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## Natalie MacNeil: Emmy Award Winning Founder Of "She Takes On The World", Blogs Her Way To Half A Million A Year Inspiring Woman To Start The Business Of Their Dreams

Hello, this is Yaro and you're listening to the Entrepreneurs' Journey podcast. Today's guest is Natalie MacNeil.

**YARO:** Hello, this is Yaro Starak and welcome to an Entrepreneurs' Journey interview. I have to say I'm a little bit excited about this one for so many reasons actually.

My guest is Natalie MacNeil who I've just discovered is from kind of my other hometown in Toronto, Canada, kind of... She's from Waterloo. She's won an Emmy. She's taken my Blog Mastermind and membership site Mastermind programs in the past and she's making half a million dollars a year online, thanks to her business. And, she blogs, and I has videos and it's really awesome. I'm really looking forward to telling this story with Natalie.



Natalie, thank you for coming on my podcast today.



**NATALIE:** Thanks for having me. I've been following this for so, so long so, it's cool to actually be the one that everyone else will be listening to [laughs].

**YARO:** So, let's go back in time straight away because it sounds like you packed a lot in to the short years that you've been living Natalie and I would love to know the story behind the Emmy and in fact, this time because we're talking about Waterloo and Canada, or where you're born, let's talk about that and I'd like to maybe reminisce and do some nostalgia here.

So, you were born and raised in...?

**NATALIE:** I was born in Toronto, mostly grew up and went to school in Waterloo Region. We're like the Silicon Valley of Canada so, really big tech community and lots of entrepreneurship. I really wanted to be an entrepreneur growing up. You still go through the school system though and teachers kind of tell you, "You know, maybe you should get a real job," or, "You're doing really well in school, why don't you consider being a doctor or a lawyer or an accountant?"

Those are like, I feel, the three go to's for anyone doing well in school, we tell them doctor, lawyer, accountant. I knew I didn't want that but, I kind of got sucked into that vortex of thinking, "Okay, maybe I can't start a business. I've got to do what my teachers, my guidance counselors are telling me."

It wasn't until a trip I took to Europe actually, when I was in University. I was in the Czech Republic and just trying to figure out what the hell I wanted to do. I was listening to a song by David Guetta, *The World is Mine*, I don't know if you know that song... Love it. At the same time, I drove by this giant globe that was like two stories high that said, "The World is Yours." As silly as it may sound to you, that was like a huge, huge turning point for me, and it just... I stopped. I pulled over and I just kind of sat there and that was really where the seed of inspiration was planted for [She Takes on The World](#) which is now a company that I run all online which you mentioned in the introduction and I was still in school at that time so, I decided you know, I was going to go back finish my degree and then, I was going to start a



business. I wasn't going to get a real job. That's actually when I came across you because I was looking for other people who had done this. I was looking for other people who were building online businesses and there weren't as many then than there are now. So, I feel like I found you pretty easily by searching for people running online businesses or online entrepreneurship and you came up and that's when I first connected with you.

**YARO:** It's funny you say, I want to avoid a job aspect of your motivation. I think my blog was written entirely, certainly the first two or three years about that idea of avoid a job at all costs, figure out a way to scramble to get their money from other places until you can get something really going because yes, I didn't want the nine to five.

So, it sounds like we are kindred spirits in that regard, Natalie. Although, I didn't have a David Guetta moment. I'm more of an Armin Van Buuren kind of guy so, I'm not sure if--

**NATALIE:** I like him a lot too.

**YARO:** Okay.

**NATALIE:** Yes.

**YARO:** We agree there. I've had some moments with him but, more spiritual-less [*laughs*].

**NATALIE:** [*Laughs*]

**YARO:** Well, one and the same I guess. So, what happened next? I'm assuming you've now reached this point where you know you could possibly avoid a job and not be a doctor, a lawyer, or whatever... How did you actually realize that?

**NATALIE:** Yes, so thanks to people like you, I was able to see that there were, even though there were only a few people doing what I wanted to do, that there were at least a few that I could look to and I think, yes, I absolutely remember the post that you wrote, several posts about avoiding



a real job at all cost and that you can do this yourself and that was definitely very motivating for me.

At the time, I, again, I had to finish my degree so, I had wrapped that up probably in about six to twelve months-ish on the timeline after I had this experience in Europe, and I wanted to do something in the media and marketing She Takes on the World was started around the same time but, it was just a blog at first. It wasn't, I saw this as something that would grow over time but, it wasn't what I delved into first because I felt like I needed to build a different kind of business to start with. She Takes on The World, I still didn't know. I was like, "Okay, well, a lot of people online are teaching about building online businesses. They are teaching other people about their own business experience, bringing businesses online," I'm not at that point and I just didn't know what I could teach at the time. I was like I'm just starting out in business. I'm just going to document my journey instead. That's where She Takes on The World started as a blog to do that, build my credibility and build an audience while sharing my own journey of starting a business while travelling at the same time as well.

I then started this media and marketing business which I actually still was working in until last year, is when I wrapped up my last project. So, it changed that branding and the name of that business changed a little bit over the years and I started off by working with another entrepreneur that I really admire and then, him and I ended up merging our businesses and working together for several years. That's how the Emmy ended up coming to be.

