate to you. I'm sure you find there's a lot of people that relate to you, there's people that relate to me because of who I am and what I do. And, I just try to really impress upon people who I am and what I do and why I do it and how passionate I am about it and how they're able to do it themselves. I really enjoy helping people and I think that comes through.

**YARO:** Okay, can we go back in time. It's sort of not quite my usual interview formula, but I do want to cover the period where you transitioned into your own business because it sounds like things are amazing now. You've got products. You've got services. You're traveling. You've got a family. That's everything everyone wants, and you're managing to make it work somehow. So, let's go back in time now for the person who's listening this who's still working their job, or they're contemplating quitting their job, or maybe they haven't gotten a job and they want to start making an income and travel and all these wonderful things. You left school at 16. Did you go into the work force after that?



**MICHELLE:** Yes, well I left home as well. So, I just got on a bus and went somewhere and found my first job and my first flat, where I could... But yes, I left home at 16, and I just wanted to work. I actually applied for a college grant, and I got denied, turned down for it, so I thought to myself, "Well, I don't necessarily enjoy school or like it, so why am I doing that?" And, I realized that I was only applying for it because that was the done thing, you know, at the time.

So, I thought to myself, well I'll go out into the world and see what I want to do. And, I worked so many different jobs, and I lived in so many different places. I never felt fulfilled in any of them. And, eventually when I was about 18, I got a job in a bank, which, you know, I suppose that was the one I felt most comfortable in after coming from restaurants and waitressing and hotels and bar work and hospitals and things like that. It was quite random.

And then, I started buying properties back then through repossession properties, and I started just basically buying and selling properties. I bought about 5 by the time I was 23, but beyond that I had no skills in what I was doing. I mean, I suppose that my work at the bank was, you know, in some way it helped me with my administration and things like that, but there's nothing I can say definitively that I did that led on to what I was doing. And, then one day I just decided that I didn't feel happy and fulfilled in what I was doing. I was 23 years old, and, you know, nothing had worked for me, and so I decided to do something dramatically different. And, I just walked in and quit my job. I booked a one-way ticket to the Middle East. I sold everything that I owned, and I just left.

**YARO:** Wow, you were buying and selling property. Did you, when you sold everything, did you have enough to live for years and years without ever having an income again at that point? Or what was the plan?

**MICHELLE:** There was no plan. I left. I mean, I was buying and selling properties, but I always sold and bought and sold and bought and sold and every property that I bought was a more higher value and I put all my money into it because I used to do the market at Salem so, by the time I left, by the time I left England and everything, I had about 10,000 pounds, which is nothing after I paid off all my mortgages, my credit cards, and my



car loan, and things like that, you know. It was gone. And, yes, so I had about 10,000 pounds in the bank, which surprisingly, actually, I lost in a very bad property deal when I got to the Middle East.

**YARO:** Oh, no.

**MICHELLE:** Yes, yes, I lost everything. I'll tell the story. It's very quick. I bought a piece of land, and in my naivety thinking to myself that everything operated the same as England I realized that I didn't actually own the piece of land, and I was unable to get my money back.

**YARO:** That must have been depressing. Where were you – were you sitting in Oman somewhere, no money?

**MICHELLE:** I was in Luxor, Egypt. And yes, yes. I bought this amazing piece of land by the Nile. I was going to start building on it, and then I realized I didn't own it. *[Laughs]* Yes, it was a bit of a shock. But actually, funnily enough, I think the world works in mysterious ways, or life does work in mysterious ways, and that's primarily what actually motivated me to really get my business off the ground because I had no money left. And, I was literally, I had no money. I mean, I was living in a third world country at the time, so it was very cheap to live. I was very lucky, but it kind of motivated me to get off my ass and really do something about my financial situation, and that's when I really put my all into my business.

**YARO:** So, how does one, I mean, clearly you're a jack of all trades kind of girl when you were younger doing everything, but to then to find yourself in Egypt, did you think, "Okay, I'm going to start offering virtual assistant services via the Internet living in Egypt." Was that just a random thought that popped into your head?

**MICHELLE:** No, well, the process really was that I made decisions in my life. I wasn't really ever good at making decisions about what I wanted, but I was very good at making decisions about what I didn't want. And, I knew that I didn't want to go back to the U.K., and I knew that I wanted to see more of the world.



