

The Modern Editor Podcast – Episode 8: How To Embrace Your Freelancing Journey

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: [0:19] Hi there, and welcome to today's episode. We are going to be diving into talking about our journeys, both *to* freelance editing and our journeys within our freelance editing businesses. So, I think sometimes we tend to get maybe a little hung up on comparison or trying to rush things. And I think it's important that we stop and chat about how we can all embrace and honor our own individual journeys. And maybe there's a little bit of self-serving in this because it's something I need to remind myself about a lot. So, we're gonna chat about how the path to freelance editing looks different for everyone. And then, we're going to talk about the path within our own freelance editing businesses.

Tara Whitaker: [1:05] So, to start off, the journey to freelance editing is so different for everyone. You know, it's not like a profession (like a doctor or a lawyer) where you have a specific—you know—educational track or work experience—you know—you have to do this, this certain type of class in college and then you have to do this type of residency, etc. That's not what freelance editing is like. Now, some editors do go to school or higher education in editing or publishing and then jump right into their careers. I didn't even realize that was a thing back when I was in college. And it is more popular now as more universities are offering those types of programs. But for a lot of us, many of us started our careers in totally different jobs. Sometimes in—a lot of times—in completely unrelated fields. So, I was thinking about this when I was thinking about the podcast episode, about what other jobs editors that I personally know of had held before they became editors. And some were—or still are—lawyers, authors... I know stay-at-home parents and caregivers, retail workers, chefs, customer service reps, managers. I mean, the list goes on and on and on. And you can see just in that small list, there is no common thread other than serving others. So, if we want, we can think of it that way, in terms of our backgrounds and experiences. But otherwise, we all come from this with vastly different perspectives and backgrounds.

Tara Whitaker: [2:49] And I say this, too, because it can be really easy—especially in the beginning—to compare our journeys to someone else's. And it's important to remember that those are not fair comparisons. Because of those differences. Because of those different backgrounds and experiences. It's impossible to compare our paths to someone else's. And I think social media makes this even more difficult because—you know—some people use their social media as a highlight reel, which is fine; it's their social media page. But when we see those things, where we see all the shiny wins, or the—you know—tons of new clients coming in. It's, it's difficult, right? Especially if we're in the opposite season of that. But it's very important to remember that that highlight reel is not an indication of real life. It's just not, because for every person you see that has a shiny social media post about how many clients they have, there are, more often than

not, more people in the background that are having a very different experience. Because we're all different, right? So, it's not fair to compare our beginnings with someone else's middle. Or vice versa—to compare our middle with someone else's beginning because we are all on such different paths.

Tara Whitaker: [4:12] And I think it's important to remember that we don't have a flippin' clue what another person has gone through—or is still currently going through—to get to where they are today. You know, if you do see a shiny highlight reel of someone who's got a bunch of clients and—or a bunch of products or—you know—just winning, we have no idea what they went through to get to that point. None. We should be celebrating their wins, not comparing them to our own. You know, it is so important to look at our own path. I mean, like physically, mentally— Physically. Not physically. Mentally look at our path ahead that is straight ahead of us. And now, that path might be straight. It might be a windy jumbly mess, as most of us are. And periodically look back and bring others up with us. You know, uplift them, carry them with us. But otherwise, just stay focussed on our own path. Because, like I said, it's just not feasible to compare ourselves to someone else's journey to freelance editing when we come from such different backgrounds. Alright, that's what I'll say about *to* freelance editing.

Tara Whitaker: [5:25] Now, let's say that you've started your freelance editing business, and now you're launching it, building it, growing it. Now, if you're anything like me, I am the most impatient person, especially when it comes to business things. I want things to happen now or yesterday. I want things done now. I want clients now. I want to make money now. I want to make an impact now. Now, now, now. You know, that's all fine and well—like—I'm an ambitious person. I don't think that's a bug. I think it's a feature. However, if it gets too far, we can find ourselves constantly in motion and looking ahead to the next thing. And we completely disregard the position that we're currently in by trying to always go faster and looking ahead. I'm gonna botch this. I probably should have wrote—written it down, but there's a saying that something like where you're at right now is where you wanted to be in the past. You worked hard and got to where you are right now. Where you are right now is where you wished you were or were thinking about or were dreaming about in your past at some point. Could have been last week, could have been last year, could have been a decade ago. We have to make sure that we stop, take a breath, and honor the position we're in right now.