We would work on these big online documentaries or we would create online experiences like we would do gamification for television shows. So, we worked on this kids show based in the UK and the kids could go online and they could play along with the television show and what was happening in the series.

And now, this is a little more common but, it definitely wasn't back then, and we did pretty well with that. Again, that's how the Emmy came to be and at the same time, by documenting my own business journey on She Takes on the World, I started to build a pretty awesome audience there and



as I was learning more in business, I was then able to teach a little bit more as well.

**YARO:** I got to just, sorry Natalie... I'm curious with the production company. You did gamification, you did documentaries, and you won an Emmy. To me, especially fresh out of University, just sort of starting this business, did you have some sort of secret video production skills that other people didn't? Who did what in that company like what was your contribution? Are you an editor or...?

**NATALIE:** No, I actually did the production piece so, more of the management bringing all those pieces together because as you know, creating any kind of software which sometimes, we had to develop our own software in order to make all of these work, that can be very intensive and require a lot of different people.

We would bring all these people together to create these experiences and my business partner acted in the creative director role. He's a digital artist and I did more of the business side of things, marketing, team management and it was a really good combo for a while and we had a great working relationship, worked with amazing people, amazing companies, the projects that we worked on were really cool and I learned a lot.

And, I still believe that even though I'm not doing that anymore, there are so much of that that I weave into what I am doing now and I always find it fascinating. People say, you can only connect the dots looking backwards. I think that's a Steve Jobs quote actually and once you connect those dots in your career, you see how everything is related and intertwines even when it doesn't really make sense at the time.

Because at the time, I was thinking, "Okay, this isn't what I thought I would be or what I thought I would be doing but, it's really cool, and I'm learning a lot." And now that I'm starting to work more interactive into She Takes on the World, and I have a few other projects that I'm working on under the She Takes on the World brand, and I'm pulling all of that with me as I move forward even though I'm not working with other clients anymore on the production side of things.



So, that sort of what got me to a point where I felt like, "Okay, now people are wanting my advice, I'm sharing a lot more about very specifically how I built my business, how I got six-figure clients," all of those topics were really of interest to my audience, and that's when I started more confidently talking about business because at this point now, I had actually built a business. I had run a business. I had worked with major clients and all the headaches that can come with really big clients.

So, it was a really cool place to be and at the time, when I was making the decision of, "Okay, now it's She Takes on the World is what I want to do full time," and that brings me to I guess, [Membership Site Mastermind](#) and [Blog Mastermind](#) with you, and would have been a while ago.

**YARO:** It was.

Now, I got to know here, you've covered a what sounds like a fairly substantial business in short five minute speech there and there are so many parts of that I'm curious about. I do want to talk about She Takes on the World because, you know, it's an information publishing business and that's what a lot of the listeners are interested in doing and learning about but, it sounds like your training ground, your entrepreneur's journey so to speak, is this production company. It's like for me, before I was teaching blogging, my blog was all about the other businesses I had done beforehand and they gave me the materials and experiences to have content that people were enjoying on the blog. It's the same story for you by the sounds of things when you start doing things like landing \$100,000 client, a six-figure client like you said. That's interesting and people care about it. So, you have the subject matter for a great blog.

I don't want to spend too much time on it but, this production company did like... how did you get the clients? Why did you stop it if it was doing so well? Were you like an owner and you sold out just kind of tie up the loose ends with that one?

**NATALIE:** Yes, for sure. So, when I got started in media and marketing, I was working pretty much on my own. By *on my own*, I mean, I was a solo entrepreneur, wasn't really working with a team. I sort of had a venture with a small group of people, and that just didn't work out at all, wrong partners.



We didn't agree on where we were going and that very quickly fell apart and I was working on my own at that point. I started working with the man who became my business partner so, he had already been working in the industry for a while and had his own business and had a lot of really great connections and what I brought to their team, when I first started working with him through my own business was the project management piece, more of the business sense and the production side of things whereas they had, my business partner, Vincent is his name, who became my business partner, he had a very specific style of artwork and his team had a very specific way of doing things and sort of bringing that art to life but, they didn't really have someone who was in that management role or anyone who was doing any sort of marketing at the time and so, it was a very natural partnership to fall into once we connected.

It goes to show you that you can... it doesn't matter where you are in your business. You can connect with people who have more experience than you or have been doing it for longer than you. You can prove yourself to those people and you can... I feel people always think, "Oh, that person has been doing this so much longer than me," and I don't think I have what it takes and they feel really nervous about approaching people and I've never been that way. I've always reached out to people who had more experience than me more success than me, and I've said, you know, this is what I bring to the table and there's always something you can bring to the table whether you're just starting out or whether you've been doing this for years.

I would go to people who were very successful and say, "This is what I can bring to your business." And, that's how him and I started working together and so, how did it all come to an end?

