

25 My 3 wins & struggles as a leader in a start-up

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SPEAKERS

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Hello there, and welcome to my 25th podcast. And today I wanted to talk about my wins, and my struggles as a leader in a startup. So I started my online business two and a half years ago, but I quit my job as a CEO almost four years ago. And so I wanted to share my wins and struggles, because I think it might interest you. Whether you are an entrepreneur or whether you are a leader, you might recognise a lot of things that I'm going to talk about. I'm Murielle, CEO mum and educator, I used to work really hard and sacrificed important things to me until I lost my motivation. Fast forward passed many failed attempts and lessons learned. And I found a way to reach great results while working less. Today, I'm obsessed with helping other leaders build meaningful lives. So each week, I'll be sharing inspiration to change your life and organisation. This is rebel leader with a heart.

And first I wanted to share what I do because I often get the question from my friends or from my family, but what do you do? Exactly? So my purpose is to help leaders build meaningful lives and organisations and how do I do that? Well, I have developed a programme and that programme is my whole experience when I was a CEO, transforming my organisation, but also transforming myself I've combined everything that I've been through every theory, every research that I've that I've encountered in this programme called leading authentically in digital times. And with this programme, I help leaders build a meaningful life have more impact, better deal with all the changes, but I also help teams and organisations and when that programme is offered to organisations, the goal is to change the mindsets of the people, but also to change the culture of the organisation. so that they become more HL, but in a very human way. So that is the bulk of what I do. And then next to that, I also give keynotes to inspire people to transform and to lead differently. And then I also give workshops, for instance, I've given workshops to transform the culture, true values, and I did that with the management team. But then even with a whole organisation, using co creation tools, I've given workshops about how to change mindsets, and workshops about how to increase empowerment, how to deal with stress. So I give a lot of workshops, all about how you can deal in these fast changing and uncertain times that we are living in. So that's the bulk of what I do. I have an online programme leading authentically in digital times, I give keynotes and I give workshops. And in these two and a half years, I have learned a lot. I felt that I

had learned already a lot when I was a CEO of an organisation of 130 people. But launching my own business starting from zero or like some people say going from zero to one is completely different than transforming an existing organisation. And so I have really learned so much about myself again about how to run a startup, but also about how to run an online business and how to do online marketing because that also is completely different. I started my career in marketing and sales. But I can assure you that marketing today has nothing to do with the marketing that I did 15 years ago. So now I'm going to share my wins and my struggles. So my first win is purpose over profit. And so when I started, I really wanted to make a difference. I came from an organisation where my shareholders only cared about short term profits. And that costed me a lot. But I also saw that it costed a lot to the to the organisation because I truly believe that when you serve your customer, with all your heart and when you have that purpose, then the money will follow and profit will follow and that is what I saw also in my business. So at the end, I will also share a little bit about my financials. But I see that profit follows purpose but what Does that mean exactly? Well, what it means first is that I always connect to my purpose, when I give a keynote when I give a webinar, when I'm talking to potential customers that wants to buy something from me. And that is also why I give a lot of things for free, I did a free five day challenge. You listen to this free podcast, I have a free youtube video, I share a lot of tips and tricks on social media, because I really want to transform leaders, whether they buy from me or not. And I've calculated that I only need 1% of the people buying from me to be able to help hundred percent of the people that follow me. And that's how I believe that profit will follow purpose. Because, I mean, well, I want to help people. But of course, I have to make a living also, because I otherwise I won't be able to help you anymore. And that's why I love this business model, where I can help a lot of people, and I only need 1% of buyers, and have people that buy from me from time to time to be able to make profits and to continue this meaningful life I have. And so I have been in situations where I could make money where I could make a lot of money. But that wasn't aligned with my purpose. And so I said no, even in the beginning, when I wasn't making a lot of money. I was saying no, because I believe that I had to follow my purpose. And when I say purpose over profit, what I'm also very proud of is the meaningful life I have. So when I started my organisation, I really thought about what if I had all the money of the world? How would my life look like? And then I thought, Okay, this is what I want to have. It's my little house in Andalusia where I spent one week per month, it's being there for my children, it's exercising, it's not working too much. And of course, it's helping you have a meaningful life and organisations become more human again. And and then I thought, Okay, then how much money do I need to make if I want this life? And how am I going to make that money. That's how I built my business, and how I built my business model and why I decided to launch an online business. Because with an online business, I can work also, wherever I want. And so I have now really this meaningful life where I'm present for my family, for my friend for myself, and for my customers as well, because we have automated a lot of things. Everything that can be automated in our business is automated, so that I can be present to really be there for my customers. So purpose over profit. The second thing I believe, is a win for me is move despite imperfections. And that's really a hard one in a world that is constantly changing. And when you have an online business with online marketing, D algorithms, they change all the time. So my business is constantly evolving, my market is constantly evolving, and probably your market as well. And so the classic way of making a detailed plan and then implementing it, that doesn't work anymore. And so for instance, when I decided to launch my online programme I had made for myself the structure of that programme. I had, then, of course, thought about the transformation I wanted to offer to my customers. And then I had built one module out of six and my sales page. And that's how I sold my first

