#83: How to Evolve as an Entrepreneur with Dr. Azi Jankovic (Part 2)

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Debbie Sassen

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You're listening to the *Mastering Money in Midlife* podcast with Debbie Sassen, Episode 83.

Welcome to *Mastering Money in Midlife*, a podcast for midlife women in business to overcome financial anxiety and make more money without burning out or sacrificing their families. Join Certified Life and Money Coach Debbie Sassen, as she shares practical business strategies and mindset shifts that help you dissolve the money blocks that keep you stuck in a cycle of underearning and undersaving, sabotage the growth of your business, and prevent you from building the wealth that you desire.

Hello, my friends and welcome back to the podcast. I have some big announcements to make. And that is, that episode 83 is the last episode of the *Mastering Money in Midlife* podcast. But never fear, the podcast will go on. I am rebranding and relaunching this podcast. It is going to be a big surprise. Or for some people, not a big surprise, because I have done market research and spoken with a few people, and there are folks out there in the world who know where we're going with the podcast.

But I have new information, new podcasts, new things that I would like to share with you on the podcast, and that is all going to come to you in the rebrand, which drops next week, on June 20. So, if you are not yet signed up for the podcast, I encourage you to go to your favorite podcast platform and subscribe. Because then you will get news and notification every time a new podcast drops.

If you are an intermittent listener, meaning you show up and you listen, you get some value, and you come back from week to week, and you are here listening to Episode 83, I encourage you to come back next week, tune in for episode 84, and hear about the new direction for this podcast.

Before we jump into part two of the interview with Dr. Azi Jankovic, I think that part of the message that both Dr. Azi and I share, is that our business is an evolving entity. We start one place and Azi shares with us in the interview, how she started something in 2017 and it didn't work, it was a

failure. But as we're going to discuss in part two of the episode today, that was the springboard for her getting valuable skills that she uses as she grows her business today.

And she's always growing and evolving, and just creating new iterations of herself and her business. And that's similarly what I'm doing with my podcast. My business certainly has evolved from starting out as a financial planner, 15 years ago, then adding money coaching, and then transitioning to money in business coaching. And there is a continuous evolution.

And that is the beautiful thing about being an entrepreneur, is that whatever you were doing today, it doesn't have to be your forever business. But if you take only one thing away from today's episode, get started. Your vision is going to grow, expand, change, evolve as you show up in your business. But don't hold back. Start. Put one foot in front of the other and just take action steps forward.

Do the uncomfortable thing. Be willing to fail. Be willing to try new things, and that is all data that you get back. It's information that you get back from your trials and errors, that you can then analyze in order to make the next decision that you want to make for going forward in your business.

Alright, that's enough of an introduction. I would like to introduce you now to Dr. Azi Jankovic. If you haven't tuned in for part one, please go back to Episode 82, because we had such a rich and juicy conversation together, and you really do want to start at the beginning of the journey and then jump into part two.

But without further ado, here is Episode 83. The last episode of the *Mastering Money in Midlife* podcast. Let's take it away.

Dr. Azi Jankovic: Yes, we have to get started somewhere. So, I want to share with you, I implemented this personally a couple weeks back, and what happened was that I took a sabbatical from business and I relaunched in January. And one of the things that I did was I did a giveaway. I gave away an Amazon gift card and a copy of my book *Beyond All Things*.

And I sent out a Google doc so that everybody who entered would put in their email, so I could announce the winners, and they also answered a few questions about: What are the challenges in my business? What are my business goals? And what is my social media handle? So, flash forward three weeks, I announced the big winners. And I now have a spreadsheet of all of the entrants. Where I can look at what their goals are, what their problems are, and I can have a look at their digital footprint.

So, I did a few things with that. I sent out individual offers to the people who I knew that I could help with my consulting. I brought in a few clients, which was beautiful. And then last month, when I revisited it, and I took a look at some of the social accounts. And some of the women who wanted to upgrade their marketing, I noticed something interesting.

And I noticed for the vast majority of these women, their Instagrams and their Facebook and their social media pages had a lot of static posts. So, they were really nice memes, with quotes, captions, or they would have a cartoon, animated cartoon. Whatever it was, they would have these static posts. But something was really missing.

And the missing ingredient was that I never got behind the scenes. I was never able to hear them in a video, or feel like I knew them with their digital footprint. So, I had this flashback to three years ago when I hired my first social media team. And I was paying them good money. And they would do my Instagram posts and my Facebook posts and make me gorgeous graphics. And we grew the accounts. And we were doing all right.

