

141 - Get Your Time Back as a Freelancer

Laura Davis: [00:00:00] In this episode, we're talking about how to reclaim your time as a freelancer.

Laura Moore: Welcome back to another episode of JFDI with the Two Lauras, where we're keeping it real, sharing our best tips and strategies and advice to help you with your social media business. A common problem we hear from freelancers is all about time or rather a lack of it.

And when you went freelance to free up your time, it can be really frustrating to find yourself struggling to free up that time. So on the show today, we're delving into three ways that you can reclaim your time, how you spend it is entirely up to you, but before we dive into those three things, let's just touch on why it is really important that you do take control of this.

So why do we need to solve this problem, Laura?

Laura Davis: Number one, by quite a long stretch is. We don't want to hate what we do. We don't want to resent our business.

Laura Moore: Yeah.

Laura Davis: We don't want to get to the end of a week or a month and just feel [00:01:00] frustration by the fact that we're overworked and, oh, because we get naggy about it, don't we, and we resent it and no one wants that.

Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, I agree with you. And I feel like it goes back to the, why doesn't it, why did you go freelance? And you know, what was your, what did you think it was going to look like? And does it still look like that? And if you have, you know, found yourself in a position where you don't have much time left, you don't have that freedom to go and do all the things that you decided you were going to do when you wanted to go freelance.

So yeah, it's really important that you do get a control on it and you don't want to end up, you know, at the end of the year burnt out or even like, you know, the end of the week thinking, Oh my God, I need to just go and get a job in Tesco so I can just sit there on a checkout and then come home and I don't have to worry about all of this stuff.

You want to make sure that you're building a business that, that works around you so you can go and travel or, you know, spend time with your kids or whatever it is. And time is a

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massive piece of that. So we've got, this is going to be a pretty quick podcast because we've got three solutions and we don't want you to waste loads and loads of [00:02:00] time.

So we're going to keep it real, keep it short. So first one is – Laura.

Laura Davis: Stop doing everything that you don't need to do.

Laura Moore: Nice.

Laura Davis: Now I say this with knowing I can fall into this category and I have in the past and I had to work really really hard to not do this but if you sit down and think of your, at the end of the day, I think, what have I actually done today that I didn't need to do today or didn't need to do between my working hours.

Now those working hours could be whatever they are. You could work evening, whatever it is, but if you, if you have done things in that set amount of time that could have waited, then that's something that you need to fix.

Laura Moore: Or that you didn't need to do at all. Like, Oh, I thought I'd just go and change all the colors on my website.

Cause I didn't like that shade of pink. So I'm going to go change them to a different shade of pink, pointless, wasting your time.

Laura Davis: And I think a classic with us, I think in our industry. It's [00:03:00] mindless scrolling on social media because I don't know about anybody else like I'll, I'll go on like Instagram because I want to go and look at some stats or find some old posts that we can repurpose or, and I go on there and straight away something's in the on my screen and it, that's it before I know it I've lost 10 minutes –

Laura Moore: She's long gone yeah yeah , we're on Zoom at this point and I'm like Laura come in!

Laura Davis: Back in the room! Um, so I, and I, and I get it, like it's hard when you work in social media, there are a lot of bloody distractions.

Yeah. So it's things like that. So it's a, you know, understanding that and allowing yourself, it's okay to do it, but you've got to be. Strict with it. It's like doing the laundry, doing the dishwasher, like I, and this is what I used to really struggle with was because I was always

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thinking when I'm at home, you know, especially my husband's not my husband's at work and I'm at home and it's like,

Laura Moore: Isn't he lucky.

Laura Davis: Yeah, I had to change my mentality because what was happening [00:04:00] was that the kids would get, or when they were little, they would go off to nursery or what have you.

I'd drop them at school, I'd come home, I'd have to tidy up the weetabix that had gone concrete on the table or to the load the dishwasher, I'd pick up all the toys, you know, the list went on and on and on. And then normally I'd have like This Morning on the background, then I end up watching what Dr. Hillary's talking about. Is that This Morning or is that something else? But -

Laura Moore: Yeah, uh, yeah, I don't know. If you don't live in the UK, none of that will make any sense to you.

Laura Davis: I'm sure the Weetabix will. Surely Weetabix is international.

Laura Moore: Oh, yeah, probably Weetabix will, but I don't think Dr. Hillary will translate.