programme. I only had the structure, one module ready, and my sales page to give information. Then I sent one email, and I got, I don't remember exactly, but I think I got like 25 people starting and I made 23,000 euros with the first launch of my course. And then I started building it. Well, people were following it. So I built every week I build a new module. It was a lot of work, but I moved despite imperfection. It was the same with my videos, my first videos and I've kept them because I wanted to share them one day. They were really bad. I can assure you that when you start making videos of yourself at the beginning, you suck. I know I'm still not not perfect, but I saw my Self evolving. The more I made videos, the better I became. And it was really hard in the beginning because I hated seeing me on these videos. And I was thinking, but people won't like me because I suck. I even had a friend one day calling me. And she said, Murielle, I have to give you feedback. And I know it will be hard. And you know how I can be but I mean, it's well, but I wanted to say to you that the videos they really suck, and I said, Okay, and what's what's not good? Yeah, the light is not good. And your your hair is not good. And the way you speak is not good. And but I said, but have you listened to my message? Well, to be honest, Muriel, it was so bad that I couldn't really listen to what you were saying. And this was really, really horrible. I remember, going into my bedroom, when I, when I hang up, I went to my bedroom, and I started crying, because I was already thinking of myself that my video sucked. And then I had this good friend with good intentions, because she proposed a solution to me, with good intentions telling me that my videos were so bad that she couldn't even listen to them. This was really a very difficult moment. But I continued, I continued, and I have to tell you that with these first videos, I think I made like 150,000 euros of revenues in my course with these first videos. And so whatever people are telling you, they will tell you that you suck, they will try to help you by saying you should improve this or you should improve that. Just continue because you will become better. And the people that were taking my course, they were listening to what I was saying they weren't really looking at the lights and my hair and how I was they just saw that I was authentic. And even if I was perfect at all. They liked the course and they got their transformation things to the course. And so I believe that's moving despite imperfection is the most important thing and then improve. And my course has been improved. Over the years, I changed my videos, I think three or four times since the first batch. I also changed the structure, I reduced the chorus I went to the essential. And so just start today it's about starting and moving even if it's not perfect. And even if you get feedback that it's not good enough, just pick yourself up and continue because that's how you will get there. I'm interrupting my own podcast to let you know that in the last years, I've helped many leaders build meaningful lives and organisations and I've identified specific traits that characterises each of them. Do you want to know which type of leader you are? Take our free two minute quiz to find out, go to rebelleaderwithaheart.com/quiz or to the show notes of this episode to take it, you'll receive your leadership profile, seven personalised lessons and a roadmap to transform yourself, your team or organisation. And remember, you are a leader of your life. You don't have to have a team to take this quiz. Now, let's go back to our episode. So my first one was purpose over profit. The second one is move despite imperfection. And the third one, I believe that is a win is energy over time. And what I mean by that is for me, I measure my return on time. For me it is more important to manage my energy, and to be sure that I feel good then to manage my time. And that's why I don't work a lot of hours. Usually I work five to six hours per day. Of course, there are weeks where I work a little bit more especially during a lounge. But normally I work between five or six hours a day. And why do I do that? It's because I know that I have to manage my beliefs. And then I have to manage my energy over my time because when I have high energy, that's when I'm creative. That's when I present well on my videos or on my podcast. That's when I manage to be there for my