But the CEO said to me, categorically, she said, “Azi, please send me videos, I need videos,” she was all the time asking. So, here's what I would do. I'd pick up my phone, and I would press record and I would look at myself. And I would freeze. I would freeze. I wanted to sound competent, and I couldn't talk to a screen and communicate in a competent way.

I wanted to look polished. And let's face it, holding a phone in your hand is not always the most polished image. It can work sometimes. In any case,

all I wanted, Debbie, was for someone to sit across the Zoom for me and ask me the questions that I could answer in a conversation. I could feel calm, I could feel like myself, I'm being myself, I'm speaking with you.

And then they would turn around and produce clips for me, to send to cast so we could upgrade my social. And I had this breakthrough moment. I thought, “Well, my social media team is already creating clips. We have an amazing workflow. I could just do this.”

I've done over 100 interviews. I'm an amazing interviewer. I always get great sound bites, authentic, competent, warm sounding, all the things. And so, I shared this idea with friend. I didn't make a fancy website, guys. I didn't buy a website domain. I invested zero money. I just had a little conversation with an entrepreneur who I thought maybe could benefit.

Shared the idea with her, “Azi,” she cuts me off mid-sentence, “Azi, what's the price?” I threw a number out there and she sent me money. Okay?

Debbie Sassen: Nice, nice, nice.

Azi: The next day, I was online. I happened to meet an entrepreneur, lovely dietitian, who's Instagram looks like she's just running diet programs. And when we were back and forth messaging on Facebook, I realized, wow, she has so much depth. And I wonder if I should share this idea with her, too. And I did.

And guess what? We did her interviews two days ago. And they were phenomenal. And it's the biggest rush. It's the best feeling to know that you, as a business owner, are helping people and being useful. And for me, it's really, really energizing.

And what I'm realizing, in starting this new business, is that all the knowledge that I have from these “failures”, like that failure in 2017, where it was the wrong time for my idea, was not a failure. It was a learning experience. Where now I can take all of that learning, and I can put it into this new venture, which is a flexible startup and a flexible growth.

So, on a really practical level, I put the word out. I said I have room for three beta clients at this rate, and that was it. And I needed to test it at a beta rate, because now what I realize, is okay, wait a second. This is going to require XY and Z so that my company can put its best foot forward and make a quality product for our clients.

So, it was like really figuring out that sweet spot. And now I set my May prices, and I'll do this in May, and that'll be that. And after May I'll step back, I'll look at the processes, and I'll figure out who's my new hire. And what are they going to do? What do they need to do? And I'll know step by step, because I've been taking notes the whole way, exactly what I did, exactly what my VA is doing.

And now we have the manual to grow the next step. Okay? So, this is that flexible process in a nutshell. And I really believe firmly that it can help so many people to reformulate how they even envision business. What are your paradigms for business? And those are holding you back, it could be time to take a look at this new model.

Debbie: I've always just admired this about you, that you have an idea and you go out there, and you test it. You call it “flexible”; I might call it trial and error. But that's what you're doing, you have an idea, and rather than going out and doing a bunch of research… You've done a little bit of research, right? You're going to go out and try it. You're going to jump. You call it your “beta pricing”.

And then you'll look at the data, you'll analyze the numbers, the time, the energy, everything you're putting into it. And you'll be like, “Okay, that was a great price to get started. Now let's market it, where it really needs to be.” So, it's beautiful.

Azi: Yeah, absolutely. And I want to say also, that this isn't necessarily about jumping into something completely new that you don't know anything about, right? So, there definitely are steps to take. And I would say to everyone listening, that a really good starting point is to look around and

ask yourself, what do I do well? And it could be things you don't even think about.

But going through your day and thinking out loud, “Okay, well, I organize my living room really well. And I put my makeup on really well. I'm good at that also. And I listened to a friend and I was able to give her good advice.” And at the end of the day, you can look back at these things. Maybe it's, “I balanced the bank account really well.” Whatever it is, you can look at those as your skill set.

And you can ask yourself: Is this something that I can package as a business? Is this something I can package as an offer? And really go from there. So, this process is knowing yourself, being really clear on your strengths. And this idea of trial and error, trial and error could be the way to look at it. I also want to offer that it could be trial and learning. Just giving yourself that space to, not necessarily like look at any of this as a failure, but look at all of it as feedback.

It's like if a client's not happy… Yesterday, for example, there was a humming noise in some of the videos. And I thought, gosh, “Okay, if the client’s not happy, is that a failure? Does that mean my whole business failed and I can't do this? Or is it possible that I can learn something, and I can adapt something, and I can make sure my client will be…” It's all doable. It's all really, really doable.