So basically, what I did is I sat down on the laptop and I opened it up, and I just started, you know, typing in loads of search terms about making money online, about online entrepreneurs, about how to make money on the Internet. That's actually how I came across your blog, you know, through those various different searches.

And, I basically listed, I sat down and listed, every possible way of being able to make money on the Internet, and I crossed off the list. I just started eliminating things. You know, like there was blogging. There was selling products. There was Internet marketing. I mean, social media was pretty non-existent back then, so there was nothing like that around.

And then, I came across virtual assistants, and I was like "Right, I'm going to pick that." It wasn't something that I kind of fell into. It was a decision that I was going to become a virtual assistant. And after I made that decision, I just started following people like yourself and other entrepreneurs online and just gathering as much information as I could and going on forums and asking people about remote working or finding systems. I mean, I researched the heck out of this thing.

That's basically how the business started. There was nothing other than a lot of research and just making a decision, "Right, I'm going to choose that one. That's how I'm going to make my money."

**YARO:** How did you make the money? Did you, I'm assuming, you built a website, [virtualmissfriday.com](http://virtualmissfriday.com), and then you had to get clients, right? Again, were you sitting in Egypt doing this or you moved on by now?

**MICHELLE:** Yes, obviously in Egypt still because I needed to make some money to leave. I still sat in Egypt, but it was a very nice place to be, so that was fine. It was quite sunny. [*Laughs*]

And, basically I just started thinking to myself, "Right, what do I need?" So, I would list all the things I needed to be able start my business. One of them was a website, so I managed to get hold of a friend's copy of [Dreamweaver](#), and by some miracle, I don't know how I managed to do it, I managed to teach myself how to build a website through Dreamweaver. And, I also got a copy of Photoshop, so I started learning how to use



Photoshop, until eventually, I don't know whether you remember it, but you remember Front Page that came from Microsoft?

**YARO:** Oh yes.

**MICHELLE:** Yes. So, I managed to patch together this sort of very basic website on Front Page, as well. And then, I put that up and then I started basically telling people back home in the U.K. about what I was doing and saying, "Could you tell other people about it?" And nobody knew, nobody had a clue. I was like, "I'm going to be a virtual assistant."

"What is that exactly?"

**YARO:** Right.

**MICHELLE:** So, I realized then I had to, you know, try and sort of help educate people about what I was doing. I just tried to spread the word as much as I could until I eventually decided that I needed to start offering some services for free to people because I knew I'd never done this before and I felt kind of shy to be taking money from people based on, you know, no experience whatsoever.

And, so I started saying to people, like for example, my friend, I used to work in financial advising, and my friend had decided to start up a business on her own and I said, "Let me build your website for you. It's totally free. Just let me do it."

So, she's like, "Okay fine." And, that's basically how I started, so I took on a few clients. Once I realized that I was able to work remotely from where I was, you know, helping people in other countries, that's when I started thinking about what I was going to charge for my services. I started off charging you know, something like, about 8 or 10 pounds an hour back then, and now I charge, sort of, 29 pounds an hour up to 39 pounds an hour, just for the services, and sort of 500 pounds for consulting.

Obviously, that's grown over the years, but it's grown with my experience as well. There's been more, like a decade of my life dedicated to the virtual





assistant industry now, and it's been worth it. But yes, it started off as really nothing.

**YARO:** So, just to summarize, the post-Egypt experience. I'm assuming then you left Egypt because you made enough money from the small trickle of clients that you got. And then, at some point, you've obviously had children as well, and you're still traveling as well, aren't you?

**MICHELLE:** Yes.

**YARO:** So, how does that work?

**MICHELLE:** Okay, well –

**YARO:** And when did that happen?

**MICHELLE:** I'd been in Egypt for about 18 months, nearly 2 years at that time, and my friend, who I was working with, told me that she had an American guy renting her flat in one of her flats, so that's how I met my husband. He was traveling from America, he happened to be in Luxor, and we just kind of hit it off, and then I became pregnant.

So, we decided at that point that we were both travellers, and we were like, "Should we go back to England, or go back to America?" And, we just didn't want to. And, so from there, we ended up going to France, then we went to Spain, then Italy, so this has been a process since sort of 2007. And, now we're in Greece. Every year, I mean my kids are 5 and 6 now, and every year of their lives, we've lived in a different country.

