

## The Modern Editor Podcast – Episode 3: Why Mindset is More Than Just a Buzzword

**Tara Whitaker:** [0:03] Welcome to *The Modern Editor Podcast*, where we talk about all things editing and what it's like to run an editorial business in today's world. I'm your host, Tara Whitaker. Let's get to it.

**Tara Whitaker:** [0:18] Hello, and welcome to today's episode. I am super, super excited to talk about mindset with you today. It is one of my absolute favorite topics to talk about. And for many reasons. So, I'm going to try and keep it on the level here and not talk too, too fast. I know I can get very excited, but no promises here—I'll do my best. Now, I know the word mindset can be—you know—can bring up some thoughts and some feelings, which is going to be perfect because we're going to dive deep into our thoughts and feelings today (hint, hint). But I think the word mindset, it just gets thrown around a lot. It's kind of lost its meaning. I think it became so much of a buzzword that it just lost its impact. And honestly, when I first heard about it years ago, I kind of gave it an eye roll. It's like it's a bunch of woo-woo garbage; I don't need it. Oh, how times have changed. So now I am challenging that whole ideal. And we're going to talk about how mindset can positively impact your business and your life. I know that sounds a little dramatic, but it's true because I have seen it firsthand. So, this is going to be a high-level overview of mindset. And I'm going to go through a process with you. But this is totally going to be the first of many episodes around mindset. So, this is just going to be a little taster, a little overview. And we'll dive deeper into other mindsets later on in the show.

**Tara Whitaker:** [1:53] So today, we're going to specifically talk about what mindset is and also what it isn't. We're going to talk about why mindset is important for your business and why it's more than just a buzzword. And then, I'm going to take you through my exact five-step process that I use to take my mindset and shift it when I need to. It's a very specific step-by-step process. It's—like I said—it's life-changing. So, let's dive right in. Now, the definition of mindset, if you look at *Merriam-Webster*—which, of course, we do, because we're editors—it says it's a mental attitude, which, I love that definition, it encompasses it so well. And another way of thinking of mindset is a collection of beliefs about something. So, you can have a belief or an attitude about anything really: money, relationships, love, friendships, your ability to learn new things, your ability to try new things. Basically, anything—you can have a mindset around it. And I want to be very clear at this point that we can have beliefs and thoughts and attitudes about something, but that does not make that [belief/thought] true. Just because we believe we're not good with money doesn't mean that's a fact. It's just what we believe. So, I want you to remind yourself of that and challenge yourself during this episode. And after when you have thoughts and feelings like that. Because a lot of the time what we believe, especially about ourselves, is not fact—it's not true. It's just a story we've told ourselves, okay? Keep that in mind.

**Tara Whitaker:** [3:33] Now, what mindset isn't? And I think this—what we're going to talk about—is why mindset gets such a bad rap. Mindset is not toxic positivity. It's not saying things like, *oh, just think good thoughts, and everything will be okay*. Or we

repeat these positive affirmations and think that's enough to make change or for things to change. Quite frankly, it's BS, and it's not what a modern editor is about. We are not into the toxic positivity. The world can be a place—a not positive place. We're not sugarcoating things here. We're not, you know, putting lipstick on a pig or whatever else you want to say. That's not what we do here. That's not what mindset is to me and how I teach it. Now, positive thoughts are great. They're not bad, of course, but you have to use them in a productive way. So how I like to think of it is mindset is the foundation of your business, or honestly, your life. It's only one piece of the entire puzzle that comes to success. So, we have to pair mindset with action in order for it to make any difference. The mindset and the action are what produce the results. So, none of this, you know, think good thoughts or, you know, any of those toxic positivity things we have all heard. That's not mindset. Not at all. Okay? You'll never hear me say anything like that here on the podcast, in my coaching, in the club—nowhere.

**Tara Whitaker:** [5:11] So why is mindset important for your business? Why is it more than just some marketing buzzword? For many of us, our editing businesses are our first venture into entrepreneurship. Some of us might have started businesses before, but I think a lot of us, our first foray into business ownership, is when we started our editing businesses. And when you do something as big and exciting and as new as that, it is bound to bring up all the things: the imposter syndrome; the fear; the lack of confidence; all of those things. And why mindset is so important is because—going back to what I just said about it being the foundation of your business—I honestly think that mindset is more important than anything else, even your editing skills. And I know, some of you might be like, “Wait a minute!” Hold on; let me explain.