Debbie: Right. So, I love to say, when you're trying something out, we could call it trial and tweaking. Or we can say, there's winning or learning, right? Basically, you make a decision. You go. You don't then keep analyzing, you make a decision. Now you implement your decision. You analyze, which is what you're doing. You're getting the learning and getting the feedback. And then, you tweak and you make a new decision. And you go out and you try that.

And as you continue to do that, you will refine your process of providing video clips for entrepreneurs who need some video content on their social media.

Azi: Yes. Okay. We are so on the same page about so many things. I love it. And I want to share with you why I didn't make a shiny, polished website and why I didn't do Google ads and why I didn't do all those things. Why is my website so super basic right now? Well, it's because I'm just starting out. And guess what? If I had made a really shiny website, and I had advertised in Google and I had really cast a wide net, the systems would not have been set up yet.

So, the business would not have been ready, right? So, a really concrete example is someone who wants to open a restaurant. They are going to have to take out a lease. They're going to decorate the restaurant and write the menus and make sure everything is done; so many details, time, and money. And then, opening day comes around, and they've done so much advertising, they've done all the right things, and suddenly, nobody's lining up at their pizza shop. And they're stumped.

What happened? Well, they didn't realize the entire neighborhood is kosher. And their shop is not kosher. And so, guess what? Now they have to go back and they have to redo the whole menu. And they have to work with different vendors. And they just lost a lot of time and a lot of money.

If they had started off by making pizzas in their living room, in their kitchen, and sharing their family or sharing with a few neighbors, they would have heard, after the third pizza, from the neighbor, “Oh, you know what? Your pizza is delicious. But I eat kosher. Let's talk about how you might be able to cater to this neighborhood.”

Debbie: Yeah, because you can have a pizza shop in a neighborhood that decides that it wants to stay small, and just be in that neighborhood. And it's going to open at 11 o'clock in the morning, and maybe even close at five in the afternoon. Maybe they don't even care about the people who are

going to come for dinner, because they want that kind of lifestyle. Or maybe they'll stay up until eight. Or they could become a franchise. And they could become like a Domino's or a Pizza Hut or something else.

And so, it goes back to your business decisions. What do you want to do with your business? Do you just want to be that neighborhood kosher pizza shop? Or do you have visions to make something more? Or do you have visions to take pizza, and then you're going to serve lasagna, eggplant parmesan, and a bunch of other different… You'll just expand the size of your restaurant, and that's the way you grow your business? Just get going.

Azi: I love that. Yeah, just get going. I love that. And what's so beautiful about this idea of being flexible and listening to the feedback of your customers, is that if that pizza shop is egoless enough to ask the customers, “Well, did you like these flavors?” And not feel offended. A customer might say something also, “I really liked that flavor. And I also love lasagna. And I also really wish I could just buy this in the freezer section of my local grocery store.”

And now suddenly, that business has some new ideas that they can also test and grow. So, I think we're both on the same page. The limits are only what we place upon ourselves.

Debbie: Yes. A lot of people have that fear of failure. And I just love that you gave your example from 2017. You started this business, it didn't work, and there was so much learning. And you didn't just decide at that time, “I tried something, it didn't work. I'm a failure.” You're going to go climb back into your rabbit hole, and just hang out in your rabbit hole for the rest of your life. You just let it simmer and you ended up using all of your learning in different ways later on.

When you're going out into the marketplace, with a new offer or even an old offer, right? I've launched my group program now, three times. People

can still say no, they can still refuse me. I might have to learn how to market it a little bit better, sell it a little bit better.

I'm still in the learning phase of what I'm doing. But we just we get so much feedback. And the more you can increase your capacity to feel failure, we're going to go back to sitting in silence and feeling your emotions. Feeling whatever's happening in your body. And for so much of it, whether it's rejection; people don't want it.

You can go out and be like, “Oh, nobody wanted videos. Oh, woe is me,” and feel rejected, feel judged, or criticized or feel like a failure. And it could just be like, “Well, I only spoke with three people. Maybe I didn't market it right. Maybe I don't yet know how to sell the importance of video, and I need to bring some market research about how everything's going to video. And 90% of businesses are made with video. And my people just don't know that yet.”

But the more we can increase our capacity to feel failure or feel negative emotions, then the more capacity we have to actually grow our businesses and make money.