Laura Davis: But I think, um, yeah, so, and then I would sit down to work.

Normally by then I'd be bloody exhausted. And I'd just waste all this time. Whereas actually that's the stuff I could have done in the evening or being a bit more organised in the morning. So totally just trying to treat your business like you would if you had to go to a physical office. And that's what I used to have to [00:05:00] do.

I used to drop the kids. And the moment I walked back in the house, I had to pretend I am walking into an office. I ignored everything around me. It was just a very comfortable office that it was okay to wear pyjamas in.

Laura Moore: Yeah. And I think there's also, there's other ways, like as well as that, there's other ways that you can stop yourself doing things that you don't need to do.

Like with what you were just saying about the, the scrolling, if you're looking for content ideas, why don't you set yourself up like a Slack channel or a WhatsApp and every time you see something that could be a good, good content idea, whack the link in it. So the next time you need content ideas, that's where you're going.

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Laura Moore: And you're not going into social media to get distracted, you know.

Laura Davis: That is such a good tip.

Laura Moore: Laura looks very guilty. She's like, I totally should do that and I'm not going to.

Laura Davis: I totally should do that. But I, I don't know whether I've got that level of discipline, but what I, what –

Laura Moore: No, cause you'll just forget that that exists.

Laura Davis: Yeah, you don't, totally. Um, but I think what I would do, which would lead us onto solution number three.

Laura Davis: And I was actually doing this the other day.

Laura Moore: Have we done solution number two yet?

Laura Davis: Oh [00:06:00] sorry, solution number two. Sorry, jumping ahead. Uh, lead us on to solution number two because I do this and I did it the other day and I was, I was very efficient with myself. I was proud of myself as well, is I time block.

Now this is how when I was just doing social media management or ads management, like before The Two Lauras existed, this is how I used to live my life. But I find myself needing to do it again now, even when we're working on stuff in this business. But, and it was where I was giving my set amount of time to do a task.

And I can talk about how. I used to do it with my clients in a second but just for example last week it was like, right I'm just going to work in 20 minutes stints, I'm going to get as much done in 20 minutes and then I would allow myself to do something. Now it could be just go and have a cup of tea and just a bit of a potter about or let the dog out or whatever or it could be scroll on TikTok, whatever it was I was allowed, it was like I could do whatever I freaking well wanted but had to do that 20 minutes work to treat myself.

[00:07:00]

God, it makes me sound like a child. Um, but you know, that, that is maybe how I need to treat myself. But, and then back when I did my just pure client work and when we really first started working together, when my, our workloads were even busier than they are

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now, I used to block time in every day and the days that I had available grew as my children have all got older.

But I used to sit down and think, right, this client needs this amount of time. Put it in the calendar. I'd literally put it in with reminders. So it would remind me when that time was like coming up. So if I was working on one client, I'd get reminded in 15 minutes, you're starting on the next client. So I would work in blocks of time and always without doubt, having time in my diary for my business as well, even if it was just half an hour a day.

And it often changed. And as my business grew, as I started to do different things with, with more, bigger demanding clients. I changed how I worked and I [00:08:00] just was very set in how I did that and I made sure there was downtime like I am not someone who works solidly as Laura will agree from nine to three.

I'm saying nothing. With like, pure 100 percent dedication, like I did have times where I'd sit back and I'd put the telly on or sometimes I'd allow myself to do tasks where I'm watching shit on the TV as well. And it's understanding about how you work best and being organised and disciplined because you're not in an, you're not in an employed job where you've got a manager standing over you, thankfully.

You've got no one kind of monitoring you. There's no one watching how much time you're not working or criticising you because you're always chatting at the photocopier. There's none of that to get you paranoid. So you do have to be able to manage your own time. And that goes across the board for any kind of self employment, but time blocking is a big part of it. So good. [00:09:00]

Laura Moore: Definitely.

Laura Davis: The end.

Laura Moore: Fully agree with you on that. Yeah. No, I agree. So now we're allowed to come on to the third one, Laura. Jumping right ahead there.

Laura Davis: Sorry.

Laura Moore: Um, third and final one. We told you this would be a nice quick podcast. So you've got lots of time to go and do the things you do need to do.

Third and final one. Is one that might take a little bit of time, but once you've done it, you will be so grateful you did and that is to reduce your client load. And I can hear you going. I

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can't do that because I've got bills to pay. Let me finish my sentence. Reduce your client load by switching those low paying clients for higher paying ones.