**Tara Whitaker:** [6:04] Think of that foundation, right? Think of an actual, like—what is it—cement foundation for a building. If that foundation is built on a place of fear and scarcity and anxiety and just IQ, it's going to permeate up into every aspect of your business. It's going to be shaky. We want to really dive into this. It's not going to be a solid, positive, productive foundation. So that's why I think it's more important—especially at first—than editing skills or anything else. Because once you have that foundation in place, then you can grow up, then you can build those editing skills, then you can learn how to market yourself, then you can start networking. It's putting that foundation in place first and then building from there. Now, if you're thinking, *Well, yeah, Tara, I started my business a long time ago—didn't have that foundation.* Totally fine. Neither did I. I don't think I started mindset work until like seven-ish years into my business. So, it is never too late to learn about mindset or to implement thought-work. Never, never ever too late. But if you're listening to this episode, and you're just now either thinking about starting your business or just started your business—perfect timing because now you can start your business with this solid foundation that some of us didn't get, because we just didn't know about it or didn't think it was important. Quite frankly, it's not something that I saw anything about when I started my business at all. If I really sat and thought about it, I could swear I never once saw anything about mindset. I saw how to build a website, how to get clients, you know, how to build a resume, and how to improve your editing skills. Nothing about mindset. And I think it's so overlooked. And something that I'm trying to change—with this podcast—is getting the word out there that we're taking mindset and we're using it for

our businesses in a positive, productive way and not perpetuating this woo-woo yucky connotation when we think about mindset.

**Tara Whitaker:** [8:20] So now, the nitty gritty. Now we're going to talk about the exact process that I use to manage my mindset. There's a bit of a funny story with it. But it's called the TEARA process. And that is not what it was originally called, but I'll talk about that here in a minute. And it's TEARA as in T-E-A-R-A. So, this process is derived from cognitive behavioral psychology. And this is a process I learned from my coaching mentor, the lovely Jessica Stong. So, this is, you know, this is legit science-based stuff here. This isn't some random process thrown together. This is legitimate, okay? And I do want to say because it's derived from cognitive behavioral psychology, this is not a substitute for medication or therapy for your mental health. Full disclosure, I use both for my mental health, and this TEARA process is a perfect complement to those things, but it is not a substitute. Okay? If you are looking for therapy, I always suggest the Open Path Collective, which I'll link in the show notes. It's a great resource for finding therapists on sliding scales or more affordable options. So, this is not any of that. It's not a substitute. It's just a compliment or a tool to use. Okay? I want to make that very clear. And I'm not a doctor or a therapist. I will never claim to be, so just keep that in mind. Okay? Search out experts in those fields should you need them.

**Tara Whitaker:** [9:59] Okay, so now what we're going to do is we're going to work through this TEARA process. I've also linked a worksheet I've created in the show notes. So, if you're a visual learner, it might really help to download that so you can see the process in action. Or you can just grab a sheet of paper, and all you're going to do is write T-E-A-R-A down the left-hand side of the sheet vertically. So, in a line. So, what these letters stand for: T is for Thought; E is for Emotion (or sometimes feeling, I use them interchangeably); A is Action; R is Result, and A is Anchor thought. So, the process is our thoughts create our emotions that drive our actions that produce results. And then that last A, the anchor thought, that is the statement that we create that serves as a reminder and grounds us when we're going through the action. Okay? Again, our thoughts create our emotions that drive our actions that produce results. So why does this help? What's the point of this whole process?

