

# SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESSEN, FOUNDER OF **membermouse™**

## EP 126: What No One Tells You About Growing A Membership Site with Neely Quinn

*"I made this business so that I could do all of these things. And it used to be that I was extremely business-focused. I would stay up all night and I would never go climbing. And it wrecked me. In fact, it made me have two shoulder surgeries because I was hunched over a computer for so long. And so, I think that at that point I was like, I can't make this my whole life."*

### **INTRO:**

You're listening to Neely Quinn, our guest on today's show.

Neely is an amazing entrepreneur and the brains behind TrainingBeta.com - a membership site and community that provides its members with a rich library of resources related to rock climbing and bouldering. Neely has been a MemberMouse customer for many years and it has been a privilege to watch her grow and evolve her business over time.

In case you're wondering... MemberMouse is a business I started over 10 years ago - we're a membership and subscription platform for WordPress and help entrepreneurs like you build powerful and profitable online recurring revenue businesses. Check us out at [membermouse.com](http://membermouse.com)

Last time Neely and I spoke was about a year ago and it was great to have her back on the show and hear what she's been up to in her life and business since then. In our conversation we cover...

- The challenges we face at different stages of business growth
- Finding and claiming the freedom we actually set out to achieve
- Understanding the difference between product and membership sales
- Getting comfortable with promoting yourself

Something I really appreciate about Neely is her realness and willingness to share the good and the bad about entrepreneurship. You won't find any "rah, rah" hype in this episode, just a conversation between two travelers along the entrepreneurial path. I hope you enjoy and benefit from our discussion.

As always, I'm your host Eric Turnnessen and this is Episode 126 of the Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

**Eric:** Welcome back to the show, Neely.

**Neely:** Thank you for having me. I appreciate it.

**Eric:** Of course. We last spoke in September of 2018. I imagine you've been climbing a lot of walls since then.

**Neely:** September, yes. I have been climbing quite a bit since then. And really, really loving it and really appreciating the fact that I can do that, given my job situation.

**Eric:** Sure. And have you been traveling for that?

**Neely:** Yeah. We went to Spain for a month to climb. We went to the Red River Gorge in Kentucky last October, November. And then I've been climbing a lot around Boulder, actually, and it's been really fun.

**Eric:** What are the things that are the deciding points on where you're going to go? Is it that, "I want to do a wall of this certain skill level and this is where it is so I'm going to go there?" What are the factors that you use to determine where you're going to travel?

**Neely:** Well, all of the areas that we go to have a lot of different walls, so most of the time I'm not climbing anything that's higher than 120 feet. And, well, all of the time. I almost never climb higher than that. And so, it's more about, does this area have enough climbs that are at my ability that I want to do? And who's going to be there? And what are the lodging situation? And how hard is it to travel there? But basically, when we went to Spain it was just because one of our best friends was like, "Hey, you want to go to Spain?" And we were like, "Okay." So sometimes it's a little whimsical.

**Eric:** It's basically the same way that I would determine what theme park to go to. Like, what are the rides? How many rides can I go on? I'm not interested in that teacup ride, so that's-

**Neely:** Yeah. That's a really great metaphor or analogy.

**Eric:** And rock climbing has gotten on my radar just in other ways because, and I don't know if these are recent, but they've come to me, The Dawn Wall and Free Solo, these documentaries that came out following people doing crazy stuff. When movies like that come out with the focus on rock climbing, do you see any spike in people coming to your site or on your social network?

**Neely:** No. But I haven't really paid attention to that. It's possible that that is happening. That's a good question.

**Eric:** Well, we'll just leave it unanswered. That's a great question. You know, you sound a lot like me at various stages of my business. People ask me, a lot of times it's my dad, "How's everything going in the business?" I'm like, "It's good."

**Neely:** Right, yeah.

**Eric:** He's like, "Okay, well what about your numbers?" And I'm like, "Yeah. I think they're fine."

**Neely:** They're okay. They're good enough.

**Eric:** And this is an interesting component, I think, about starting a business in a certain way. I know that there are certain people who are very much on top of all that stuff. But I think one thing that you and I have in common is it's a lifestyle business, right? These things have to do with our passion, but our focus isn't 100% on getting to the top of that business wall where you're hitting these major goals and doing all this stuff. It's like, no. Make sure everybody in the community's happy, produce content that I'm really interested in and that I think can help people. And make sure there are processes in place that automate the business so that I can continue to explore things in my life that I'm interested in and then feed back into the business, right?