So let's say you've got 10 clients. So like you've got no time because you've got so many clients and they're all paying you a low fee. What if instead you had two or three who were paying you a high fee? How much time would you have back? That would be much better use of your time.

Laura Davis: God, like literally when you say things like 10 clients, I, my body shivers.

Laura Moore: Yeah. And it worries me because we know that people –

Laura Davis: It worries me.

Laura Moore: – do have that many [00:10:00] clients and like, if you're an agency, fine, you know, crack on. You've got people helping you that that's not who we're talking about. We're talking about solo freelance social media managers. When you've got more than a handful of clients, I personally feel like that's too many.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Even if you work full time hours, that's too many.

Laura Davis: Yeah.

Laura Moore: Like your brain must be on fire.

Laura Davis: Yeah, it must be. And I get it. Like I remember when I started, I had too many clients. I had too many low ball clients because what I would do is constantly take on new clients. And don't get me wrong, every client I've ever taken on has always charged more than the one before.

Like never have they been charged the same and it's always been an increase. And, so I built up quite a lot of clients, but they were all not paying me enough. So then what I started to do is I'd get new clients, like new leads come in and I'd get rid of the lower paying clients. And as I got better [00:11:00] leads coming in and were able to convert higher paying, I was able to get rid of like two or three clients in one go, that one client has replaced two or three. So I do get it. I've been there and I remember how tired I was and like the notebooks I had to keep just because of my brain couldn't retain 10 different

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clients on what was going on with 10 different businesses and all the deadlines, the things that we needed to make sure we talked to her.

So every client had their own notebook. So I used to walk around the house with like, I look like I worked in a library. Like I had that many books and I just, you know, it was so much, but I very quickly, not that, you know, I learned the hard way that that was the wrong way to go and having higher paying clients and just a couple of them was perfect.

Laura Moore: And I, like I could have got myself into that situation. And like, I'm like, [00:12:00] not in a smug way, but I feel like I knew a way to avoid it because I don't have very much time. And especially when I very first started this, I had even less time. Like William was only at nursery and like, you know, so I didn't have very much time.

And so instead of me taking on a monthly client at a low rate, I would do a one off power hour at the same rate. So, like, if you're charging £300 a month to manage a client, you could probably do a power hour, maybe two, and get the same amount of money in two hours, like, how much time you just reclaimed.

If you were charging £500, what would you have to do instead for a client once to get that £500? There's so many different ways that you can reclaim your time when it comes to your client work. Just have a think about that.

Laura Davis: One of the biggest learnings that I got from that whole process of working with too many clients and not charging enough and when I got to the point where I, like it all clicked and I understood that I [00:13:00] just needed higher paying clients and less of them, my job satisfaction and my enjoyment in my job and just life dramatically changed.

I didn't feel like I was a slave to the scheduler because I was scheduling for 10 different clients, you know, I didn't feel overwhelmed. I wasn't working in the evening. I wasn't literally jumping from one client accounts to another. Like everything just became so much calmer, simpler.

And just, just easier. So I was then doing, I was enjoying my job more. So I was doing a better job. I had more time to think I had more time to be creative and strategic and do a really good job for my clients, which meant they kept me and, you know, six years down, I'm still with the same, some of the same clients now because it's just so much easier when you allow yourself that time.

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Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely. And you can get stuck in more, can't you? So there's more job satisfaction.

Laura Davis: Yeah, exactly. And I just think it makes a difference to [00:14:00] the end, the end result for your client and subsequently for you.

Laura Moore: Yeah, definitely. Love that. So there we go. That's how you can get your time back this year.

Laura Davis: And this has only been a 14 ish minute podcast. That means normally they're at least half an hour, so we've, there you go, we have given you 15 minutes.

Laura Moore: Yeah. So what are you going to do with that 15 minutes? Go and do something productive.

Laura Davis: And, and then, before you move on, come and tell us what you did.

Laura Moore: Yes. Don't get sucked into a hole on social media. Just DM us @thetwolauras on Instagram and then put your phone away and go and do some more work.

Laura Davis: Yes, yeah, definitely.

Laura Moore: Love it.

Laura Davis: Go on, 15 minutes. Ready, steady, go!

Laura Moore: See you next week! Bye!

Laura Davis: Bye!

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