

# SUBSCRIPTION ENTREPRENEUR



HOSTED BY ERIC TURNNESSEN, FOUNDER OF [membermouse™](#)

## How Jamie Raftery Turned His Chef Experience Into An Inspiring Membership Site

*"That's always been my challenge over the last few years as holistic chef — how can I multiply myself? Because exchanging my time for money is unsustainable. It's only very short term, a day's salary. It's nothing I can scale. So, with MemberMouse and getting my content on there and having all the tools that I can use, it gives me a way to then strategically plan my business into a way that I can get my knowledge and content on there. And then build the relationships and build everything in a way that the chefs can access it then."*

### **INTRO:**

You're listening to Jamie Raftery – my special guest on today's episode of The Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

I'm really excited to share our conversation with you for two reasons.

The first is because Jamie is a classically trained chef who's worked in many top kitchens and Michelin star rated restaurants over the past 20 years.

And the second is because he's also an awesome entrepreneur and the founder of The Holistic Chef Academy.

It's a cooking site and paid membership community that provides people with healthy and delicious plant-based recipes.

In our conversation, you'll hear how Jamie's training as a chef prepared him for the world of entrepreneurship. Plus, you'll hear the story of why he launched the Holistic Chef Academy in the first place.

I thoroughly enjoyed my conversation with Jamie and hope you do as well.

As always, I'm your host Eric Turnnessen and this is The Subscription Entrepreneur Podcast.

**Eric:** Hey, Jamie! Welcome to the show.

**Jamie:** Hey, how's it going, Eric? Great to be here. Thank you.

**Eric:** Doing great. Thank you so much for being here. I look forward to talking to you, just been reviewing your about us page on your website, Holistic Chef, and there's a lot of great things in

there to chat with you about. So, I'm excited to get into this. Before we do that, can you just start by telling us a little bit about your background, a high-level view of who you are and what you do?

**Jamie:** Yeah. Hello. So, my name's Jamie Raftery from West of Ireland. Been a chef since I was about 15. So, pushing on over 20 years now, I've been cooking all around the world. So, I started out in the West of Ireland and then made my way over to the UK, to France, Switzerland, over to America, working as well for a few years, and then made my way over to Asia where I'm based now for the last three years.

So, yeah, I've worked in a lot of top restaurants throughout my career, worked my way up from a pot washer to executive chef working all the way through Michelin Star Kitchens, trained with Gordon Ramsey, Thomas Keller, Rasmus Kofoed. So, a lot of top chefs. I always put myself in at the deep end and tried to learn from the best. So, then about seven years ago or so I took a little bit of a change of career and started on the holistic pathway, which led me to launch the Holistic Chef Academy.

**Eric:** Nice. When you were 15 years old, was being the pot washer before 15 years old. And then you started being a chef or was that when you were 15?

**Jamie:** Yeah, so the pot washer was my gateway into the industry. So, I left school a little bit early. School just didn't suit me. I like to be making stuff and doing stuff and out in nature and playing sport and all that. I didn't fancy sitting down learning stuff that I wasn't interested in. Then I'm quite interested in all that stuff now. But back then as a kid full of energy, it just didn't suit me. So, I wanted to be a chef. I didn't have the qualification from school, so I just got a job.

**Eric:** So, you actually knew at 15 that you wanted to be a chef?

**Jamie:** I knew I wanted to do something that I take a raw material and use my skill and be able to make something out of and gift it to somebody. So, I first started off with carpentry, loved carpentry, mechanical drawing and all that. So, that was my first go to career when I was 15. And then I was working up on roofs, lifting rafters up and I did carpentry for about six months. And I realized, well... I didn't see myself doing it forever. I knew the novelty and enjoyment would wear off after a while. Not that it was hard work, like I don't mind hard work. I actually love hard work. But then the idea of cooking really appealed to me.