**Neely:** Yeah, exactly. Sometimes I'm like, well, does he really want to talk to me on this interview? Because that's true. I mean, I made this business so that I could do all of these things. And it used to be that I was extremely business-focused and driven and motivated and I would stay up all night and I would never go climbing. And it wrecked me. In fact, it made me have two shoulder surgeries because I was hunched over a computer for so long. And I think that at that point I was like, I can't make this my whole life. I have to have-

**Eric:** Wait, that was just because of working at the computer? Or it was because you were working at the computer and trying to push yourself climbing?

**Neely:** Honestly, I was fine climbing. I was fine. And then I had this heinous work thing, this big project, and I spent 100 hours a week hunched over my computer for three weeks to a month. And the day after it was done, I tried to go climbing and both of my shoulders were just wrecked.

**Eric:** That's what I'm saying. Yeah, that's tough. But it is about the balance. We have to build something that can be that engine, but then pull it back. Actually, I did a podcast recording yesterday with my brother and he has a business as well, in fashion. And we basically talked about a similar arc, where he's creative and it's a passion, it's a passion business. But then for all of us, with success, the business gets to a place where the business starts driving the show a little bit. And we each of us have stories where we end up in this situation where you're working 100 hours a week and he is doing this and I'm doing that. And then you have to wake up one day and be like, wait a second. This isn't why I got into this.

I think this is an interesting thing to talk about and then dive into, finding that balance. Because you can't just have a pet and not put food out for it. You have to know where that line is. I imagine, given that you're traveling, there are things that you do on the road to check in on the business, right? You're not just completely off the grid?

**Neely:** Oh, for sure. Yeah. I mean, no. And that's the cool thing about it, is that sometimes I take true vacations where I just don't work at all. But it's pretty easy for me to, in Spain after a day of climbing, come home, check on everything, do my emails. And I would even see nutrition clients from there that I got through my website. And then I'm still managing people, I'm still doing all the things. And that's very important to me, that I can always be available and able to handle things.

**Eric:** And I know for me, one of the critical components ... Because I tried to do this prematurely, at one point. I got burned out in my business at a point and I basically went on a trip to Mexico and I completely checked out. And the way that I told myself to do that, I put somebody in a position, in a role, to cover all the things that I was doing, but it didn't really appropriately train them. When I got back, I was like, okay. That didn't really work out that well, but I got some time away.

But what I did realize is, okay. I need to start replacing myself. This is the only way. All the things that I'm doing, I'm responsible for, I need to find people, hire people, who can take those over and basically become more of an overseer of what people are doing, check in with them and provide guidance. Is that something that has been similar in your business as well?

**Neely:** Yeah, for sure. I was doing everything myself. And I just want to reflect that I wonder if when you got super burnt out, it was in the beginning. And I remember I was emailing you all the time and being like, "I don't understand this. And how do I do this?" And you were answering all my emails. I was like, how is Eric answering all my emails? That's incredible.

But for sure, for the first year or so I was doing everything myself. And then I went to this mastermind clinic with a bunch of people who I really respect. And they were like, "Neely, no. You need to get somebody to do your social media and all of your content and all of these things. And all of the support emails," so that I'm freed up to do all of the other things. And that's exactly what I did, and it completely changed my life.

**Eric:** Yeah. See, now we're talking, right? Because at the beginning of this, you were saying, "Well, I'm not doing anything, actually, to grow my business." But what you just said, that's what you do to grow your business. The things that have been my challenges in the growth phase of the business is how do I stop becoming the block for moving forward? Putting processes in place, automation, people. These are things that I actually was very resistant to because for me, my biggest fear was relinquishing control. I don't know if that's something you relate to.

**Neely:** That was definitely a big fear of mine. And not having the money to pay these people to do things. And once I realized that it wasn't going to cost me all of my money to do it and it was actually a very palatable amount, I was like, "Oh. This is so smart. Why didn't I do this forever ago?"