customers to really listen to them. That's also how I sell better what I have to offer. And so having energy makes all the difference. And so I hired very soon. And why did I hire, it's very soon because I wanted to protect my energy. And I hate doing administration, I am not very good in all the details. And that's why my sister does that she likes that she she enjoys going into the details, and organising things. I'm not very good at that. And that's why I hired her. And then in March, I hired Daphne. And she does she helps me with the social media with a digital marketing, but also with a strategy. But I hired to keep my energy level up so that I could really delegate and collaborate for all the things that I don't like doing or that cost me energy. Yeah, and you might wonder, but hiring costs a lot of money. And yes, it does. But by being able to really work on the things that give me energy, I managed to increase the revenues. And also currently, I pay myself a very small salary, Tatiana, and definitely have a higher salary than mine. But I have this really meaningful life with a lot of freedom, I help people. I've never had such a great life as I have today. And that's what I often tell people is, well, when you are happy, when you have a meaningful life, you need less money. And I can still do a lot of things like, I don't really limit myself, I just have this this great life, and I don't need as much money anymore, as I did in the past. Also, I love working on this energy and having this meaningful life because that allows me to be a part time digital nomads. And what does that mean? It means that I can work from wherever I want, of course, when there is no Corona. So I already went three times to the US and I went there because I took some I went to conferences and two courses there that I loved. Because I learned a lot about marketing, I went to Africa with the pet I, of course, I go a lot to Spain. And so I travel a lot and I can travel Well, I'm working that which is really great. And that helps me also maintain my energy. And maybe a last thing that gives me a lot of energy. But that also makes a crucial difference. In my business is learning. I think that I spend on average one hour every day learning. And how do I do that? I listen to podcasts. So every day I do 10,000 steps with a podcast or an audiobook, I go, I walk and I listen, and I learn. I love watching YouTube videos, I take a lot of online courses, I go to conferences, I love learning. And that's what helps me keeping my business up to date, whether it's content wise, because of course, I teach you a lot of content. So I need to be up to date regarding the content. But also regarding the online marketing, how do you build an online business? And how do you? How do you do the marketing. So my tree wins his purpose over profit, move despite imperfection and energy over time. And now my struggles, because of course, it's not all a success story. I have had a lot of struggles, I thought that being the CEO of an organisation of 130 people was really hard and that being an entrepreneur would be easier. But it isn't. It's a very different kind of stress. But I have a lot of struggles as well. And the first struggle that I have is that I always compare myself with the best. And that's really a curse. I'm very ambitious. And I always look at people that have done things before me, which is great, of course, because on one side, it gives me the energy that it is possible others have done it so you can do it as well. But on the other side, it costs me a lot of energy because I always compare myself to the best that maybe are 10 years before me. And then I always think I'm not good enough. I suck. I only did this I'm not far enough I should be there. And so I constantly have this tension between What I see that it's still possible for me, and where I am today. And that's really something I have to work on, I should stop comparing myself to the best. And I should only compare myself to myself and see the progression I have made. And I know this, I know this, mentally I know this rationally. But if you follow me on my podcast, you know that rationally isn't enough anymore. And so this is something that I have to work on emotionally, and also into my body, I should stop comparing myself with the best, then my second struggle. And that is really ironic, you will see that it's really ironic, you will think is that a struggle, that's that's a strong point. But my struggle is that I am very result