**YARO:** I hope it's not a messy divorce.

**NATALIE:** Yes. No, it's not at all and we're actually really great friends as well and we'll continue to be. But, we were starting to get working with really big bureaucratic corporations and the media industry is run by a few very, very large corporations that have been around forever. They can be very taxing on your energy, your mindset, your time, and for us, it got to that point where the joy we had been experiencing from working on these



projects was not really there anymore. He cared more about working on his arts and his crafts and being recognized more as an artist instead of a director of digital projects and for me, I was getting to the point where I was getting burnt out from working with people who felt like they could. That's the thing about a client who is paying you six figures, they expect a lot from you.

And, when we talk about not wanting to have a job, I know you and I are on the same page there, it was starting to feel like a job. It was starting to feel like I had somebody to report to. And, yes. I was being compensated nicely for that work that was being done but, at the same time, I remember one Christmas, this company that we were working with in the UK, and they knew that I was based in Canada and they knew I didn't want phone calls before 8:30 in the morning, New York time and they would call me at 9:00 am when they would get to work. That was like 3AM for me and not only is it 3AM for me, and they're waking me up in the middle of my sleep, it's also Christmas and holidays.

I was like, "What am I doing?" This is really getting to a point where it's not something that I really love. So, it just became something that we weren't happy with anymore and we both had these other projects on the side that we were really passionate about. In terms of having it stay running without us, it would have been really difficult because most of the time, companies would come to us for a very specific look and feel that was based on my business partner's artwork that he did.

So, the projects had a distinctive look and feel that you could look at it and say, "Okay, that was done by Imaginarius, which was the name of this company and you could just tell that it was Vincent's art, Vincent's style." We just couldn't, there wasn't really anyone who could replicate that and make a client happy. There wasn't somebody that we could hand it off to who could maintain what we were able to do as a team and that's why it didn't really work out to just have somebody else run it for us.

People would come and hire us as a team and they cared about having us involved in it. So, it was not a scalable company at all and that's where I felt like I was hitting my head against the wall because not only was this no longer bringing me joy as an entrepreneur, I recognized that this was not a



business I was going to be able to scale and what I really, really wanted was to build a business that I could scale, that I could have a team run, and then, maybe even start another business, and another business after that.

And so, today, I have two companies and I see them being limitless like the opportunities that we have and the team that I'm working with, I don't need to be involved in the day to day running of the business and that was the biggest challenge that I had with this service-based company because people didn't want to work with somebody else.

They wanted to work with me and my business partner. We would have closed the deal and then, handed it off to somebody else. Our client wouldn't have liked that and wouldn't have wanted to pay that premium price point, and we also would have gone out of business probably very quickly.

So, just a lot of things wrong with the whole business model but, at the same time, great experience, great projects, great money, and it was something that really taught me a lot about running a business, managing people, managing expectations, managing clients, and I think, I needed that to do everything else that I am doing today.

**YARO:** So, did you just close it down then or, you both said, "You know what? Good job. Let's move on?"

**NATALIE:** Yes, it's on hiatus for now so, we're not going to say we'll never do anything together again because the truth is, we do work really well together. And, if we find something that we really love or that we are really passionate about bringing to the world then, we would probably consider and it would just have to be the right projects and the right client for us or something that we really want to do on our own in terms of a game or an app or something that we are just really excited about creating.

So, we're on a hiatus for now but, I'll never say never and I could see him working with me on other projects that I'm doing too through my own brand. Like he was the one who creative directed my book cover and he's a very talented artist and yes, I'm sure we'll work together again on something but



for now, I'm really, really busy with She Takes on the World and NatalieMacNeil,Inc and that's where my heart is right now.

**YARO:** Okay, so let me just do a recap here. You actually, before you had any business, went online and my blog among others showed you that you could not have a job and you actually started SheTakesontheWorld.com then not intending to be anything than expiration out of blogging and then tracking the journey as you continued but, you feel confident enough or experienced enough to be a teacher yet then, you launched this production company, go through the whole process, have great clients like you just said. You're documenting all of that at the same time in She Takes on the World then, you guys turn your production company off temporarily potentially and then, She Takes on the World becomes your main focus. That's when you pumped in to my courses, is that right? Because we're talking what, five years here.

**NATALIE:** It was actually so, at the same time that I was running the production company, I was still running She Takes on the World. I had taken your courses and I actually did have a program already created through She Takes on the World.

So, by the time I arrived at focusing on She Takes on the World full time which was only last year, I've actually been running She Takes on the World for five years with my first product coming out probably almost four years ago.

So, there is a lot of overlap actually. I was sort of running these few businesses at the same time, and then, through Imaginarius which was the production media marketing company we also worked on marketing projects, as well. So, I would work with clients on that. There were a lot of different things that I was working on that all shaped what I ended up creating with She Takes on the World.

Now that I'm talking about this, I'm like, "Oh my goodness! What a wad! It's like all over the place."



**YARO:** Do you think that these can become like therapy sessions for entrepreneurs. I do notice that sometimes. It's sort of like, "Wow, I really did that because of this and I didn't realize that was that."

**NATALIE:** It's so funny.

**YARO:** I would like to dive into She Takes on the World then. Let's move away from the production company for a while because She Takes on the World is kind of like that the dream business you wanted it to be at the start, I guess like that. You're the leader of a teaching company now and you've got community and you get to change people's lives basically.