I grew up in a farm and my mom did a lot of home cooking as well. And there was a good tradition of home cooking and natural food in our home where we grew up. So, I always liked cooking. Then I tried my hand at cooking, but I couldn't get into culinary college. So, that's why I got a job as a pot washer to get my way into the kitchen, make some connections with chefs and work my way up, which I did. I worked my way up to a trainee chef. And then I went for an interview for the local college in Galway. And I got myself into professional chef college in Galway and did a two-year course there.

**Eric:** As you were talking about your introduction as well, you basically traveled a lot. Is that common for people in the culinary world to be that nomadic?

**Jamie:** In the culinary world? Yes. It's quite a nomadic career in that even myself, I think two years is the most I've spent in any kitchen because once you learn everything you need to learn in that kitchen, I think to continue growing and evolving, you need to get into another kitchen environment or another culture to continue on that learning because it's in easy to remain stagnant in the industry.

And then for myself, my dad is a poet and he used to lecture out in Scandinavia quite a lot. So, we were taken out of school a lot when we were kids, traveling around Sweden, Norway, Denmark. So, we got that taste of travel at a young age. So, then when I started cooking, I saw it as a job that I could do for my entire life because I could work wherever I traveled, the learning never stops. So, it appealed to me in that respect.

**Eric:** These days, you talked about how... really, I think you describe yourself as a creative person. You really are passionate about taking something, transforming it and then delivering it, having it ultimately be experienced by an audience of a kind.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** And so early years of learning something, it's really about the craft. You learn your tools, you learn the basics. You talk about going through the tour of kitchens with Ramsey and Thomas Keller and all these guys. So, these days, where you at with the craft, because it always gets more and more subtle, right? In terms of the lessons you're learning.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** So, what are the things that you are really being inspired by in your field right now?

**Jamie:** Great question. Yeah, it is a craft. A lot of people say that cooking is an art. Like it is a culinary art. I think there is an element of artistry in it, but I think it's mainly craft. It's something you dedicate your life too. And you're always learning. You're continually learning. And I actually hit a point in my career when I was about 32, 33. I'd done all the Michelin star stuff and it came to a point where I was losing my creativity. I was doing more Excel spreadsheets and doing more firefighting and just surviving really in the stressful kitchen environments.

And I was losing the creativity a bit. And then I lost my soul a little bit, lost my passion, lost my drive. And that's when I took some time out in Thailand about seven years ago and started doing my Thai, started detoxing a little bit from a very unhealthy lifestyle, which is the chef lifestyle of working 16, 17, 18 hours a day, lots of coffee and little sleep and quick food and all that.

So, that time out in Thailand really gave me time to just really review how far I've come and then reassess where I'm going to go for the next chapter in my career. And coincidentally, that time in Thailand, I stopped eating meat for my first time ever just to avoid food poisoning in Thailand. Well, like in many parts of Asia and Africa with no refrigeration and different food hygiene standards, there is a risk of food poisoning. So, I stopped eating it while I was in Northern Thailand. And by doing that and doing my Thai, and learning a little bit about yoga and meditation, I started to feel the healthiest and the freshest and the most alive I had in years after burning myself out, basically from overworking for a decade. So, it was around that time, I started learning about fermentation and kombucha and kefir and sauerkraut.

And I started to see food differently. I started to see food as medicine really as like a superpower, as there's more to food than how it looks and how it tastes. There's so much more depth than food. Like food is life. The food we eat makes us feel how we feel. If we eat bad, we feel bad. When we eat fresh, we feel fresh. So, it was throughout that time, about seven years ago, I started to look at food in a whole different way and that really kick-started my creativity again. And it was like starting all over again. And that's when I started to put all animal products out of the equation, out of my repertoire, after spending so many years learning and fine-tuning my art and craft and being a butcher and a meat cook in one of the best restaurants in the world to then turn around and say, "Okay, no more meat." And start again.