But yeah, I'm kind of a perfectionist with certain things. And I want the site to have a certain tone to it and I want to present professionally. And so, it was really scary for me to say, "Okay, you take over the blog, even though I'm a complete grammar freak." And there were growing pains, for sure. I had to get on the same page with the people that I hired to run all of the content creation. And that took a while. And luckily, one of them has stayed with me for years, and so it's really nice now.

**Eric:** And I found personally that patience and trust were the biggest things that I needed to work on. Because in the beginning when I first started hiring people, I would basically just micromanage them. Like on support team. "Show me what you're sending the customer before you send it." So, I can make sure that it's, whatever.

But then I realized at a certain point, okay. Doing that is basically keeping these people from thinking they can make their own decisions. It's almost as if I didn't even hire anybody. It's like I did and I was paying them but I wasn't allowing them to grow in a resource and make mistakes. Because that's how I learn, too. And so, I wasn't allowing people to learn from their own experience, which is essential, I think.

**Neely:** For sure. I totally agree with you. And most of the time when something goes up on my site or my social media, I don't even know about it because I trust them so much. But then there are big things that I still have oversight with, because it just makes me feel more comfortable. Like with big things that we put out. But it is nice, first of all for me, because I don't like social media. I don't like being on it. I don't like taking my time to do it. And so, to just not have to even think about that is incredible.

**Eric:** Yeah. I'm the same way. I mean, I have an Instagram account, but somebody else puts stuff on it for me. Like, "This is what Eric did today." And people will tell me outside of social media, "Oh, I saw that thing on Instagram." Oh, let me look. I haven't seen it.

**Neely:** Right, yeah? Me too.

**Eric:** What did I do that day?

**Neely:** Yeah, that's funny. Yeah, in Spain I was like, "I'm going to try to be on social media more." And I made two stories and it was exhausting. And I haven't done one since.

**Eric:** Oh no. It's so bad. Yeah, I got it into my head this summer for six weeks that I was going to try social media, and I did. And it was whatever. And I found more than anything, for me personally, it was just distracting. It's like trying to go out in a rainstorm and not get wet. It's impossible. You put yourself in that environment and there's just so much stuff going on and flying ... And also, the whole thing where Instagram totally listens to your conversations and shows you ads based on what you're talking about.

**Neely:** Which, honestly, sometimes I really appreciate. Last night, I was looking for a bed frame and it gave me exactly what I wanted. So, yes. I don't like the idea of it, but sometimes it's convenient. But I think that your analogy of going in a rainstorm and not wanting to get wet is really ... You're full of good analogies today.

**Eric:** Thanks.

**Neely:** Yeah. And I think that some people think of it as an art form, and that's why those people are really good at it. But honestly, I think that it does hold me back a little bit, that I'm not involved in that part of things very much. Because I can't brainstorm with these people and give them good ideas for how we can grow the business using social media. I can look it up and give them ideas, but I feel like that is maybe a little bit of a downfall of being a 40-something person who just doesn't care that much about it. But I don't know.

**Eric:** No, I agree with you. And I run into that same thing, too. I question, should I even be the CEO of this company? Because there's so many things I don't know about. But the thing is, I'm coming more to the point where I'm realizing that it's just about driving the vision. And my job is to keep the thing going, make sure that everybody who decided to be a part of it, whether they're team members or customers et cetera, that nothing is done that can jeopardize their trust in the company. But in terms of growth, we talked about Rich Debt, Poor Debt, didn't we, last time?

**Neely:** Probably, yeah, a little bit.

**Eric:** Okay. But it's like from that book. Basically, one of his things was, from his rich dad, the thing that he observed that really changed his life was oh, he just surrounds himself with really smart people. It's not that he knows everything that everybody else knows, it's that creating the team is really the legacy, is the thing that drives the company forward. And it's so challenging. It's just one of those things that just, its own thing.

**Neely:** Yeah. I mean, we can compare ourselves narcissistically to Steve Jobs in this moment. Because he certainly didn't know how to make the things that Apple made. But he just told people what to do and they did a good job. And made sure that they did a good job. I guess that's what we're doing.