Correct me if I'm wrong, well, actually maybe let's do this, can you take me through the evolution of She Takes on the World. I'm assuming you registered a domain name, set up the blog on Wordpress, got a nice design up and then, just started writing content. Is that how it all started?

**NATALIE:** Kind of. So, instead of Wordpress at the time, I was on Blogger.

**YARO:** Oh okay.

**NATALIE:** Yes. This was really going back. This is when like RSS subscribers were more important than email list subscribers and when social media was like in its infancy in terms of dominating your marketing activities and community building. So, how did that all...? And no, it wasn't a good design at all. It was a crappy design at first. It was a template that I pulled from Blogger that I kind of customized a little bit and then, I was off to the races and started blogging.

So, it was really one of those things that I looked at as it was going to be a work in progress. It wasn't going to be something that was built overnight and that it was something that I was going to be in for the long haul and I really felt that there was something there when I started it, when I put it online, I just had that feeling of, you know, "This is going to be something so much bigger than it is right now, one day."

And so, while I was focused on the production and media and all that at the time, I still actively built She Takes on the World, took money that I was



making in the production company and put it towards getting a design, moving over to Wordpress, starting the mailing list and starting to think about what I wanted to create as a product, recognizing that products are really the way to make money through blogging.

We had some advertisers at the time and it brought in a little bit of money when the blog started getting a bigger readership but, I recognized that it was selling something like a product or service that was going to allow me to create an income from She Takes on the World. And, once we started creating a bit of a revenue stream there from the advertising from the first program that I launched as well, that's when I actually brought on a team and I had a team that was basically doing the management of She Takes on the World.

So, I took no money from She Takes on the World for years really. It was all about what can I do to keep on investing back into making this something bigger and having the right people work on it with me recognizing that my time is limited and there are so many hours in a day and I have this other company that I need to run as well. And, at the time that I did the Blog Mastermind and Membership Site Mastermind with you, I wasn't even close to probably wanting to create a product. I knew I would eventually. Again, it was all like, "Okay, I'm going to do that one day so, I'm going to follow people like Yaro," and then, it was just one day that I was like, "You know what? I'm just going to do it now. I'm going to learn about it. I'm going to start getting the wheels turning," and that is when I decided to not only take the program but, to actually start working on something because as soon as I started on the content for the program, I was like, "You know what? I am going to do this now because I do have pre-eminence and people are listening to me and people are wanting me to teach them more about marketing or about landing a bigger client and why not?" Like, why shouldn't I be sharing that? And it, I guess, helped me to realize that you don't have to have ten years of experience in business to share what you learn. You can always be sharing what you are learning.

So, I started to go in a little bit of a different direction at that point with She Takes on the World, and I decided to create my first program which was with another entrepreneur, Natalie Sisson of the [Suitcase Entrepreneur](#)...



**YARO:** Oh really?!

**NATALIE:** Her and I partnered to do the Mastermind.

**YARO:** I had no idea.

**NATALIE:** Yes, so her and I partnered to do a program called WE Mastermind for women who wanted to bring businesses online and ran that successfully for a few years. It was nice to work on it with somebody else. It was great to have, especially because I was busy with the other business, it was great to have someone who could work on it with me and that I wasn't just all by myself doing this membership site.

We launched our own Mastermind program. That was probably the year after Membership Site Mastermind. So, going back to about 2010 and I finished University around 2008. So, membership site and Blog Mastermind in 2009 and then, first program in 2010. I was like, I'm ready for this because people keep asking me to share more and more and more. I was just at that point where I was comfortable with it.

**YARO:** Okay... Now, I have to know for the sake of the listeners as well, a couple of the how-tos with this, I'm curious how were you growing your audience especially because it sounds like you had people ready to buy from you already and I'm assuming, and you eventually could hire a team to run it for you, as well which that was a pretty significant step, most bloggers don't even take that one.

So, I'm curious how you're getting traffic and then, how did you create and launch your first program in terms of getting customers, creating a sales page, coming up with a price, creating a membership area... all those sort of technical structure pieces. Can you break it down a little bit of that for us?

**NATALIE:** For sure. So, at the time, it wasn't making a lot of money but, what I've always said to entrepreneurs is even if you're making a little bit of money, you have to look at how much of that you really need. Obviously, if it's your full time gig, and you need an income to pay your bills and support your family, then you're going to probably need a lot of that and I just



looked at budget-wise what I needed to survive and then, I said, anything beyond that, I'm going to invest into hiring somebody to start working with me even if they are... If they can work like 3 hours a month, that's fine. I think it's better for you to take that money that you can invest into working with a team and saying, "Hey, I can only afford three hours a month. I can only afford five hours a month right now."

And, I spent those hours doing revenue generating activities. So, I would never waste that time. I said, you know, the time that I no longer have to spend actually publishing my blog post, editing my blog post because someone else is doing them, I'm going to take that same amount of time. I'm not going to waste it. I'm going to spend it on either bringing on more advertising dollars or creating some sort of product program or bringing in more traffic.

At the time, the traffic piece was really from guest blog post on other sites and by being a little controversial. I felt like every time I was a little bit controversial on a blog post, that's when it would get shared.