Azi: Yes, it's so true, Debbie. And what you're sharing about failure, reminds me of the moment when I was finishing my doctoral degree in L.A. at USC, and our art professor asked us to do something really uncomfortable. And he had us write a failure resume. And we were all pouring our hearts out, tears, and writing these resumes. And after an hour, we sat there in silence doing this work, and we finished.

And then Dr. Garcia looked at us and he said, “Okay, now, next hour, I want you to write next to that all of the facts, concepts, skills, strategies, beliefs that you took away from those failures.” And I did that with my company, Sage Pear, in 2017.

And one of the things that I realized as well, I know a lot about the online directory business. And now, I know a lot about marketing and a lot about coaches and consultants. And I've put that out into the world. And

interestingly, I was just invited to be on the advisory board of a really, really innovative directory.

Not because I had a successful directory myself, but because now I have so much information about directory. So, I don't have to be a CEO of a directory of a tech company to have information. I have resources. And those resources are valuable to someone who does something else. So, I believe that, yes, we can have uncomfortable feelings about feeling like, we failed or didn't work or this or that.

But not to get stuck in that, because it doesn't mean anything about you, as long as you're open to… It never means something about you. But by being open to considering what did you learn, again, like facts, concepts, skills, strategies, beliefs. You now have assets. And that makes your capacity to serve greater.

Debbie: Correct, yeah. I love bringing also, examples from the sports world. Because I grew up with my dad, my older brother. We did a lot of sports in Los Angeles when I was growing up. So, I'm an L.A. Dodgers fan, and the Lakers and the Rams, and all that.

But batting 300 in baseball, which means you hit like three out of 10 balls, that is an amazing record. Most pitches that the batter meets are going to be failures, like 2/3 will be failures. And only 1/3 of them are going to be hits. And then some of them are going to be caught, they'll be out, whatever. But that's already considered a good record.

Azi: I love that. I love that idea of even reconceptualizing what the word failure means. Fail fast. Fail fast. And those baseball players, if their average is in the 150's is not like considered… I used to be a baseball fan. I don't remember the details. But what is it? It's like not that high.

It's so worth thinking about. In the world of sales, I remember when I first started selling some of the services I was offering. It was really deflating. Why are half of my calls not moving forward into a sale? Until I learned that

cold calls, on average, have a one in ten yes rate. One in ten. Even lower in certain fields.

Debbie: I would have thought that was high, one in ten.

Azi: Yeah. Yeah. And it's such an eye-opening moment where we can realize this is part of the process.

Debbie: Yeah, we're just expanding our capacity to feel negative emotions, to feel failure, to feel rejection. That's all. I recently saw Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger, it was a clip of an interview, I have to go find the whole thing. But they were speaking about Elon Musk.

And if anybody's ever followed Elon Musk, what Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger, who manage Berkshire Hathaway, for our listeners who don't know, they were saying that Elon Musk is a brilliant man and brilliant entrepreneur, and his capacity for failure, his willingness to fail, was greater than Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger.

They had a lot of praise for Elon and what he does and what he has accomplished, by his willingness to try things and fail. And they're just saying, “But yeah, we just don't want to fail that much.”

Azi: Yeah, he's so fascinating. We could really talk about him for a while. And I'm curious, he's so fascinating. Right? Tesla, and now SpaceX. And I recently read an article that he does not do anything luxury. He even resisted getting a private plane until he absolutely had to. His girlfriend had a real issue with him because he wanted to eat the most basic foods ever, and just make time for work. And he wasn't making time for leisure. He really loves what he does, also. Which is fascinating.

And I'm curious; two things. So, first off, this is a fact, we don't all have the billions of dollars that Elon Musk has to invest in something, and then fail casually, and still have the private jet. So, I think that's where this flexible model can really come in.

And the second piece, I want to explore, do you think, Debbie, it's possible that Elon Musk, or even any of us, could fail and not feel negative emotions?

Debbie: Oh, that's a good question. Is it possible? If he's willing to eat very simple food, and maybe his desire for pleasure can be very, very low. And which means, if his desire for pleasure, if he's willing to eat boiled chicken or very simple meals, then perhaps, on the upside, his range of emotions that he allows himself to feel… Which is why he doesn't feel failures so deeply as other people. But just let's leave him outside.

Failure… Statistically, he's on the tails. If we have a bell curve, he'll be in the tails. But humans feel negative emotion, and it's your willingness to feel it and not make it mean anything about you. And how quickly do you bounce back? That's probably your resiliency, right?

Azi: Resiliency, I love that.