**Eric:** Yeah. And also, I think providing the example, energetically, the enthusiasm. Because I've also been through phases of MemberMouse when I was like, "Don't talk to me. Nobody talk to me about MemberMouse." You know?

**Neely:** Yeah, totally.

**Eric:** And that flows down. That trickles down through everybody. The critical thing looking back, for me, is the cycle of burnout, basically. I was doing the cycle of burnout. I would get burnt out, I would have to disappear. I'd come back, work, get burnout, disappear. That is not

sustainable and creates all sorts of problems. So, bringing in people, building the teams, learning to work with those teams and encourage people to come into their own.

I think one of the major things that I appreciate these days is that the good ideas aren't just coming from me. Other people are enthusiastic about MemberMouse internally, and come up with great ideas. And I, kind of like an outsider, look at what gets put on the blog or something else that happens. I'm like, oh, that was awesome. It's great not to have to be a part of everything. Which is weird, because coming from a place where originally, I was afraid not to be a part of everything.

**Neely:** I know, yeah. You get used to it.

**Eric:** But you are doing some pretty cool things on your site. I mean, I poked around on there and specifically talking about getting into now content strategies, retention and stuff, everything, not all of the products you're offering on your site are subscription products. You have some training programs that are one-time purchases. I'm wondering, if you know, how does this play out in your business? Do most people sign up for your ongoing subscriptions and then buy standalone products? Or do your customers typically start with one of your courses and then progress to a subscription?

**Neely:** I think that a lot of people start with an e-book purchase. And they're like, "Let's try these guys out." And then they'll have some success with it and then they'll be like, "Okay. I'll do more of a subscription program." And then they'll jump on one of our ... It's like a training program for either climbers or boulderers, which means nothing to most of your audience. But it's just different kinds of climbing. And so, then they're more of a member of our community, where they're paying us every month and they're doing our program and they're either getting better or not. At which point, they'll stop.

But a lot of times, people will also start with the subscription program and they'll be like, "I actually want to focus a lot on my finger strength right now." So, they'll buy a finger strength program. Or they'll be like, "You know, I need more individual help." And so, they'll either contact me for nutrition stuff, because that's low-hanging fruit for climbers. We just change our diets up a little. Or they'll do more training with my trainer, Matt Pincus, where he does online training with climbers around the world. And so, it can go in a lot of different ways, but we also have had people on the subscription program for years now. And they just do it every week. It's been amazing to me.

**Eric:** That's great.

**Neely:** It's kind of all over the place. And it's nice. And that's what I want, I wanted people to have options. A lot of options.

**Eric:** Yeah. And I'm going to read a quote from the last conversation that we had, which I think is related to this. Because last time we were talking about, you were saying how you were



hesitant about placing sales offers across your site. You said, "We could be doing a better job at this. I don't like to be in your face about things. I put links in the side bars, at the bottom of the blog. I have banners. We mention it in the podcast sometimes. And I used to take ad sponsors for the podcast. And I realized it was worth more to me to fill those slots for myself." Is this still something that's true for you?

**Neely:** Yeah, it is. I don't know that I'm ever going to get over that, unless I told somebody to take over for me and then they started doing it. It's just not part of my personality. I mean, you can even see in the way that I answer questions, I'm not a long-winded person. I don't like to take up that much space in the world. Which is something I'm working on in therapy, but it carries over through into my business. And I think that that is good for my community. In other communities, it was totally different. Like in the paleo world, people are more okay with that.

**Eric:** Yeah. They talk a lot.

**Neely:** Right? But also, people are like, "Oh, I don't know what it is about climbers, but they're cynical and very discerning and skeptical," and a bunch of different things that don't bode well for a business, really.

**Eric:** Well, I know a positive spin on it.

**Neely:** What?

**Eric:** From my perspective. I've done maybe about five days of climbing. And the thing that I learned the most is that energy conservation is a critical component of success. I was trying to muscle through the climbing, but just because you make it to the top doesn't mean that's success. Because there's nowhere you can go from there. To me, speech is one of the biggest expenditures of energy. If you can accomplish more in less, to me, that's a good thing.