I think that was a huge turning point, but personally and professionally to just go at it in a whole new direction. And it just felt right myself. I just follow my intuition, follow my gut. And it just felt right. I knew I was doing something for my own creativity, my own passion, my own continued learning. That's when I launched the Holistic Chef. It just sounded right. It just gave me a whole new approach to food in not just how it looks and tastes. It's more about how it makes us feel, the impact and the environment, the impact in communities and culture and food effects, everything. It all comes back to food, I believe at the end of the day. So, that was seven years ago. And since then I've been on a creative culinary adventure around the world, doing all sorts of fun project.

**Eric:** I hear so many things in that answer. One thing I personally can relate to is I think you're getting at this idea of the subtlety, talking about... things aren't just about what they appear on the surface.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Of course, a lot of food we often think about. The sensual aspects, how it appears visually, presented on the plate, what it tastes like, but I've been practicing meditation myself for a number of years. And I know for me too, when I started that journey, my diet and everything just naturally shifted. And also, one of the things that happened over time is I really couldn't eat out as much. I had to prepare my own food. And I just had this sense that when I eat at a restaurant, of course it could be the best restaurant. They could be getting the best farm to table ingredients and all this stuff.

But somehow the chaos of what was happening in the kitchen also influenced how it felt in my body when I ate it. And I wonder as that chef, and as somebody who's really transitioning your journey, is that something that you resonate with?

**Jamie:** Absolutely. My skin is crawling now thinking about it, I'm really excited that you see food like that, because that's a big aspect of it. And when I went to my holistic journey through food, I needed some guiding principle like, "Do I go paleo? Or is it vegan? Or is it this? Or is it that?" Because before I was always led by a chef, that's where I got introduced and started to learn more about Ayurveda. And I've been studying and learning about that over many years and it's a lifelong learning.

I'm still learning about it. And what I've learned from that and what I've experienced and felt myself is that food is energy, for food is life. In China, they call it a Chi of the energy. And in Ayurveda it's a prana and the person who cooks the food, gives the energy to the food.

And I know it myself when I'm cooking and I'm not happy. The food doesn't taste as good. When you're cooking and you're happy and you're putting love into the food. It has that immeasurable impact that it's hard to communicate, but once you feel it, you feel it. Food, it does carry a prana and food that's cooked freshly, it has much more life force to it. Food that's being cooked and left in the fridge for three, four, five days or in supermarket shelf for days and weeks and months. In a way they're dead foods. So, I really resonate with that completely in the food is life. Food is energy, we get our energy from the food we eat and what's in it.

**Eric:** Yeah, 100%. And I feel like that's in everything. For example, my first area that I was in as part of a career, I was a software programmer. That was even before I started meditating. But I did have this belief that when I was working on the code, it's not something that anybody would ever see, but there was something about if I pay attention to detail and I approach it with a certain awareness and focus and clarity.

That would come through in the experience of people using the software, even though nobody ever sees it, food being such like, it's a living thing, especially when you're using fresh ingredients that you pick from a garden or something like this. I find it's super receptive to energy. I also do Gongfu tea ceremony. That's basically just work with one ingredient, you learn to brew it really well. And I find that that's a huge lesson for me in terms of my own cooking and things like that because becoming deeply sensitive to one ingredient helps, I think become sensitive to all ingredients. And I feel like I've developed this empathetic relationship with a leaf where if the water's too hot for it, I kind of feel it. Or if it's brewed long enough, I feel it.

**Jamie:** Yeah. I think it comes back to respecting ingredients and giving them the utmost presence and care and attention. It is connecting with them, connecting with the ingredient. Just the way I approach food as well. Like when you're tasting it and looking at it, like you're connecting with it. You're really giving it your utmost presence, care, attention, love, and respect. And that really transforms it into something even more special.

**Eric:** Yeah. There are no Michelin Star microwaveable meals?

**Jamie:** No. Microwave kills food. French Laundry and top restaurants I work in there's no microwaves because there's no skill involved. It's cheating. There is no microwaves in the kitchen. Some kitchens, then they rely upon microwaves. Everything's pre-prepared in that. But no, that just kills food.