Debbie: Yeah, you're going to feel the failure, it's not going to be comfortable. I'm not going to paint it as roses and daisies and unicorns, and things like that. Failure doesn't feel great. It doesn't have to stop you and keep you stuck. Again, let's just go back and find out what the learning is.

I love Mel Robbins, who's like 5-4-3-2-1. Like, maybe failure is going to take you half a day. But let's move on. Let's learn what we can. And now, let's tweak. Let's go back to implementing the cycle of making a decision. Implementing, analyzing, tweaking, and do it again.

Azi: Yeah, absolutely. I think we can definitely raise our threshold for discomfort. And I'll give you an example, quick example, that I put out this very, very basic website that was really just an overview of the services that the company is going to be providing. Because people were asking. And I had AI make the website, it took me 30 minutes. It wasn't a big investment, but I still put it out there into the world, and I asked for some feedback.

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Now, most people came to me and said, “Wow, what an amazing idea.” They got it, like, okay, this isn’t Azi’s final website. It's just a landing page to show people what she does. But one woman contacted me with a page-long email telling me everything she hated about the website. So, I'm like reading through, reading through, and I'm thinking, “Hmm, this is really interesting. This person has nothing nice to say.”

I could really be agitated here. And then, I had this moment where I realized that one of my podcast guests, Sunil Gupta, is a serial entrepreneur. And he shared there are four people you need with you on the entrepreneurial journey. One is a coach, one is a cheerleader, and one is your critic.

And I thought about that, and I looked at the email, and I was like, “Okay, she definitely doesn't understand my process, or what I'm trying to do here. But I'm still going to just read through this, make a note of it, and let it go.” And it didn't bother me. And I think that if I gotten that same email four years ago, I might have shut my computer and crawled under the covers.

Debbie: It's good, you didn't.

Azi: It is really good, right?

Debbie: I was reading recently about that feedback. We talk about it being constructive, like constructive criticism, constructive feedback. There’re just all the negative things that she doesn't like, but was any of it constructive? Was any of it helpful? Because then you can also just pull out… Or it was all just, no? okay, fine. Yeah. That's also, as you grow, the more people that know you, the more people that encounter you, wherever you put yourself out there, your digital footprint, you'll have more haters.

Azi: It's funny, because I was almost going to shoot off a really snarky reply, like, “Thanks so much for the feedback. Not everybody loves chocolate.” But I didn't do that. Listen, not everyone likes chocolate. Not everyone likes puppies. Not everyone likes sunsets. I think it's time to just let go a little bit, and realize there are 8 billion people in the world. And if a

million of them like what you do, chances are you can grow an empire. Like if one out of every million people likes what you do… We don't need everyone to like us.

Debbie: I think it's actually great, because I like to say, between love and hate, there is no money. So, you got your hater. That's great. That means there's money in what you're doing.

Azi: It's true. I remember Dr. Garcia, the same professor of blessed memory, used to always say, “You know you're in front when you have daggers being thrown into your back.” And I know that's a really intense sounding metaphor, but some fields are really intense, and there can be criticism. So, if you check out Oprah's Instagram, Oprah is beloved. But guess what? She also receives a lot of hate. And so has every single person in history who's ever done something that's changed the world.

Debbie: I've never checked out her Instagram. I didn't even know she was on Instagram. But I'm not going to waste my time there. And it's actually something that I will speak to, because you said, we all have the same amount of time, which is true. We all have 24 hours in a day, seven days a week, 30-ish days in a month.

Some people do have different life circumstances and different life choices, different way they prioritize. Some people are single moms, and so they might be doing the mom and the dad thing. Some people might have one child or no child. And some people might have… I mean, I have eight children, thank God. But most of them are out of the house. I was the doula for my daughter at her birth this week.

Azi: Congratulations.

Debbie: So, we make different choices. Thank you, thank you. So, we do make different choices. And it could be that you are at a stage of your life, when I had my eight kids still all living under my roof, where I had to have a different business model than I can now. Because of time that I was prioritizing to take care of my family. And it's a life choice.

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Our business is part of our life. It's the part of that big, one, whole piece of life that we're here to live. Or however many years and days and hours were on this planet, and God only knows that. But we have choices. And then the question is…

You could grow a business in two hours a day, if you stayed really super focused in those two hours. So many people waste four hours a day. They're like, "I don't know, is it going to work? What are people going to think of me? Nobody's going to pay that price. Maybe they'll reject me."

Girlfriend, you've got two hours when your kids are at school, your kids are at nursery, your husband's at work, or whatever, or you don't have a husband. Two hours a day, you can do some awesome work in the world, when you decide to focus and do things that will bring you money. And can we talk about just bringing the money in?