**Tara Whitaker:** [11:07] And the point is, for many of us, when we face a problem, an issue, a roadblock, or what have you, we tend to focus on changing our actions so that the results change. We completely skip over the thoughts and emotions piece of it. Why? Well, that's the hard part. How many of us were taught how to truly feel our feelings and work through our emotions? I'm an '80s kid—that wasn't a thing. I was not taught that. We are taught oftentimes to push through it or shove it aside or deal with it later. And Jessica Stong also uses this backpack example of, we tend to shovel our thoughts and emotions in a backpack, or a purse or what have you, because it's easier; we don't have to deal with it. But at some point, that bag is going to burst. And when it bursts, that's not good; then you have an explosion of emotions. And then it's much more difficult to work through than it would be if you process these thoughts and emotions as they come up. So, why the TEARA process? Because it allows us to process those thoughts and emotions on a regular basis. It lets us let go of what doesn't serve us and reframe so that it helps us and we're not shoving things into a backpack.

Now, the best way to learn this process is to do a live example. And a podcast is a little weird because you can't see me, but we're gonna work through it. Again, if you have that worksheet, it would be great if that helps you. If not, just picture it in your head if that works for you, too. Whatever works. And I'm going to say this: if you've never done anything like this before, it's going to probably appear very strange. It's gonna be weird. It's new, right? It's something different. All I can say is trust the process; give it a try. Just give it a try. And the more you do it, the easier it gets. So, if you're doing this and you're thinking, *What in the heck is going on?* That's fine. I thought the same way. But just roll with it. I promise you; it helps. Okay? I promise, I promise.

**Tara Whitaker:** [13:14] So, let's take a thought—the first T in the TEARA process. And let's say the thought is: *I'm not smart enough to start a business*. Now, it can be any iteration of that—you know—*I can't start a business, I don't have what it takes to start a business*. Whatever thought that's like that. Now, when you have that thought, what kind of emotions come up for you? Say it out loud. *I'm not smart enough to start a business*. Some of the ones I came up with: defeat, bitterness, sadness. Maybe you're even resentful toward other people who are “smart enough.” Not good emotions, right? So, when you're thinking that thought—*you're not smart enough, you can't start a business*—and you're feeling these gross emotions, what action do you think you're going to take? My guess is nothing. And your result is nothing; you're gonna stay in the same spot. Now, when you're doing this process, a lot of the time, the action and result at first are nothing. So, if you're finding that that's the case for you, that's totally normal.

**Tara Whitaker:** [14:18] So, thinking that thought, *I'm not smart enough*, and having those emotions is not getting you anywhere. So, this is why we have to go through the process—through the entire process, not jumping ahead to the action—and work through it. So, let's take the same thought, *I'm not smart enough to start a business*. We've still got those same emotions—right, the defeat, the despair, the sadness—and now we're going to feel the feelings. This is probably going to be the oddest part for you. So, if you need to, take a minute to prepare yourself, but the more you do it, the more it works. Trust me. So, you're going to first name the feeling. And if you have multiple feelings, pick whatever is strongest to you or whatever is giving you the most “ick.” So, for this example, we'll just go with defeat—*I just feel defeated. Like, why even bother if I'm not smart enough?* You're gonna locate it in your body. And this will take some practice, too. And I can do this now quickly because I've been doing it for years, but at first, it took a while. Now, for me, for defeat—I had to think about this for a little bit, but—I feel it in my face. I know it doesn't physically sag, but it feels like my face is sagging, like a melting candle. Like, it just feels *bleh*. Like, if you hold your hands to your cheeks and like, make a funny face like you did when you were a kid and make your eyes stretch. That's what my face feels like when I feel defeated. It could be anywhere else for you, your stomach, your chest, your neck, your shoulders, anywhere.

**Tara Whitaker:** [15:49] And now, you're going to give it a color. Now, for me, a lot of these feelings like defeat, and such, I always give them a brown color—I don't know—I think it's my immaturity and associating it with poop, let's be honest. But I'm just going to call it brown because that's what I do. And now you're going to breathe into it. Now, if you haven't done breathwork or done anything like yoga or pilates, this might be a bit of

a challenge. But practice. What you're going to do is you're going to take a deep breath in, and you're going to imagine that all of those molecules are filling up that space in your body where you're feeling the feeling. So, for me, I'm going to take a deep breath and picture the air filling my face. And then I'm going to exhale, and I'm going to imagine that those molecules grabbed on to all that brown "ick," and I'm exhaling out all that toxicity. Now, you're probably going to have to do this many times, depending on the severity of the emotion. Lately, I've had a lot of rage in the past couple of years. That takes a lot of breathwork for me—that's not a one-and-done thing. That's many, many, many breaths.