**Eric:** Puts the mentality in the wrong place. It's almost like if you need a microwave, you already lost.

**Jamie:** Yeah. It's convenient.

**Eric:** Because this idea is that food should just be ready as soon as we need it.

**Jamie:** Yeah. It's like a complete detachment. And I think that's part of the problem in society that there's a real detachment with where food comes from and how it's prepared and who produces it. And I think bringing back grace before meals would be great. Like just blessing the food and just paying respect to the food that's on your plate and where it came from. And there's so many processes and people involved from looking after that soil to growing the food, to harvesting it, to storing it, to distributing it, to selling it, all of hands it's passed through to get to your plate. I think we owe that food that mindful time to just sit and enjoy and appreciate it. And that also opens up your body to... I love eating breakfast myself. I always eat it on my own every day, 20 minutes, no phone, no anything.

I just sit and look at the jungle and eat my food presently. And I think that's a great form of self-love. And it opens your body up to receiving the nutrients, receiving the food, receiving the energy, allowing for digestion better and charges you up for the day. But now I think there's a problem where so many people just not eating mindfully, not even chewing their food enough and not eating mindfully, talking too much or watching a movie or on their device. And then they're not tuned into their hunger levels and how much they're chewing food and it's not getting digested properly.

**Eric:** Yeah, it's a real problem. And it's not just related to food. It's related to pretty much everything because what happens in success? I mean, you look at these huge kitchens you worked at, success brings a certain amount of chaos and busyness that if you don't have a situation that you had where you got to a breaking point, you're like, "Hold on a second. Is this what I want?" Unless you reset and deliberately and consciously make the choice to, "Okay, we need to make space for something." Then it won't happen.

**Jamie:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Eric:** Let's go back to this transition as a chef who is working with all these great restaurants and things. I mean, it seems like a career suicide, right? To say, "Okay, well, now I'm not interested in any meat or animal products." And you basically throw yourself into a deep end, right?

Because you don't know necessarily what direction you're going to go, but you know that this isn't working. So, you make that decision. What were people around you at that time saying?

**Jamie:** Great question. And two ways to look at this. There was one part of me thinking, what is everyone going to think? What are they going to say? And I was really concerned, a little bit about that first. Like what are people going to think and so on. And I tried to detach from that and not care what they're thinking and not do it for them and just think about, okay, I'm doing it for myself. It feels right myself. I know I'm on the right path. I've got my creativity back. It's like, I'm starting all over again. So, it took me a while to just blank out, what I imagine other people are saying. I imagine they were wondering what's on with this guy making this fermented tea out of a mushroom, seven years ago and nobody was making kombucha. You couldn't buy it in any shop in England or Ireland.

And I learned to make it with some hippies up in the valleys in Northern Thailand, I was blown away by it, changed my whole perception on food. Because I realized that I, as a chef can give food superpowers by fermenting a cabbage or making a kombucha or a kefir or a kimchi. It's like giving food superpowers. And I was like, "Wow, this is the most incredible thing ever." But I came back teaching classes on kombucha making and everyone thought I was like, "What's going on? What are you up to?" But I stuck with this. I knew I was on the right path. It felt right. I followed my intuition and my guts feeling. And a lot of it all came back to the gut. That's what fermentation is all about. I just realized that we have this whole miraculous universe of microbes inside our guts that are keeping us alive, digesting our food.

They do everything. Without them, we would not be alive. We're more bacteria in our body than we are human. And then if I can create food to feed these bacteria, I'm like, "Wow." It's like having super powers. So, I stuck with that and I ended up being a raw food and fermentation teacher around England and I became the go-to person for raw food and fermentation. It was a niche area. And I think it is good to go niche and go deep. And people started to track me down and Sainsbury, one of the biggest retailers in UK invited me in to give a raw food in fermentation workshop to all their product development team and directors and everything.