**YARO:** Amazing, amazing. And, the whole time you've been running this virtual assistance business and selling products?

**MICHELLE:** Yes. The whole thing that sustained us the whole time is the virtual assistant business. It's been our only primary source of income. And, now my husband works with me. He has a department in the business, and he helps with marketing and things like that. So, it's kind of a family business now.



**YARO:** That's incredible, and what an experience for your kids too. Okay, can we go forward a bit then? What year did you start the products? You said 2010 was when you launched your first product. Now, I'd love to know, you've done 7. How did you get so good at creating so much content? That's a lot of work to create a course, so how have you done these programs?

**MICHELLE:** I have no idea. I'm astounded about how I do it. I mean, basically, I really listen to my audience. I really listen to them, and what their problems are, and what they need, basically. And, I created that first program, which was like a real major program, and it's still one of my biggest programs – the very first one I did.

And then, somebody contacted me, so that was program number one. Then somebody said to me, you know, how do I do this? And they were asking me like little small things about what they could do, so then the membership site came after that, which was the subscription site. So, people pay monthly and quarterly and every month I put a new video of there of something I'm doing on my own business. All this content comes from my own business. I mean, it's not like I sit here twiddling my thumbs. As soon as I do anything in my own business, I write it down on the list and I've got that later on to create something else.

So, the story behind the products is the Apprentice came first, which is the big kind of blueprint of my whole business, my virtual assistant business. It's the blueprint and everything that I did from start to finish, from getting clients, to everything.

And then, somebody asked me for these short little videos, so I got the subscription site every month. I put in PLR articles to help people with their blogging, and I put in videos to help people with different bits and pieces that I'm doing. I give them hints and tips, and things like that. They're really easy to create because they're part of your everyday life.

And also, on the membership site, I offer monthly Q&A coaching calls, and things like that as well. So, that's that. And then, the third program was basically somebody wanted a really condensed version of the Apprentice because it's, you know, it's quite a pricey program if you're starting out. So,



they said, you know, can you create something that's really, super affordable? So, I did. I basically took my massive program, and then I condensed it into a very, very, sort of, summarized short version of it.

So, pretty much anybody, anywhere in the world would be able to purchase it. And, I've had people purchase it from third world countries, people from the Philippines, and things like that, because it's quite affordable. So, those are the three main products, and since then, a lot of people have been saying, "Well, how do you offer your services online? How specifically can I deal with someone's email handling? How specifically can I do their marketing, and things like that?" So, the final three products are basically a course on how to do virtual assistant marketing, how to do administrative services, and how to do creative services online. So, it's all, they all connect, and they're all part of this bigger picture, which is my business.

**YARO:** And where is the audience coming from? Is it still, like the customers and the traffic, do they go to your blog? Do they join your newsletter and then they buy your product? Kind of like the formula that I teach in my programs?

**MICHELLE:** Yes, absolutely, I still do exactly what you taught. I blog every single week. I publish the hell out of that on social media, and also the various outlets and things like that. I now do a weekly video, as well, which is part of my newsletter.

So, I publish that on YouTube. I do a weekly podcast, which I publish that as well. The YouTube video and the podcast are the same thing, I just separate the video and the audio. And, so I basically have this routine every week of doing my blog post, my video, and my newsletter, and I just keep promoting it, and keep promoting it, and people come through a sort of funnel.

They first of all come to my blog, and they can subscribe to my newsletter. But, I also offer a free account. You know, I have all these different membership sites, so I have one main central area where people can access all of my products. But, you can also get access to a free version of that area as well, where people can get the archives of my newsletters and my videos and I've got a free e-book in there, as well. I've recently done



another free e-book, A Quarter Decade on The Road, which was basically what I picked up over the last 10 years of traveling and stuff.

That's inside the free members' area. People subscribe to the free members area. And then from there, what we basically do is just to keep communicating with them and keep offering them really good free content every week. They ask questions, and we build up relationships, and they eventually buy.

**YARO:** Very good. It sounds too perfect in some ways. I know there's a lot of history behind it all. I'm curious, in terms of today, your day to day role, how much is handled by other people? And what do you personally still do?

**MICHELLE:** That's a good question. For me now, I primarily do consulting. I have three managers. I have basically an admin department in my business, a marketing department, and a creative department, and I have three managers for each of those departments, and then they have their teams, who work with them.