**Tara Whitaker:** [17:04] So do it until you're feeling centered. You'll know when it's enough. Maybe your face—like if your face is feeling like mine, it'll feel like it's not sagging. If you've got a pit in your stomach, it'll, you know, alleviate and feel less heavy. Whatever the case may be, do the breathwork until it feels better. Then you're going to come up with your new thought. So, let's pretend we did deep breaths together. Feeling good. Now we're going to take that thought of *I'm not smart enough to start a business*, and we're going to flip it. And instead, our new thought is going to be *I have the ability to start a business*. Or *I know that I can start a business on my own*. And what emotions would come up for you with that? I would expect hope, happiness, feeling motivated, excited. Now, when you're feeling that, what action are you going to take? Anything! You're going to take action—that's the important part. Period. And the result? You're gonna start a dang business; you're gonna do the thing! Boom!

**Tara Whitaker:** [18:07] And now, the last piece of that puzzle is your anchor thought. So, if your thought was, *I have the ability to start a business*, your anchor thought could be something very similar. Something like *I have everything I need in me to start a business right now*. However, if you were to come up with that anchor thought, and your brain immediately went, *Pfft! Yeah, right. No, you don't*, and starts fighting against you? That means your anchor thought is too much for your brain to handle right now. And you need to bring it down a few notches. So, I want you to create a ladder thought. Now picture a ladder—a physical ladder—and that original anchor thought—that *I have everything I need to start a business*—is at the very top. You're going to want to go a few rungs down, maybe halfway down, maybe all the way to the bottom, and create a new thought that your brain can believe. So, instead of *I have everything I need to start a business*, maybe it's *I'm working toward building my business every single day, one step at a time*. Or it can be very specific—and it can—you could change your thought every day. Maybe today is: *Today, I am going to brainstorm business name ideas, and I'm going to have fun doing it*. And then maybe tomorrow, it's: *I'm going to narrow down my business name to the top three choices*, etc., etc. You're gonna keep going up a rung until you can get to that anchor thought.

**Tara Whitaker:** [19:33] Now I know. That was strange. That's the process, though. It's totally out there if you've never learned anything like this. It was for me. But I cannot reiterate how impactful it has been on my life and my business. I'm a better business owner. I'm a better editor. I'm a better coach. I'm a better parent, and I'm a better partner because of this process. And it kind of blows my mind because if you had told me this 10 years ago when I started my business, that I would be talking this much about

mindset, and—you know, feeling my feelings—I would have laughed in your face. No joke. I would have thought that was ridiculous. I would have thought mindset has nothing to do with running a business or feeling my feelings. That's way too mushy. Oh, my goodness, like, I'd be eating my word—well, I am eating my words right now. I don't think I ever said those things, but if I did, I would totally be eating my words.

**Tara Whitaker:** [20:30] So that is my initial high-level chat about mindset and why it is so important for your business. Again, this is going to be a topic we talk about a lot, but this gives you an overview and a general idea of how I approach mindset in this podcast, in my coaching, and in my Freelance Editors Club. And I hope that it's helpful for you; I hope that you take this and practice. I'd love to hear if you did—I'd love to hear the examples that you did or any roadblocks you might have come across while you worked through it. I would love to chat more about it. Again, I could chat about this all day. So, you can go to my website, [tarawhitaker.com](http://tarawhitaker.com) or—again—in the show notes, I have a link that directs you to book a free 15-minute call with me, and we can chat more about the process. We can chat more about anything. And we could even, if you're interested, chat more about one-on-one coaching and really diving deep into the TEARA process. We go real deep in the one-on-one coaching. And we also talk about it in the Freelance Editors Club. So, head on over there if you're interested. I will try not to talk your ear off but again, no promises. So, until next time, keep learning, keep growing, and know that you've got this!

Tara Whitaker: [21:46] Thank you so much for tuning into today's episode. If you enjoy *The Modern Editor Podcast*, I would be so grateful if you left us a review over on iTunes. And as always, you can head to [tarawhitaker.com](http://tarawhitaker.com) to connect with me and stay in touch. We'll chat again soon.