A luxury holistic resort in China flew me out there to teach their Chinese team on macrobiotics and raw food. So, it paid off sticking to what I believed in and what I felt was right. Getting over that initial period of uncertainty since then it's just now with what's happening in the last two, three years. And even now with plant-based food and healthy food, I'm just delighted. I made the transition when I did.

**Eric:** Yeah. You definitely positioned well now to be fully in a mature space to be a part of the growing awareness. I think that people have for these things. So, in 2015, you started the Holistic Chef website, in relation to those things that you just mentioned in your timeline, like Sainsbury and being called in over to China to do some speeches to people and teach them. Were those after you launched the site or were they before?

**Jamie:** My first website was actually about six years ago and it was a WordPress website, but it was designed for back of house kitchen for food costing. So, it wasn't a very nice front-facing website, but it was a website that you need to login access. And it was designed around you put in the ingredients, you put in the equipment, the method, you can put in pictures and then it automatically costs the dish, which I need for consulting. Because I did a lot of consulting using my professional background.

Then I was working with holistic resorts and health food restaurants and designing their menus. So, I really needed a food costing feature. Also, I put all the recipes I developed on all the workshops and all the consulting and all the private chef cooking I did over my first few years as Holistic chef. I put all my recipes on that website.

So, I'm about 2,500 recipes on there now, that's my IP. That's all my holistic development over the years, but that's not a very user-friendly SEO optimized, a very user-friendly website, but it's just sitting there with all my recipes. That's how I learned about WordPress. Because I had no experience with computers whatsoever. I could just about do a Google document. So, that taste of WordPress, that introduction to WordPress really helped me launch my second website, which it's [holisticchef.co.uk](http://holisticchef.co.uk). It's more a profile website as a brand identity website that I worked on with a good friend of mine, a designer from Norway who we did a few events together. So, that was my second website, just as a profile. If people want to know what I'm doing, where I am, it was centered there, but the team on it was very much a team for designers.

So, it wasn't good for recipes. It wasn't practical for recipes. I needed a recipe plugin and a specific team. So, it was only a year and a half ago that I launched the Holistic Chef Academy website. So, it had been brewing for a few years because I wanted a platform to be able to share the recipes I've developed to share them with people in an efficient way that led me to launch the Holistic Chef Academy website about a year and a half ago and why the Holistic Chef Academy? It's because it all comes back to education. Everything I've learned over the last seven years in particular, that's what I want to share with people like fermentation recipes, raw food recipes, recipes from around the world, whole food recipes that are celebrating plant-based ingredients.

So, they're the recipes I wanted to share. And that's why the Holistic Chef Academy, because I want to launch courses and workshops and virtual classes and all them sort of aspects. So, yeah, there's about a year and a half ago, Holistic Chef Academy. I put my first recipe on there and I have about 80 to 90 recipes on there now, but still that's a small fraction of what I got to publish. I could literally have a full-time team photographing, videoing and uploading recipes, but it is quite a time consuming process to put in a fully SEO optimized recipe blog post.

**Eric:** Right. So, do you have plans to grow your team?

**Jamie:** I do indeed, yeah. My partner is a food photographer and we're learning videography together, but as cashflow, more cash flow comes in, I will hire more and I think grow more so I

can share more recipe posts and so on. It is quite time consuming, but having a little media team to do all the photograph editing and video editing and stuff like that, which is time consuming, but it is a good way to bring the recipe to life. Because essentially a recipe is just a list of ingredients and quantities, but to bring that to life, good pictures are needed to tell the story of the dish and then a good video and then search engine optimizing it as well so that people can actually find it. And then the beauty of YouTube and all the social media platforms. Now there's lots of ways to share the recipes.