So, I primarily work with the managers. In terms of billable time, like doing hourly billable time, I'm removed from that completely now. I don't do any, other than the consulting work I do through my sessions. I primarily devote my time, I set up the schedule, you know, I have like these seven products. One of them is a monthly membership site, so that's updated every month. And, I have six other products now that I've got.

So, basically what I do, is every two months, I invest my time, and this is primarily what I do now, in updating those products and revamping them and adding new content and taking out stuff that's irrelevant. And then, every two months, I will re-launch the product. So, that's my formula now for kind of keeping, you know, making money out of the same products. I just revamp them and put them out there again, and it seems to be doing really well.

**YARO:** You must enjoy the teaching part if that's what you choose to spend your time on...

**MICHELLE:** ...Anything like that but—



**YARO:** Sorry you just dropped out there.

**MICHELLE:** Oh, sorry, can you hear me now?

**YARO:** Yes, and I just asked, you must enjoy the teaching part?

**MICHELLE:** Yes, I do, and I enjoy it very, very much. The best thing about it is seeing the people get the results. For example, I did a one-day workshop, and it was about applying techniques on how you can basically generate the kind of income that I generate because it's not just about what I do. It's about what I believe I'm capable of. And, I think a lot of success in anything, whether you're selling products or services, comes down to your own personal mindset.

If you think you're going to do well, you'll do well. If you think you're going to fail, you'll probably fail. So, I teach people a lot inside my programs, not just the practicalities of business, but also the kind of mindset and the positive thinking that you're going to need to have around it, should do it.

When I teach people these things, alongside the practical things, magnificent things happen. For example, I did this workshop, and it was *How to Change Your Business in Thirty Days*, and one of my people who I did it with, there was only 7 people in the workshop, she contacted me thirty days later and said, "Michelle, I can't believe what happened." She basically doubled her income in 30 days. And then she contacted me thirty days later and she's like, "I just can't believe. This is crazy. I've doubled my income again in 30 days."

Just through applying the techniques I teach. And after that, she contacted me thirty days later and she said that she's turning down clients. She's had to take on new team members. You know, she's doing remarkably well, and I was like, "Please put that in the video." [*Laughs*]

So, she did me a really nice video testimonial with her experiences on working with me on the program. That tends to be, you know, when I watch things like that, and I see the difference in how I feel, when I see people's lives change, and how their lives have changed, it's just so gratifying and satisfying. Yes, I'd really like to devote more of my attention to that, and I



really only just started it this year with revamping three of the programs and doing some new launches and things. I did a launch in March of the creator, and the administrator, and the marketer, and the feedback has just been incredible. So, yes. I like the feedback that I get. That's what really drives me to sit here and to create these products for people because I know they make a difference.

**YARO:** I think we have similar feelings about it. That's probably why I do a lot of my teaching as well. This is probably, I think, a no-brainer question, and I know how you're going to answer it, but I'm going to ask you anyway for the people listening in who are contemplating taking on a coach or a mentor or going through a training program, especially since I'm talking to a member who took my coaching program years ago, do you think it's a good thing to do to take coaching programs? And when do you think you should do them? Because I know that a lot of free information, and in particular now on the Internet there's really ridiculous amounts of free information, and there's a time to study free information, there's a time to pay money for a course, especially considering budgets as well. If you don't have food money, you shouldn't be buying courses, but there's a time when it helps. What's your opinion on that? Why would you take a course or hire a coach today?

**MICHELLE:** You know there are so many reasons. One of the biggest things for me, and I know this is like, people might say this all the time, I took away so much information from your blog and from the content that you produced, and you know, your posts and everything like that. But, I didn't have the ability myself to put together this plan from start to finish.

And, I think what a lot of people is trying to do is piece meal information together from different sources, and some of that information sometimes conflicts, so what people end up doing is, you know, saying, "He said I should do this," and "She said I should do this," and "This contradicts what he said". And, then they just get confused and they don't know what to do.

And, I think that's when people fail, when they don't have a solid kind of start to finish. Right, I'm going to listen to this person. I'm going to follow what they say. They're clearly very successful at it, at doing what they're doing, and I'm going to try and sort of drown out all the other noise around



it, while I focus on it. And, I think that's why it's important to hire a coach or to take a program because you get clarity and you get focus, which you just don't get when you're subscribed to hundreds of blogs and just trying to put information together yourself.