**Neely:** Yeah. I think that's how I feel about it. If people are looking for a program and they know that they want help, when they come to our site, they're going to find it. That's what I think. That's how I feel.

**Eric:** Yeah, yeah, that's right.

**Neely:** And if they don't want it, I don't want to be screaming in their faces.

**Eric:** Yeah. But I also think that you do a really good job on your site, even with that filter where you're not trying to push things in people's face. You do a good job of repurposing your content. For example, you do your podcast, you have somebody do a transcription, but then you create a transcript highlight as a blog post. And within that, I've seen in some of your transcript highlights, in the mid-part of the thing where you're giving people this content, you will put a relevant ad for one of your programs that are related to maybe what's being talked about in the podcast. That's an amazing strategy.

**Neely:** Yeah. That's something. I think that what I'm missing right now is actually putting in a minute ad for myself in the middle of each of the podcasts. But putting in little advertisements here and there on the blog posts about the transcript highlights or whatever, that's low-hanging fruit that I didn't even realize that I could be doing until recently. And that reminds me, because I think we forgot to do it in the last couple of blog posts. But I think that it's really effective and pretty subtle if you do it right. You have a captive audience at that point.

**Eric:** Sure. If they've made it that far, yeah.

**Neely:** Yeah. In the beginning of a podcast they, a lot of times, will fast forward. At the end, they will just skip the whole end, the outro. But in the middle of the episode, that's prime real estate, I think. And so that's what I'm avoiding doing right now because I don't ... All these things are things that I probably could be doing.

But I will say that for some reason, recently I started to get a lot more nutrition clients. And I think it came at the same time that I changed how I start my podcast. And I started by very subtly saying, "Welcome to the TrainingBeta podcast. I just want to remind you that the TrainingBeta podcast is an offshoot of the site that I created, called TrainingBeta.com, where we," blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Because I heard somebody else do that in a podcast and I was like, that's really nice. It's just a friendly reminder, and that's what I want people to know. And I think that we had a couple of our best months since I started doing that. And so that's working. And it doesn't feel too over-the-top for me to do that.

**Eric:** Yeah. That's a really good point, because part of the thing about the podcast is, yeah, it's fun to do them. But the other part of doing it is strategically, we want them to be tools that guide people back to our catalog, right?

**Neely:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Of what we do and what supports us being able to do podcasts. Yeah, I think that's a really nice thing to do. You may hear maybe a change in our intro script.

**Neely:** Yeah, right. I know. Yeah. It was this random English, like I said, I'm a grammar freak. And this was The History of the English Language podcast guy. I was like, oh, this is so nerdy. And I love it.

**Eric:** Yeah, that is. That sounds like something that maybe if I'm having trouble sleeping-

**Neely:** Yes, totally. Yes.

**Eric:** How are you approaching content these days? Because we talked about how a big thing for you right now, and it's kind of coming to a level of success for you in terms of why you created this business, is for the flexibility so you can take trips, continue to follow your passion

of climbing. You still need to make sure you're keeping an eye on the business. Now, in terms of creating content, you do have subscription courses. How do you approach creating new content for these paid programs? Are you doing it every week? Is that, again, something that your team is wholly responsible for?

**Neely:** No. Well, in the beginning, we had a trainer who worked for us and he would update those every week. They get three workouts every week. And once we reached week 74-ish on each of them, we actually stopped creating new content. And we just recycled it. Once they get to week 74, they just start over. Which makes sense in a cyclical training program like that. So, we didn't feel out of integrity doing that, because you can't just always do new things. That was really convenient for us. And that's how it's been for the last, since 2015 or something. So, for four years we've been running on these programs that are already made. We have to do nothing with them, which is very convenient for all of us so we can focus on other things. That's what we do with that.

But I will say that we are working on new programs, because these programs aren't exactly in line with my philosophies now and my trainer's philosophies now, who is a different trainer than who originally built these training programs. And so, we're creating new programs and it's hard, because having a back end that works as a platform, basically, I mean you know what it is to build a platform. It's hard. And my husband is a software engineer and so he's designing it. But that takes time when you also have a full-time job to work.