Azi: I'd love that. I love that.

Debbie: And not making websites that are going to… Because you think you need the website, because that's going to prove that you're a real business owner.

Azi: You don't need anything.

Debbie: Or you spend hours on Canva trying to get the perfect logo. Just choose something and go. You shouldn't spend more than 30 minutes on it. If you did 30 minutes, AI website, make yourself a logo in 15 minutes. Just get going.

Azi: Yes. It's so important. And I think it comes down to… First of all, the fact you have eight kids, and I mean, amazing. I have four kids, and I still feel like I'm juggling. But I think it's so important for us to take inventory of our time and our life. And how much time do we want to invest in something? And so, maybe it's something like have working hours. On a very, very tangible, visual level, you can open a lemonade store on your street for an hour a day. And you don't have to be there all day.

You can do that, and that's still a business. So, I think this idea of work/life harmony is so huge to avoid burnout. It's so, so huge. So, I'm really, really happy you mentioned that.

Debbie: And we can do so much. Take your phone; which, mine rang. I thought it was off. Put it in the other room, right? Just go and sit down and focus. And I'm just going to re-emphasize, income generating activities are where most business owners are not focusing enough. They're doing the foundational parts of their business.

I work with my clients on client acquisition first. Do the thing that's going to bring you clients, and don't worry about… I even tell people, and since this is my podcast too, I'm just repeating myself. You don't even have to set up your business. You don't have to go to the accountant. You don't have to go to the bookkeepers. Just get money in the door. You don't need Pay Pal; you don't need anything.

I promise you; the tax authorities will be happy to take your money if you wait two months or six months to pay them. There might be a fine, I'm not telling you to not ever pay taxes. But you can figure that all out. Don't do all your business foundations, just get going.

Azi: Yes, yes. First things first. Absolutely. Absolutely. And it's so interesting, two things I want to share with you. After I shared this very beta website, I got some feedback from a really creative photographer. She gave me some great feedback; and add some videos, and do this. And I am planning on doing all of the things. And then I asked her, "I'm curious, can I see your website?" And she says to me, "Well, the irony here, is I don't have a website." And meanwhile, she's successful in her field.

So, she sends me a PDF. And the PDF has her three services. And that's what she sends people. And in her business, she doesn't need a website because she's local. She knows how much time she has. She knows where her leads are coming from. And she can just send them this thing. And that's efficient for her.

In a different case, in my case, because I'm planning to scale a business, I will need a website so that my Google Ads can then direct to the website and this, that and the other. But I did it in steps. And I think that's where you can get stuck. And this idea that you mentioned also, about money generating. You said income generating activities?

Debbie: income generating, revenue generating. Client acquisition and get money in the door.

Azi: Yes, client acquisition. So, one thing that I started doing at the end of every week, is making a list of everything I did during that week to grow the business. And there's this principle, it's called The Pareto Principle, based on this Italian man who was growing peas in his garden. And he realized that 20% of the plants were bringing in 80% of the peas. And so, he came up with this principle.

And in more recent years, a lot of entrepreneurs have applied this principle to their businesses. So, it could look something like, at the end of the week writing down 20 things that you did to acquire clients, grow your business. And then, having a look at that list and circling the two that were the most effective.

Perhaps those two things weren't really polishing your website or making pretty Canva templates. They were messaging someone on Instagram, or they were hopping on a sales call, or going to a networking event, right? And so, gather the data. Be a researcher about your own business, and it's magic.

Debbie: Yeah, I think actually, when you're talking about being a researcher it’s like, wow, your background in education and research is so valuable. It's a skill set that you have, that you didn't even realize you're going to apply to growing businesses. But this is a skill set that so many entrepreneurs… They're just like shooting stuff out there into the world, which is great.

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Get out of your comfort zone, go do it. But now, let's analyze the data. Which of your Instagram posts or emails are performing well, because you want to do more things like that.

Azi: Yes, yes, yes. You want to do more of what works. And I want to share two things. The first one is, when I moved to Israel in 2015, and I realized that I wasn't going to be an educator in this country, that it wasn't transferable completely, I felt like a failure. And it was very, very challenging for me.

But again, add that to the failure resume and look back at the skills. I now have, not a failure, but an asset. And you know, it's just so important for all of us to internalize this idea that if we allow ourselves, we can keep constantly growing.

Debbie: I want to speak specifically to, I mentioned it a little bit, your financial thermostat. That was part of your beliefs and what feels comfortable to you. We do have an internal thermostat for how much money we believe that we can ask for, receive, hold on to, and even gift or share a gift to charity. Right? We have financial set points.