**Eric:** I don't have much experience from a kitchen other than watching some scenes in Ratatouille. But I imagine because of the hierarchical nature of it, I mean a lot of it, I feel like you could learn about running a business from working up your way in the ranks of a kitchen. At a certain point, you need your sous-chefs, you need the prep team and other people to come in if you're going to serve a particular size of audience. As the chef or the head of that kitchen, there's all these lessons you need to learn about relinquishing control and trusting your team and all these other things that come into play.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** And I wonder, as you having a great experience in the kitchen, are any of those things coming into play as useful as you are running this business?

**Jamie:** They have been, yes. And I think there will more as the team grows and I think I've developed some good leadership skills throughout the years. My recent job here in Thailand at 104 on my team and they're all Thai. So, I'm the only Western English-speaking person. So, I think I have developed some good leadership skills and developing the art of listening more to the team and giving them what they need to do their job and investing in them. I really believe investing in the team is key, investing in their career development, investing in their happiness, investing in all that and looking after them and creating a good positive team environment and culture that allows for creativity and allows for development. I think that's really important. And what I've learned over the last few years in particular here in Thailand is once you get all the ingredients, rice.

You have the most loyal, hardworking team that all gels together and things just happen. It's beautiful when it all comes together. So, since the last year with everything, with not being able to travel. And so, I've kept my team small. It's just me and my partner and I have some freelancers for certain other projects in that, but I do look forward to when I have a team again. Having a team is like a sense of community as well, where you all look out for each other and learn together and celebrate together and lose together sometimes and pick each other up and everything.

Look forward to that. And now bringing that in, in the membership side a little bit, I've created a community group on Facebook and with the MemberMouse Membership platform as well. I'm trying to create that community and team and environment as well that I've had in the professional kitchen, but bring that in, in how I'm sharing my recipes and encouraging and

inspiring people to cook more at home and so on. So, yeah, I think I'm using some of my skills I've developed there as well and to build a membership club. I don't know whether to call it a club or a platform, but I think it's more a community or a club.

**Eric:** Yeah, that's cool. And are you finding that you have more time to work on your membership community now? Has there been a slowdown in the in-person restaurant aspect of what you do because of the pandemic?

**Jamie:** Yeah, there has indeed. I'm based in Phuket now. I was working at international sports and health resorts with a huge resort for Olympic teams would come and train mainly triathlon. With everything from volleyball to my Thai to yoga, it's like a sporting paradise. I had 104 on my team and it was busy. It was busy. I was working on the ground in the kitchen all the time, but I was developing a lot of recipes there with the team as well. So, I developed a lot of recipes that I'm going to share in my membership now, but that all slowed down slowly but surely it slowed down over the last couple of years to a point Thailand closed their international borders very early.

So, tourism has been wiped out here. So, all the resorts and hotels closed on the island, but they've opened up, they've opened back up in the last two months, two to three months, tourists are coming back and occupancy is up around the island.

And there's a very exciting thing happening now with all the hotels and resorts, really wanting a strong element of health, wellness, detox, weight loss, sports performance menus. Everyone is looking for them because that's what the market wants. That's what people want when they travel. They don't want to just come and party for a week. They want to come reset, detox. They want to do some yoga. They want to do some fitness, play some tennis, do a cooking class, meditation and all that.

So, the hotels now and resorts are looking to provide them services. And a lot of the traditionally trained chefs, they don't have the knowledge or the experience I have in that domain. So, that's why I'm building another membership platform for hospitality and putting everything on this membership platform, putting everything on there that a head chef would need in relation to wellness, from recipes, to training guides, to templates, to online courses and tutorials.

And I look at it from a chef's point of view. In the restaurant, I'm thinking, what do I need to do detox menus and weight loss menus. So, I'm thinking of it from their perspective. So, then I'm going to provide that in the membership platform and build relationships with them then, and build a whole new membership area aimed towards the hospitality, focusing on wellness cuisine, holistic cuisine, or vegan cuisine, or plant-based. This kind of all the same thing is just a different way of wording it. So, I'm quite excited about building that domain, that area of the membership platform as well, which I think would be of huge value to so many health resorts and hotels and even restaurants and private chefs.