**Eric:** What platform, exactly, are you designing?

**Neely:** It's just a platform for a consumer to get their workouts, to see their workouts. So he has to build a UI, then he has to have timers on there and ways to track progress and all those things. All the things that were missing from our current platform, which he also built, was very simple. And so, we're working on that and it's taking time-

**Eric:** Yeah. That's another good example of the challenges that face businesses in the growth period. Because naturally, we start at a place and wherever we start, we are going to continue to grow personally. And also, we're going to be getting feedback. At some point, we have to take where we are and what feedback we've gotten and reincorporate that into the business, which usually ends up being a large investment of some kind.

And so those are perfect challenges and how you're handling them is by what you just explained. You're investing, putting money back into the business, to build this new platform to address some of the feedback you've gotten and some of the personal feelings you have about it. To release a product that's more in line with what you think the true value is that you want to offer.

**Neely:** Yeah, exactly. And it's crazy, because in three years, there will be new science about training and we'll probably want to change things again. But luckily with this platform that he's building, it'll be much easier to do that. It's hard keeping up and making everybody happy.

Because if we were to build something that would be very user-friendly, all the things has a phone app and all that and pay somebody to do that, it would be upwards of \$100,000. And as a small business owner, I definitely don't have that. And I don't want to take out loans. And some businesses do. That's just how businesses work. But for me, I'm like, "No. We can bootstrap this thing together." But that's just a choice, I guess.

**Eric:** It's a personality type. And I 100% understand that, because I'm the same way. As soon as you borrow money, especially an amount of money that's a large amount, now not only do you have customers who we have to answer to, now you have money people you have to answer to. And that changes the whole equation in terms of why you started a business and what you want to focus on.

**Neely:** Totally. Especially for a person whose main goal in life is to have freedom. All of the freedom. I don't want to have strings attached to anybody.

**Eric:** Yeah. Like Pinocchio.

**Neely:** Yeah.

**Eric:** When do you think that that's going to be coming out? And, I mean I guess it's not so much important when. But when that does come out, do you see that there are additional things where you'll need to focus on in the business in terms of maybe will you need to hire new people? Do you need to grow revenues to a certain point to support growing your team?

**Neely:** I don't think so. No. That's kind of the plan, is it'll be easier to plug things into and maintain than the old system was, even. And if anything, we could bring more trainers on and they could build programs that are subscription based for other programs. So we'll have Matt's program, and then with this platform we can have as many trainers on there as we want and sell as many programs as we want. It'd be sort of like the running site where you can get a plan from 50 different trainers. And so that's where we're going with it and maybe we'd need a little bit more support, help. And that's fine. I can just hire somebody else if it gets to the point where we're making more money doing that. But I don't foresee any reason why we would need to expand to accommodate this.

**Eric:** Yeah. Well, that's a really intelligent strategy. Basically, crowd sourcing, in a sense. I mean, you would hand-pick these people to create content, but your contribution is you're creating the distribution platform for different people. And then you would be increasing, by that sole investment, you increase your catalog by giving the opportunity to other trainers to come to you. And it's a win-win because that gets you more content without having to do the work. That gets them a place to distribute their content without having to build the site or the platform.

**Neely:** Exactly, yeah.

**Eric:** So, yeah. That sounds-

**Neely:** It's totally win-win.

**Eric:** Really cool.

**Neely:** But then other ways that we're growing are, I'm actually thinking about bringing somebody. We're kind of a team in that I do nutrition, Matt does the training. And I'm going to bring somebody else on to do sports psychology with people. But that doesn't really have anything to do with the membership site. We could probably do things with that, where people are members of a nutrition group. And I've definitely thought about that, where they get content, fresh content every month, for sure, building a program like that. And people could do the same thing with sports psychology. The possibilities are pretty limitless with what we could do with a subscription program. But those are the kinds of things that we're thinking about right now.

**Eric:** That's cool. That's an interesting point about the sports psychology thing. And I think also it's an outcome of another great practice of a growing business, which is to make sure that you continue to listen to your audience. Because a lot of times, they're the ones who are going to be telling you where the opportunities are for you. What are the primary ways that you're getting this feedback from your customers about what they want? What channels?