And knowing where yours is… Which like yesterday, when I went to speak with my client and said, “Okay, $500 for a package, and let's get started.” And we started with, could you make $100,000 in a year? And that was actually 10 years, we started with 10 years, for sure. Five years? Yes. Two years?

We're trying to find out where that place was where her financial thermostat is set. And now we can stretch it. We want to stretch it and grow your capacity. We don't want to snap it, think like a rubber band; stretch your financial thermostat, bump up your set points a little bit, but without snapping it and just numbing out. Again, if you think a million-dollar business is not yet on your radar, don't go there.

But go to $100,000 or go to $50,000, whatever works for you. But let's figure out where it is for you, and then we can start moving. And again,

some people will pay your prices, some people won't. And if you're keeping your prices low to serve a lot of people, which is a beautiful thing to do. My question for you is, are you serving yourself?

Because I've seen people that were burning out, you mentioned burnout, they're just working around the clock. I have to help this person, I have to help this person. They're not taking care of themselves. They're not sleeping well and not spending time with their families. They're on the edge of burnout.

And all it takes, is telling those clients, that you've been working with for six years and are paying you 25% of what your current rates are. I was like, “Hey, I've raised my prices. And it's been lovely that I've been able to gift this to you for the last four or five years. But this is where my prices are.”

Azi: I love that.

Debbie: I was really wondering about you and your prices. But you've got to be able to take care of yourself. You have to be well resourced, especially as a woman. You need to be well resourced with sleep, food, and people on your team, when you’re showing up to work for others.

Azi: Yes, yes, yes. Imagine if Mark Zuckerberg just didn't eat or sleep. What would happen? A lot of people would be out of luck. We are the CEOs of our business. And I want to speak to a couple things here, in terms of money and prices. I think that if someone listening might be saying to themselves, “Well, of course they're saying they have to take care of ourselves, because rich people are selfish.”

I know I was taught to be benevolent and selfless and generous and giving and admire Martin Luther King and Gandhi, and all these really, really selfless people. But in business, I think we all need to remember that when we're making money, again, we can fuel the business. We are taking care of ourselves, and that is so huge and important. And having more resources can then help us to be more generous and more selfless.

Debbie: Yeah. And let's just call a spade a spade. Some rich people are selfish. And some rich people are not selfish, they're super generous. Your mind can go to, "Rich people are selfish, they're evil, they're greedy, they're mean, they're manipulative. They know how to work the tax system." But some rich people are very generous and they're helpful and they're kind. And they have a lot of time on their hands because they've cracked the business model code.

And they're not like Elon Musk, who's working24/7. They're doing whatever they do, and they contribute a lot to the world. They allow money to flow to them. And they allow money to move through them, in support of other people and other resources; solving climate change and global warming and helping underprivileged people. A lot of rich people are very, very generous. People are selfish, and some are generous also. There's no black and white.

Azi: I so agree. And I think even this idea of being selfish… A couple of things. First of all, we have an exposure bias. So, what we see in the news about this rich, selfish person and how they took Wall Street down, that creates a paradigm for rich and selfish going together. But most people who are wealthy, who are super generous, aren't making the news because good news doesn't sell. So, I think that's the first piece.

And then also, if someone's going to sit down and take an inventory. Like, they feel selfish because they want to make a lot of money. I think it's worth just being okay with the fact that we have a survival instinct. And that it's okay to want financial security. And it's also okay to want to help a lot of people. And it's okay to want abundance.

And could you sit down and write about, make a list, of all of the ways that if you had unlimited resources, you would want to be generous? What causes would you want to contribute to? Where would you want to take your family? All of the things like. Where do you want to live? What could this freedom offer you? Maybe you want to take care of your parents? Maybe you want to start an orphanage? I don't know.

But I think it's really worth just being okay with the fact that maybe it feels selfish to want to have financial security, for whatever reason, that's just a feeling. And yet, that is not who I am. And I'm going to expand my idea of who I am, and what's possible. And the fact that in my heart, I am a giver. You are a giver, you are a creator, you're created in the image of God, and God is a creator, and God is abundantly generous. And it's who you are.

Debbie: I'm just going to add one little bit to what we see in the news and who grabs the headlines. I want to remind all of us, that so many of us were nurtured on fairy tales of 101 Dalmatians, Cruella Deville. She is cruel because she wants to take all these puppies and she wants to make a fur jacket out of these Dalmatian puppies, right? And even that word “Cruel” is in our mind.