So, I started just feeling more comfortable in having an opinion and recognizing, and this is difficult for Canadians, I feel [*laughs*] maybe Australians too, but no. In Canada, I felt like, I don't know, I felt like I shouldn't have that really strong opinion, and when I did, that's when things started to change.

So, I was at a business event as I often was and there was this guy who was like, "Why do you always come to these events?" And, I was like, "What do you mean why do I always come to these events? Why do you always come to these events You're always here, too." And, he was like, "Well, I feel like you're always coming to these events because you know one of us entrepreneurs are going to make it really big and you're going to want to like marry one of us."

And, I was like, "You know what? Screw you!" That's when I was like, "Okay, I think this could be a blog post."

It was when I started talking about things like that that people were really getting more interested in the blog and sharing it as well. It was around that



time that I got approached by an editor at Forbes and they were looking for women's voices in business blogging. There had just been this article. I forget who wrote it but, it was an article about how women were not talking about business. All these women were blogging about kids and fashion and he was like, "Where are all the women's voices in business blogging? I just don't think it's a subject matter that women want to talk about."

So again, I was like, "That's not true." And it was around that time that I started writing for Forbes as well and some other media outlets that would publish my contents and I would get a link back to my site and to my social media profiles and that's when I started really being able to build this community and build my list so that, I would be able to have a successful launch of a product.

So, traffic was mainly from guest blogging at the time and commenting on other people's blogs so, going around and making sure that I was leaving comments on relevant blogs in my niche and then, at the same time, I was just trying to learn as much as I can.

**YARO:** What about the newsletter?

**NATALIE:** Yes, the newsletter, it's interesting because I think when I first started She Takes on the World, everyone was all about RSS subscribers like nobody really had a mailing list opt in as like the front and center piece of their websites. So, when I started the mailing list, it was just... I don't even think I had an opt in offer. It was just like sign up for email updates here with a little tiny opt in box. It wasn't like it is now where I have an opt in offer and we send people through a course so that, they get to know us a little more and get to have access to some of my worksheets and video training and all that. So, I've put a lot more thought into it now.

But, at the time, I think I just threw up a box that had a space for people's email addresses and I could submit it. I use [Aweber](#) because I'm almost like RSS is going to be going down very soon and I think you need to start building a mailing list. You should sign up for Aweber. So, I was like, "Oh! Okay, I should sign up for Aweber."



I think I just did it that day and throughout this opt in like in my sidebar, again with really no thought at all and I think you always have to be just taking action and learning by taking action, not planning everything out and saying, "Okay, I think this is perfect enough now to actually put up."

So, I would work very, very quickly and I was not afraid to just get something out there and then, improve it as I went along, and it was like that when I had the first design of the site, I was like, "Okay, I'm pretty happy with this but, there's still a lot of things that I want to do and that's okay. As I have the money coming in, I'll just make these changes every month."

And so, I just started incorporating everything I was learning without taking all this time to plan it and think about it. That was kind of hard for me because I was a planner. I am a pretty organized person but, I also recognize that everything was moving so quickly like from the time I started my blog to about two to three years in, so much had already changed. There were a lot of people who had been using Typepad or Blogger to Wordpress being the only thing people were recommending you use, also the RSS subscribers to the newsletter subscribers.

When I first started blogging, like I said, social media was not even... like Twitter had just launched and when I joined Twitter, a lot of people didn't even know what Twitter was at that time, and that ended up becoming one of the places that I was really able to get a lot more exposure, connect with a lot of media outlets who gave me guest posting opportunities and an opportunity to get my work in front of a lot more people. So, that ended up becoming huge and again, not a lot of people even knew about it when they first launched and Facebook has gone through so many evolutions as well since then because that's when Facebook was just getting started and now, that's another huge hub for driving traffic to my site and building out my community.

So, I just felt like everything was changing so quickly, that it was really important to just get things out there and tweak them as you go along. And, I just felt that sense of urgency of having to just keep on implementing, implementing, implementing and I think people sometimes need to work



faster. A lot of people draw things out in their notebooks forever and think, "Okay, how do I want to do this? How do I want to do that?"

And, it's not always the best way of doing it. Sometimes, you need to be a little scrappy and just improve.

**YARO:** Okay, I got a good picture now of how the blog has evolved and can you pull in the products then for this process. So, your first one was with Natalie Sisson. How many products do you currently have?

**NATALIE:** I've always been wanting to launch one thing and like really focus on it. So, Natalie Sisson and I had a [WE Mastermind](#), women entrepreneurs' mastermind from 2010 until 2013. So, that was sort of my baby and we really spent a lot of time on making sure that that launch was the best that we could make it with the budget that we had and really giving a lot of attention and support to the members who did join the program.

So, instead of creating that, launching that, working with a group and then, moving on to something else, we really nurtured it, nurtured both the product and the community that we had built from it. At the same time, I had been working on my first book as well called [She Takes on the World](#) which was published in 2012. In those early years, starting from about a year after I started *She Takes on the World*, I had sort of been working on this book which I knew was going to be really big for driving traffic and building that community piece. I also had a couple of eBooks but nothing like a significant program.

Now, after we did WE Mastermind, my focus became on the Conquer Club which is *She Takes on the World's* flagship program and we are a personal and professional networking and training platform for entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs who want to reach that million dollar mark in their business.