**Neely:** I'm sure you understand this, but more often than not I get feedback about what people don't want from me. And ironically, it's me. They don't want me to voice my opinion very much. That's not true. Sometimes when I write blog posts, it's fine. But on the podcast, at least. I'll get emails, I'll get comments on posts, I'll get social media comments. And then we also have a training group on Facebook. And we have 7,000 people in there or something at this point. And there are a lot of really active people in there. It was very surprising to me how big it got. So, I can see what they're looking for in training programs.

And then I also will do questionnaires with my audience, so I'll send it out to my email list, I'll put it on that group. I'll put it on all of our social media. And that's been super helpful, because people will actually be honest about what they want in a training program and what they want from us. And so those are the ways that I hear from people.

**Eric:** Right. How did you take that? I mean, I don't get what that means when somebody says they don't want to hear your opinions when it's your podcast. What does that actually mean?

**Neely:** It's really funny, right? It just means there have been a couple of episodes where I inserted my own opinions more than I usually do. Like for instance, about crag ethics and how people are behaving at climbing areas. And I have a real strong opinion about that and I let myself go a little bit on one of the episodes. And I got a lot of messages where it was like, "She went a little too far, this was a ..." Yeah. People just didn't like that.

**Eric:** Ranting? Ranting?

**Neely:** Yeah. They thought I was ranting. And so that lets me know that yes, some people probably appreciated it and I did get some messages like that. But also, my brand is that I am more of a vessel for other people. I am more of a carrier for other people's information. And that's fine with me.

**Eric:** Yeah. I mean, that's actually another thing that I can resonate with. I mean, it's not necessarily about not sharing your opinion. It's just that, like you said, whatever comes through you has to check through your own self but also check through the other things that you represent, right? So, it's more about discernment in terms of how to put something forward. PR, basically. It's politic because whenever we say something, especially if there's a wider audience ...

First of all, there's always going to be a group of people aren't going to like it. And that just has to be a given. My rule of thumb is, I've learned to check in with myself emotionally, how I'm feeling in a moment. And if I'm feeling triggered and emotional, then I'm pretty sure that whatever I'm going to be saying is not going to go well.

**Neely:** That's a really good litmus test.

**Eric:** There can't be true clarity in those moments.

**Neely:** Yeah, you're right. And that's the whole thing. I think that's why people do listen to my podcast and maybe steer away from other podcasts. Because they resonate with how neutral I am with most of my guests, and I'm just asking the questions that they would have asked themselves. And I'm not talking about myself, usually. And so, I have to be okay with that and honor and respect that.

And that goes for every outlet that we have on this site. I feel like our job, our role in our community, is to be neutral and fair. And base our opinions on facts. And that's a cool place to be, because a lot of websites about climbing become these troll fests where people are just on there commenting and saying really stupid stuff. And we don't have that at all on our site, which I'm really proud of that. Because I feel like we must have built something that has integrity.

**Eric:** What do you attribute ... Because I know that for any of us who have sites or even YouTube channels where we open up our content to comment, that's an issue, right? What do you see the reasons are on your site that that handle self-governs itself?

**Neely:** I think a lot of times, what we put on our site is me based. Not me personally, but people will hire writers to talk about their personal experience with what worked for them, or what works for them with their clients. And it's not preachy at all, and it's definitely not offensive at all. It's just information being disseminated. And even when I write articles, it's "This is what I did for me and this is what worked for me and this is what I think about it."

**Eric:** I see.

**Neely:** And so, it's never, "This is what you should do. But this is information," or whatever. And we make that very clear.

**Eric:** So, it's a communication style in terms of how you're getting the information out there.

**Neely:** Yeah. And I think some people, at least, appreciate that.

**Eric:** I appreciate that, for sure. Because none of us like to feel like we're being told what to do.

**Neely:** Yeah. We all think we know what to do.

**Eric:** Yeah. Now, you have the opportunity to choose when you work and when you climb. How do you determine that? Is it something that you have a strategy for? Or is it just whatever happens.