Or Cinderella and the wicked stepmother, right? Cinderella is the noble one and she's down on the floor and she's scrubbing the floor. But who goes to the ball? The wicked stepmother. So, from when we're very, very little, we’re educated and socialized… First of all, wealthy women… Since we're speaking, specifically you and I, two women, at the moment. Wealthy women…

And what were the television shows? I haven’t watched television in decades. But was it Dallas or Dynasty with Alexis? Which one was that? So, these are the messages that are living inside of us from when we were young, even before you hear about the guy who took down Wall Street.

Az: And negative emotions are addicting. And so, the TV shows are conjuring up jealousy, which is really, really easy to do. And that's actually addicting. And we all also, want to have compassion for Cinderella because she's a pauper and she has a big heart. And these movies are bringing out our emotions. And it's this amazing experience, to experience all emotions. But I love this idea that you're sharing. It's like, what paradigms have we been shown? Clearly, those cartoons are not reality.

Debbie: Right. But we believe them because they're just living inside of us. Like, stepmothers are wicked. I have a stepmom, she's not wicked. But there are probably a lot of psychologists, therapists, who are making money because people just believe that it's nature, that stepparents are evil and wicked or something like that, and you can't blend families. I'm not saying that it's smooth, or it's a walk in the park. But it doesn't have to be evil.

Azi: Yeah, yeah, not at all. I met a woman a few weeks ago at a dinner, and she'd come into Israel from Chicago, and we had the most fascinating conversation about the work she does. She's a Balance Family System coach. And they basically untangle these family sort of stories we've inherited. She's telling me all about her work.

And I was so fascinated with her. I kept asking more and more about what she does. And she says, "You know, I don't have to work. I really don't need to work at all." Her husband is an investor, whatever he does, they literally don't have to think about money. She said, "So, I set my price points at a really, really reasonable fee. I have a sliding scale."

I asked her, "Oh, that's really, really interesting. So, this isn't a business that you really want to grow?" And she was like, "I feel like this works for my lifestyle. This is what I want. This is what works for me." And I think it comes back to this idea from the beginning of the episode, that you are the CEO of your business. You decide what you want. And as long as you're clear that that's really what your heart wants, great.

So, I would love to invite everyone who's listened to this to think about, what are a couple of the points that you are taking away, that you can use to grow your business, to bring more abundance into your life and business? And I also want to invite you to shoot me a personal email. I'm Azi@drazi.co I want to hear, I would love to hear, what you're taking away from this. And I answer all of my emails.

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Debbie: Well, I'm going to put that out there for my listeners also, that people should send me an email and tell me what they're taking away. Because I'd love to hear, and I do also answer all my emails, all by myself.

Azi: Amazing.

Debbie: It's Debbie@debbiesassen.com And we'll put our links in the show notes as well, so that everybody can connect and tell us what they're taking away. But really, just to believe that there is so much more available to you in the world than you're letting yourself believe. And when you can just expand your mind to what's possible, you'll see that there's more available. I love to say, "God is abundant. God is infinite. And he can gift you infinite abundance, as well."

Azi: That's so beautiful. We're going to have all of our links in the show notes, our websites; Debbie's website, my website. The link to my beta website; don't judge it if it's not perfect. All of those things.

And again, coming back to wrapping up this episode, we talked about beliefs around abundance. We talked about setting up systems with a flexible startup and growth model. And then we spoke about fears. And to wrap up that fear piece, I really believe that this boils down to safety. And maybe next episode, we can talk about the trauma piece and get more into the psychology.

I'd love to talk with you more about this idea of feeling safe in the process, and reminding yourself that you're safe. So, I'm going to do that 90°, the 180° turn. I'm definitely taking that away from the episode, and so much more. So, Debbie, thank you. Thank you for this conversation. It was really special.

Debbie: Thank you. It was a pleasure. I'm glad we had a chance to do it.

Azi: Thank you so much, Debbie.

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Thank you so much, for tuning into the podcast today. I know that you got a lot out of this interview; part one, part two, everything together. And I would love to hear from you. I want to know what are one or two action items that you are taking away from this interview. And I want to know what you are implementing in your business.

And I know that it's hard to take steps forward. There's the fear of failure, fear of rejection, what are people going to think about me, but I'm here with you. I'm on your side. I know that you have gifts to share with the world. And so, just reach out to me as your accountability buddy, and let me know what you're taking away, and what you're implementing in your business. Send me an email: Debbie@debbiesassen.com and I'll put my email in the show notes, so that you can let me know what you're taking away.

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