oriented. And I believe that being result oriented in this world today is not the way anymore. Of course, we still need to know what we want. But I believe, and I know, I have to focus on the process over the result. Because I'm this ambitious. And I'm focused on the result. For instance, I launched a YouTube channel and I launched this podcast. But for instance, my YouTube channel, I launched it, and I almost have nobody watching my videos, which when I listen to all the people who have launched their YouTube channels is completely normal in the beginning, and you just have to enjoy the process and to continue and improve. And that's how you will get there. But since I'm so oriented on the results, when I don't get the results that I want, I feel like a failure. So I know I often teach this to my participants that you need to have a growth mindset. And having a growth mindset is when you don't focus on the results, that's when you focus on the process, and you only see results as results. That's it, you don't see results as a failure, because there are not how they how you would like them to be. But that's something that I still struggle over. And also because of that, sometimes I can lose myself, I am so focused on the result that I start doing everything like a perfect student. And when I do that, that's when I lose my focus on my purpose, it has happened once or twice already. I've even made a video about it once. Because sometimes I'm so focused on my ambition and on my results, that I forget who I am that I forget my purpose and that I lose myself. So this is really a big struggle. So no, I really try to focus on the process and to enjoy the process because I know that it's true, improving the process that the results will follow. Okay. And then the third struggle that I have, and that I've always had is that I'm impatient. And I love new things. I love starting a new project. I love setting up a new campaign. I love starting a new programme. But then or I loved starting this new podcast and starting the new YouTube channel. But then because I don't get the results that I want immediately, not fast enough, I can get impatient, and then struggle with consistency. And so this is really something I have to work on this impatience of mine because I know that building a business takes time and needs consistency. And so also sometimes I noticed that I have what Jay Shetty calls a monkey mind instead of having a monk mind. So I'm looking for this instant grab and fast gratification, I want to do something and I want it immediately to have an effect. Well, I should just again, enjoy the process and really focus on Okay, it's going to come and trust that it's going to come. So my struggles are comparing myself with the best results over process and then sometimes losing myself and my impatience.

Okay, so I promised you also that I would talk a little bit about my financials. So I started this online business in 2018. And then I made 100 30,000 euros and we were with my sister and I. And that's when also we make a loss of 33,000 euros as well. So from the start, I've always paid myself a salary because I know sometimes people start and they don't pay themselves. I've always paid myself a salary. And then in 2019, there we made almost 140,000 euros, and we were break even, which was really great. In year two, we were already break even. And now we are 2020. And when I did my last bookkeeping, I do that every three months. We were at the end of September, we are really lucky because this year, we hired Daphne. So we are now tree. And I hired her right before COVID started. So it was a very difficult year, because during the period of March till June, I got zero calls, zero emails and zero new customers. And I know it's the same for everyone. But total 2020 was really different here. But still, we are now by the end of September. And we are already making profit. So even if we don't sell anything in the last three months anymore, we are already making some profit. And it looks like that we will end up the year, around 210,000 euros with a profits between 10 and 50,000 euros. So that is really, really great. I'm happy about it. And I'm also very lucky because in times of Corona, I know that a lot of organisations struggle. And then what is also great when you have an online business

is that you have very high gross margin. So my gross margin is 85% it means that we only have approximately 15% cost of sales. And most of that is for the university for Solvay Brussels school. It's the commission that we give them. And our biggest costs are our salaries. So 56% of our costs are our salaries, then we have 7%, it costs that is our second biggest cost. Because like I told you, we automate a lot. And it means that we have bought a lot of systems and that is so wonderful today is that you can automate so many things. And it's so easy to do. Because all these systems that you can buy, they have a lot of how tos that you simply follow because neither definitely Tatiana or I are it people and we manage to automate a lot ourselves. Then also, we hire freelancers and marketing that's both approximately 5% of our costs. So I'm hoping one day to make the 1 million euro revenues. I was hoping to make that faster. But I have to stay patient Of course, and I know that I will get there someday, with of course, first having my purpose in mind, because that is so much more important than the profits. Okay, that was it for today. And in my next podcast, I wanted to talk about the beliefs. And I've read a very interesting book. It's quite an old book now from Tony Robbins. And I really liked one specific parts of that book where he analysed the beliefs of highly successful people. And he saw that among these highly successful and happy people, they had seven beliefs that were in common. And that's what's my next podcast will be about the seven beliefs of highly successful people. So don't forget, please leave a rating and also leave a review because that will help me with my podcast. And also subscribe to my podcast if you want to receive the next episode automatically, but also if you want to have a meaningful life and organisation so thank you and I'll see you or we'll we'll hear each other next week. Bye. Yeah, you finished another episode of rebel leader with a hearts if you want more, go to rebelleaderwithaheart.com for show notes and past episodes. If you love the show, subscribe, leave a review and share it with a friend The more the merrier. Every year thanks for tuning in and have a great week you rebel leader with a hearts