Tara Whitaker: [6:50] And I really thought about this podcast episode when we were reading *Story or Die* last month in the Freelance Editors Club, which is all about story and how our journeys are our stories. And if you think about our journeys like a story, think about a book. I know that's not difficult. But think about picking up a book, learning about the main character, you know, getting to know them. And then you turn the page, and it says, “Everything works out in the end. The end.” You would feel completely ripped off, right? The entire middle of the story—the meat, the journey—was skipped over. It didn't happen. Nobody wants to read that. And no one wants to read a book where the character gets, you know, everything handed to them on a silver platter, they have no obstacles or challenges, and they just coast through life, you know, on easy street. That doesn't make for a good book, right?

Tara Whitaker: [7:48] Now, I will say this because I know I'm comparing a book or a story to our journeys. And there are similarities. However, this is not to say that experiencing trauma or tragedy is, you know, "part of the journey" and something for others to get enjoyment out of, like a story. That's not what we're talking about at all. We are all human. We all experience trauma; it is not to be glossed over or considered, again, "part of your story." That's toxic in multiple ways. And that's not what's going on here. We are not going to skip over acknowledging how different everyone's stories are. It's more to the point that we can all succeed and win and uplift and make an impact if we stop the toxic comparison game and do what works best for us.

Tara Whitaker: [8:40] There is no magical hack for starting a business or finding clients, you know. Experienced editors don't have some key to some secret vault that they bestow upon certain freelance editors that allows them to find clients faster. Like, that doesn't exist. The only true hack that I have for you with your freelance editing business is that you need to put in the work. That's it. There's no magical hack. Of course, there are ways you can be more productive or, you know, do things more efficiently. But at the end of the day, it's putting in the work. And everything will fall into place in the way that it does. And it might be in an unexpected way or a way that you were not anticipating or wanting. I mean, if we want to really go down this path metaphor, think about a fork in the road. It could lead you to something that you never expected, but it could be exactly what you need. Or you could take that fork in the road, and it can be an epic distraction. But by taking it, you learn a valuable lesson. It just depends.

Tara Whitaker: [9:51] And that's why I'm such a big believer in community because we are all walking along this similar journey together. But those unique perspectives and experiences that we all bring help each other out so, so much. So, I want to leave you with this little nugget. Instead of "enjoy the journey," how about "embrace the journey." Accept it for what it is. Know that it is unique to you. And trust that it's a journey you're meant to take. It might not look like someone else's. It probably won't look like someone else's—might be faster, might be slower, might be more riddled with yuck. But it is your journey. And that is where the community comes in. And this is a short and sweet episode, but I'm going to end it there. So, that's your pep talk about journeys—both journeys *to* your freelance editing career and *within* your freelance editing business.

Tara Whitaker: [10:53] I hope this helps just, you know, take a look at your current journey, your current path. Maybe look at it with a new perspective. Maybe make some shifts if you need to. Again, we're not about the toxic positivity. I'm not saying, "Oh, enjoy your journey, la la la!" And you know, "All these bad things happening are meant to be!" Yuck. No, not that at all. More so, embrace the journey. Take the path that you're on right now, know that you can always switch paths, you can always move, you can always, you know, take the fork or take the other fork or take the branch or whatever. And just remember that it is unique to you. And that it will not look like someone else's. And that is okay. There we have it. So, if you want to talk more about journeys, you can always email me. Set up a quick chat. hello@tarawhitaker.com. I would love to hear more about your own journey. I love helping editors along their journeys. So, let me know. And if I can do anything to help, I would be more than happy to. So, until next time, keep learning, keep growing, and know that you've got this!

Tara Whitaker: [12:04] 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 to connect with me and stay in touch. We'll chat again soon.