So, I invite people to come on that journey with me as I aim for a million in revenue by 2015 and I connect people with the mentors that are helping me achieve that goal and helping me to take my business to that level, and all these different experts in different areas.



That's now my focus and I have a couple retreats that I run as well and those are becoming increasingly popular because I think, for people who have been in my community now for a while, that next step that they really want are the live events and to meet with me in person and to work on their businesses with me in person.

That's been really cool to see as well. That was totally born from a need in the community, people saying, "Hey, when are you hosting a live event? Where can I show up? Where can I work with you in person?" And so, these retreats are now happening and we have one coming up in Bali, a business retreat for a week so, that should be a really good time as well.

I guess, I haven't launched a lot of different products. It's been a focus on one to two things at a time.

**YARO:** What is work for you? I'm curious since you did take my Membership Site Mastermind Program, I do talk a lot about the launch process in that, the maybe creating a course or a membership site but, only building the first module and then, going and selling it to people. It sounds like maybe that's what you did with Natalie and you guys both sold to your existing communities. Did you do that whole launch process that I kind of outlined in there? How did it influence you?

**NATALIE:** Yes, absolutely. I mean, like I said, you're one of the first people that I started following online and your program was probably the first one I ever purchased or took online in terms of training programs that were available over the Internet.

So, I think for me, the whole, absolutely the process of not creating entire course or program and then, selling it to do it as you go along, definitely a big lesson to learn to really focus on that launch first and then, the benefit of that, of course, is that you get to talk to your community. So, maybe module one comes out and people say, "This was great but, I would love more of this portion," or, "I would love more of those checklist that help me implement everything."

And so, you also have an opportunity to also listen to the feedback people are giving you and to tweak it as you go along. As you may get from this



interview already, I'm really big on tweaking and improving as you go along. So, there is a lot to be learned there just from including your community in the curriculum. That was definitely a big lesson that I took away from it.

The testimonial piece and making sure that you have social proof that you're always asking people who work with you to give you those testimonials and to help you further establish the pre-eminence for your future launches. So, I think that was another really big takeaway that I have always kept in mind since then.

And, the other thing I think would be the list from the membership site mastermind. So, the giant checklist of absolutely every single little piece that you should be thinking about, that was really helpful and I definitely use that for the first launch and I even re-visit it now. I mean, things have changed since 2009 when I've taken that but, I mean, there's a lot of the bare bones and the skeleton of that that's still the same.

So, even when I was doing the [Conquer Club Membership Site](#), last year, it was still something that I took out and re-visited and went through those modules and those checklists in particular from Membership Site Mastermind.

**YARO:** I think I need to do the same thing. I can't remember what I put in those already. It's been a while ago [*laughs*].

**NATALIE:** [*Laughs*] You need to take your own course.

**YARO:** I do. I need to be revamping them and part of the process will be to actually teach myself again through my own education about what I used to know. It's like you forget half of it but, I'd love to know, Natalie, just maybe as we start towards heading to the end of this interview, you have reached the point where you're doing steady multiple six figures and you're aiming towards a steady state in your figure of business from this. Not many blogs reach that point.

I'm curious on your take on what are the components to get to that level because I see you've got the content community part done well. You've got



lots of videos coming out. You're great at producing content. The blog posts are coming out. Your social media is handled. You've got a great email sequence that educates people on what you do and leads them to joining your flagship program, the Conquer Club, and then, you got these retreats which I assume not as many people join but, that's your hyper-responsive customers, people who love you and that probably cost a bit more. I'm sure it's in the multiple thousands for those programs.

**NATALIE:** Right.

**YARO:** So, is it a case of getting enough people and having higher-priced products in order to reach this kind of level?

**NATALIE:** Yes. So, there's a few things. I actually, a lot of the people that I work with, too, as well as myself, I think you can have a smaller community and a smaller list but have that list be really active like for example, I don't have 100,000 subscribers. I know other online entrepreneurs who do have that but, I also have a really high open rate of around 40% which is really high by industry standards. So, our click through rate is also really high and I think it's just been about nurturing the community that we do have.

We do have tens of thousands of subscribers but, those people are that's been over several years and it's a pretty active community in terms of, those people are watching my content. They are sharing the content. They feel connected with me.

So, I've just invested a lot into nurturing that community and being someone who is probably more accessible than a lot of other people who teach different training programs.

I feel like I've always been pretty accessible to my community and I know that it gets harder and harder to do as you grow but, I really try to maintain that especially for the people who decides to pay to join one of my programs.

So, I think the other, we're talking about, it's hard to turn a blog into multiple six figures in revenue or seven figures in revenue but, for the longest time now, I haven't really looked at it as a blog. I've looked at it as a business



and I've treated it as a business first. When I made that mindset shift of, "Okay, this isn't a blog that I'm going to be running on the side. This is something that I really want to turn into a scalable business," and I just decided one day that I was going to turn pro with this. So, going back to Steven Pressfield's work on, is this a hobby for you or is this something that you're going to take seriously and up your game and work on making this your craft? And once I made that shift and said, "Okay, this is a business and businesses need a team. Businesses need revenue. Businesses need products and programs," I totally got out of that space of thinking I was just a blogger.