**Neely:** Oh, it's definitely not whatever happens, but there is some flexibility built in. Like, every Wednesday-ish I like to do a podcast. Every Monday, I like to check in and get caught up. I have a basic outline of what I want my weeks to look like. And then there are some flex days in there, where if I get a partner and it's good weather, I can go climbing. Or even a half day. And sometimes, I'm just like, "I don't want to."

Yesterday, for instance, I went to bed late, I had been training and climbing a lot. I was, whatever. I just didn't set an alarm. And I woke up at 10:30. I wasn't expecting to do that. But the reason I let myself do it was I had nothing on my schedule that day and I knew I needed the rest. And I gave it to myself.

And it's funny, because I feel a little bit shameful even saying that I slept until 10:30. But then I think about it and I preach this to my clients. I really think that we all need more sleep. And when I can give it to myself, I'm going to do that. And I think it's really important. And I feel super, super lucky that I get to. It's kind of like that. I'm sort of on a schedule and then when I have time, sometimes I'll just take a day off to go do errands or whatever. And that's really freeing and liberating for me.

**Eric:** Yeah. That's nice. When is your next climbing outing? Do you have anything scheduled for the fourth?

**Neely:** My husband is injured, so we're not going to go climbing anywhere. But I'm just going to climb around here and then I get to go to Wyoming for a couple of days to climb the week after. And then we're kind of talking about planning a trip to Thailand in the winter. That would be the three-week, month type thing. That will be really fun. And then I'm going to go to Kentucky again in November, because that's pretty much my favorite place to climb.

**Eric:** Nice.

**Neely:** And I'll probably go for about a month. So, yeah.

**Eric:** Well, I hope your husband heals quickly.

**Neely:** Thanks. Me too.

**Eric:** Gets back to work on that platform.

**Neely:** Yeah. Well, it's cool, it's giving him more time to work on it. It's good for me.

**Eric:** Good. Silver lining.

**Neely:** Yeah, right.

**Eric:** But thanks so much for coming back on. I really appreciate it. And it was good catching up with you.

**Neely:** Yeah. Thanks for having me on. And it was really good ... I feel like we're sort of kindred spirits, so it's very easy to talk to you.

**Eric:** Yeah. It's like we're kind of talking to ourselves, a little bit.

**Neely:** Yeah, right? Yes, I already know that, yes.

**Eric:** Just as a final thing, people probably know this already, but if you could just say where people can learn more about what you're doing and how to get in touch with you and if they're interested.

**Neely:** My website is TrainingBeta, like B-E-T-A, and that's because beta in climbing means information, if you're wondering. It's TrainingBeta.com. And then we're @TrainingBeta on social media.

**Eric:** Beta in the computer world means test phase, which is what I thought of.

**Neely:** Right, I know, yeah. It's kind of ... Yeah. You got to be in the know.

**Eric:** Exactly. No, you do. That's definitely true with your stuff. I mean, a 5.1 whatever, an 8.AZ, you know. A lot of technical jargon that goes along with your-

**Neely:** Yeah, it's really niche, for sure. It's really niche. I'll put things on social media and my family's like, "I have no idea what you just said, but congratulations."



**Eric:** Good job with that, Neely. That's great, keep going.

**Neely:** Good job, you look really strong. Yeah, totally.

#### **OUTRO:**

Thank you so much for listening to this entire episode. I appreciate you being here and sincerely hope you got value out of the conversation Neely and I had. Many thanks to Neely for coming back on the show and getting real about what it takes to succeed as an entrepreneur and build a life you love.

If you haven't already listened to the first episode I recorded with Neely, be sure to go back and listen to it. You can find that episode at [SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/105](https://SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/105). In it, Neely reveals how she first started her business, the steps she took to build an engaged community that converts into paying members, and how she ultimately made the business profitable. A lot of great information here.

For more interviews with successful entrepreneurs, experts, and authors be sure to subscribe to the podcast on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, or Stitcher

For the complete show notes, a transcript, and links to all of the resources we mentioned in this episode please visit [SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/126](https://SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/126). We even put a few fun photos of Neely climbing what we can only guess is a 5.12b.

We've got a bit of a surprise in store for you on the next episode of the podcast... I don't want to spoil anything for you so I guess you'll just have to tune in and hear for yourself!

See you then!