When I started doing the blogging and the Mastermind and everything, your programs, I needed direction. I've been reading blog posts, as many blog posts as I could possibly under the sun, I was following you, I was following the lives of other people. And then what I did is I just made a decision to say, "Who did I want to emulate? Who online do I consider to be the person that I could most relate to, that I want to learn from, that I want to kind of not copy, but take their model and make it my own?" That's when I decided to join your program because I kind of looked for someone, who I thought to myself, "Well, I like their style, I like what they're doing, and I want to take a short cut. I don't want to guess. I don't want to decide for myself if I'm doing the right thing or not. I just want to follow a plan start to finish, and see if it works for me."

So, I put my faith in you. And it is, when you choose a coach, you have to put your faith in them. You can't just choose a coach and think to yourself, "Well, maybe that one over there would be better" or, "That one's told me a different advice." Because I get a lot of people myself who choose me as a mentor or as a coach, and then they say, "Well, I've been reading somebody else's blog and they say not to do what you've told me to do."

And I say that's absolutely fine. Everyone's got their own style. Everyone's got their own way of doing things. What I teach you works for me, and if you want that kind of life, and you want what I'm offering, and what I'm doing, then it's probably best that you listen to me. If you want what they want, and what they're doing, you should listen to them. Just by purchasing a program, or a course, what you're doing is, is you're committing to a certain person, you're committing to a certain model, and that person is also committing to you. And, I think when you do that from start to finish, you take away the noise, and it flows much more easily. And, you get to where you want to be a hell of a lot faster than if you were just trying to do things on your own through free content online.



**YARO:** Well said. [*Laughs*] Awesome, Michelle. Well, I think I'm going to start heading towards the end of the interview. I am kind of curious, most people have a big, grand vision of where they want to go, but I kind of think you've got the perfect set-up already. I know you might have ambitions for more, but it sounds so well-balanced. So what are you working on now?

**MICHELLE:** I live very much in the present, and I think that's important. I used to live in the future and in the past, and that didn't serve me very well, to be honest with you. I still want to keep traveling. I know that I want to do that. I just want to raise my kids to be independent and to appreciate the world as much as I do.

I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing and creating my products. I would love to raise money. But to be honest with you, I'm really happy in my own skin right now, and I'm happy with my life. And, I know anything is possible if I want to change it, I can. If I wake up one day and decide I want to do something totally different, I'll do it. But, I live day to day, and as long as I check in on myself, and I say, how are you feeling, and I'm feeling good, then that's all that really matters to me right now.

**YARO:** Awesome, okay, so, [virtualmissfriday.com](http://virtualmissfriday.com), that's the main destination we should tell people to go if they want to learn more about you?

**MICHELLE:** Absolutely, yes.

**YARO:** Okay, Virtual Miss Friday. Michelle, thank you for sharing your story. There's so many interesting parts of it as well – the travels, and leaving school at 16, to starting your own business. It's pretty clear you're a hard worker, but you've reaped some amazing benefits from it. Congratulations, well done. I'm so glad you took away a lot of what I taught and did it because it's quite rare to find the hard workers who implement and get results, so it's gratifying for me to hear your story as well. And, you've certainly gone and done so much more than what I was teaching as well, so you're inspiring to me. And yes, thank you for joining me.

**MICHELLE:** You're very welcome, and like I say, your program, your Mastermind program, is the only online learning program I've ever taken,





ever in the last 10 years. And, I took so much away from it. A lot of the success from the earlier days right through what you teach, and the way you teach it as well, with honesty and with integrity, I would highly recommend anybody to buy your program, seriously. And, if you do anymore, I'm going to be on the list as well.

**YARO:** Awesome, Michelle. That's very encouraging. Thank you for that day, and as I said, thank you sharing your story.

**MICHELLE:** You're welcome.

**YARO:** Thank you everyone for listening in. This is the entrepreneur's journey podcast. To find anything from me, you can Google my name, which is Yaro and my blog and podcast will be there. Thanks Michelle. Thanks to the listeners, and we'll talk again very soon. Goodbye.



## Relevant Links Mentioned in this Interview

- [Dreamweaver](#)
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