And then, like I said earlier in the interview, I looked at the team piece. Who do I need on this team to make sure that I have time to be looking at the bigger picture of this business and I don't care if you're just starting out and you tell me that you have only \$50 a month extra that you can spare in your budget for actually building this business or building out your team, take that \$50, hire somebody for two hours a month and spend those two hours a month doing something that can generate more revenue in your business.

And, over time, you're going to find that when you do that, when you spend that time even if it's just a couple of extra hours a month, you're going to have more opportunities, more money coming in and then, you can expand the team from there.

I just don't think it matters where you are. You need somebody helping you because there are so much minutiae in business and day to day stuff that you just shouldn't be doing because somebody else can do it for you. You shouldn't be publishing all your own blog posts and doing the editing and sending out that newsletter and doing your own bookkeeping which is what most bloggers that I've worked with who want to go from blogging to actually having their blog as a business, whenever I ask them about those pieces, they are always doing it all themselves. And, I think that's something that will really hurt your ability to move forward and build something to that multiple six figures.

I've also done a lot of focusing on my brand. So, making sure that my brand didn't look like everybody else's and if you look at SheTakesOnThe



World.com, today it's probably the fourth or fifth different design for the blog. We kind of done a new one every year up until this year because last year, we invested a lot into creating our new brand and so, we'll probably stick with that for at least a couple of years.

But, we've always invested a lot into that brand or not a lot in the beginning days but, whatever I could into making it stand out, look different and feel like me, feel like it was something that when I went to it, it matched my personality and I was really happy with how it looked.

So, I've been building a brand that stands out. It's really important. In the early days, most of us would just take a template on TypePad or on Blogger then on Wordpress and put up a header and away we went.

But, I think today, it's just so much more saturated too. You need to focus more on that brand piece and then, I think the final component of all of these is to just listen and really spend time talking to your audience about their needs and making sure that you're creating something that they are going to want to buy.

I think too many people assume, and you should never assume. You should always ask. I also just spend a lot of time listening to the people who are just readers and haven't purchased from me yet and my customers so that, we're always delivering what people want and then, trying to go a step above on everything that we do.

**YARO:** I'd love to know who is on your team right now and what do they do in brief, obviously.

**NATALIE:** Well, my main people, I guess my first big hire was that online business manager, the person who was going to basically take the reins on all of the operational stuff that I had to do in my business. So, I have somebody who does publishing the marketing piece outreach syndication partnerships that we have with other media outlets, getting our content out to those syndication partners, keeping our profiles updated and all of that, doing our newsletter. So, that's all one very important role which I think is one of the most important ones to start with.



The next person that was really key to my team was a part-time CFO. She actually does my accounting as well as advises me on where we're spending our money, what we can be doing to maximize profits, and she produces all the monthly income statements for me and profit sheets, and some recommendations on what we should be doing next.

She started off very part time like a few hours a month and now, she works with me probably up to like 20 hours a week because there's a lot more to do now and she's just been key because you need that in order to make good decisions.

If you're just tracking your finances in a spreadsheet and you're not actually producing these statements and looking very closely at where your money is going and what the ROI is, it's really hard for you to make empowered decisions as an entrepreneur.

She's been crucial. And then, I have a VA who does things like scheduling, emails, getting an email to the right person on my team, things like that, the more basic stuff, and then, the Conquer Club has gotten to the point where we need a community manager there as well. So, that's another role and my web designer / developer is on a monthly retainer as well just because there's a lot of work for her to do these days creating sales pages and creating those funnels with me and free trainings and upselling members. A lot of that requires a lot of design and development. So, she's another key person on my team.

**YARO:** Is it an all-female team by the sound of things?

**NATALIE:** There are a few women, probably because there are more, maybe relate to the brand a little more--

**YARO:** [*Laughs*] a little bit...

**NATALIE:** -- and end up applying for the job but, no. We have a couple power men too who help with strategy. I work with a guy who is just incredible at planning out Infusionsoft campaigns and looking at that strategic piece of a launch. So, a couple men.



**YARO:** I am curious if you registered He Takes on The World as well just in case.

**NATALIE:** That's actually a really long story.

**YARO:** [*Laughs*] Okay.

**NATALIE:** And, a funny one at that. We had somebody who ended up during one of the pitch competitions. I was in this huge pitch competition that I ended up winning and I was competing against a lot of men. There was this one guy who just was not... He just seemed to really take issue with me from the beginning and he's like, "Oh, I don't think your business is anything like too special." It was interesting. He ended up registering this domain and I had an issue with that. We had some legal issues with that.

It was a fun experience [*laughs*].

**YARO:** [*Laughs*] I know. It's funny with domain names.

All right, Natalie, that's a pretty comprehensive look at your blogging business. Thank you for—

**NATALIE:** I do feel like this was therapy.

**YARO:** Yes [*laughs*].

**NATALIE:** I did [*laughs*]. I'm just trying to remember. I mean, I know it's not even that long ago but, so much has happened in the last five years like it would have been five years ago that I took your programs and so much has happened in five years. It feels like it could have been longer than five years and then, to try to go back and re-trace all of that, it's like, "Wait, did that happen then? Yes, it did happen then. Did I really do that four years ago? Yes, it was four years ago."

**YARO:** I recently wrote a blog post how I talked about I've been blogging for ten years coming up my anniversary and I've been online running a business for 15 years now, and like dogs and cat years, the Internet years



are one year is equivalent to ten years. So, I'm actually 150 years old in Internet business years. So, it's getting very, very old and time to retire I think pretty soon but--

**NATALIE:** Time to retire?

**YARO:** Yes.

**NATALIE:** I feel like you were away for a while. I feel like this is just... maybe you did kind of retire temporarily and now you're like, now you're back. So, maybe you'll...

**YARO:** I keep hearing that. Everyone keeps saying, "I'm back." I'll keep running with that. I felt like I never left but, you know what? It's the audience that tells you what happens.

But, Natalie, obviously, SheTakesontheWorld.com is the place to go. I do have one more question and I'm pretty certain it's an easy one for you to answer given what you currently do.

For a person listening to this, they're at the beginning stage and so money is probably a bit more tight. There's not the cash flow to go hiring a lot of people and I know your attitude about finding a little bit of money to hire people. That's great.

In terms of taking a training program or hiring a coach or both, versus going around and trying to figure out everything out for free, when do you think is the best time to do each thing, like do you think like you could do it all just using free resources or do you prefer the hiring coach or going through a training program method as a recommendation to people who are new?

**NATALIE:** Yes, I think it's really important to work with a couple of people who you really admire and have been where you want to go. I think that's crucial and I see a lot of people at the same time get overloaded with courses and programs so, there's people who will go out and buy like course after course after course and I don't think that that's the right approach either. I think you should find one or two people who you really admire and like I said, who have been where you want to go.



I try to look for people who aren't like miles and miles ahead of me. I like to look for people who feel like they are five steps ahead of me. They're not at a point where it feels like I'll never be able to get there and you want somebody of course who you relate to so, I think finding those couple key people who can coach you, who can offer you the training that you need, does save you a lot of time and money in the long run.

So, don't get overloaded with coaches because sometimes, I'll see people hire like three or four coaches and then, those people will all be telling them different things. So, they may sit there like, "Oh, which coach should I listen to today?"

But, I think investing in a couple key training programs and a coach who can really help you like I said, get where you want to go and who can share their mistakes with you and say, "I did it this way and it was wrong. It didn't work out for me. I don't advise you to do that." You can save a lot of time and money and grow your business and be successful a lot faster by making those strategic investments early on.

**YARO:** I agree [*laughs*].

**NATALIE:** Yes. You need somebody who's helping you and I think you always brought in a lot of your mentors to the training programs that you were teaching so, it was very clear that you had those key people as well who helped you when you were getting started

**YARO:** Yes, I really do believe in emulating what works in a sort of a cherry-picking right time, right place situation. There's a right time and right place to use a certain technique or a certain strategy.

That's often the challenge, isn't it? Trying to not only learn what you have to do but, when you have to do it and that I think when a coach and a program can really be helpful.

But, Natalie, we've reached an hour-long interview with you. Fantastic. You have a surprising amount of stories to tell so, it was great to hear so many different things from the production studio, the blogging business, and you



really are taking things to the next level so, it's great to hear that part of a, or I can call a business that has a blog as part of it rather than a hobby blogger.

So, that's great.

**NATALIE:** Absolutely.

**YARO:** SheTakesonTheWorld.com for everything to do with you. Is there anything else you want to guide people towards or say before I say goodbye?

**NATALIE:** No, I mean, thanks so much for having me. It's really cool since this is one of the first Entrepreneur's Journey was one of the first blogs that I ever started following and you're one of the first people I connected with. It was a pleasure to be here today and you let me know when you're visiting Waterloo, Canada. We'll take you on a little tour.

**YARO:** I would love to.

**NATALIE:** We'd love to welcome you here.

**YARO:** I've grown up with the Ontario accent living in Australia so, I always felt half-Canadian or half-Australian. So, I'm looking forward to—

**NATALIE:** Yes, who is it? Was it mum or was it dad who was Canadian?

**YARO:** Well, neither of them were born in Canada but, my father was an immigrant into Winnipeg of all places and my mother into Toronto and my dad went to Vancouver then, he went to the Toronto and that's when they met and then, moved to Australia and have me but, they both were English in Canada hence, I've got the accent. So, it's a bit strange.

**NATALIE:** Yes, that's quite a journey. Very cool. I didn't know that. So, when you are visiting Canada again, you are half home, then let me know.

**YARO:** Yes. I definitely will. Okay Natalie, thank you so much for joining me and sharing so much. On behalf of the listeners, thank you as well.



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For everyone listening in, if you want to grab the show notes, or when you get the podcast I have or check out my blog, you can just google my name, YARO and you'll find everything that way.

Thanks again, Natalie! Thanks everyone for listening in and I'll talk to you all again soon on a future podcast episode. Thanks guys, bye!



## Relevant Links Mentioned in this Interview

- [She Takes on The World](#)
- [Conquer Club](#)
- [Aweber](#)
- [WE Mastermind](#)

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