**Eric:** Yeah. And that's amazing too, because without that tool, you would be less able to help as many people as possible.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Because there's only one of you, so you couldn't work with all the head chefs.

**Jamie:** Yeah, exactly. And that's always been my challenge over the last few years as holistic chef, how can I multiply myself? Because exchanging my time for money is unsustainable. It's only very short term, a day salary. It's nothing I can scale. So, with MemberMouse and getting my content on there and having all the tools that I can use, it gives me a way to then strategically plan my business into a way that I can get my knowledge and content on there and then build the relationships and build everything in a way that the chefs can access it then, and then build that other membership community there. So, it's very exciting.

**Eric:** Yeah. It is.

**Jamie:** Quite an exciting time.

**Eric:** And also, I will say my experience in building my business and getting to a certain point is, it's also a part of a holistic lifestyle. Because again, you can get to these points with success, where you are at a balance. It's a good thing in a way we work to get to those places. And then we wake up one day and we're like, "Wow, we're in such demand." Which is good. But then it all comes down to, "Well, what was the point I wanted things to be good?" It's because you wanted to feel healthy and feel content in life, which includes doing work, being of service to the community, but also maintaining our own proper wellness, such that we can continue to have the energy to be of service to people. So, it's cool to experience you at this part of your journey, because it's all about holistic, not just on the microcosm of the food level, but also your life design in general.

**Jamie:** Yeah. And lifestyle. And that's what it's all about. I think it's building healthier, holistic, sustainable lifestyles for ourselves to maintain our own health and energy and fitness and vitality and creativity. I think it's vital, I prioritize health every day and what we eat. I think it's a priority with my partner here. I tell her the food we eat every day, it's vital, it's a priority. We can't skip it. We can't sacrifice, exercise or movement daily is non-negotiable.

Meditation daily as well, building them habits in. And I think their core non-negotiable fundamentals of factoring into our lifestyle. So, that then as you say, we can serve others and we can be at our best and work more productively, make better decisions, finding that balance. It does take a while. I wouldn't say finding that balance, it's almost finding that counterbalance where you work really hard at some points, and then you reap the benefits after it's finding that continual counterbalance.

**Eric:** Well, I think thematically like something you shared in different words throughout this conversation is, I'll restate it as like trusting your intuition. You said about listening to your gut and there's one other way you put it, but it's like, we have to have the practice, where at least the awareness to tune into those smaller voices within us and say, "Hey, something's not right." Or, "This is the direction to go in." And oftentimes the voice telling us to go somewhere else might feel daunting.

**Jamie:** Yeah. Feel scary. What I've learned over the years is that fear is actually a good thing. I think fear is good. It keeps us alive. We couldn't cross the road if we didn't have fear. We couldn't drive a car if we didn't have that fear keeping us on the right side of the road. I really think that little bit of fear is good and you got to trust yourself to learn that trust.

I experienced so much fear and restaurants over the year, going into service. Busy service, three Michelin Stars, such a high level. But that fear I learned to channel it as a positive energy and to boost your awareness and creativity and just being so focused that you do the job the best you can. I think fear is a good thing, is the way I approach it. And that feeling of like, oh. That little feeling of fear it's not about getting over it from my perspective. It's about being okay with it, just going with it and trusting yourself and being okay with it.

**Eric:** But an indicator now is the time to pay attention?

**Jamie:** Yeah. And also, as you say, listening to yourself, I think it's key. I learned that from Ayurveda as well as our body gives us all the signs. It tells us, we just got to listen. Hunger is one of the most natural signs of when to eat and the signs like even our tongue in the morning, the first thing I do every day is scrape my tongue. It's an Ayurveda thing. Ayurveda doctors, they look at your fingernails, they look at your tongue, they look at your eyes, they'll check your pulse and they can tell what's going on inside. Our body gives us, we just have to listen to it, really have to tune in. And that comes from more awareness, more presence and all that. So, listening to the body signs and taking note.

**Eric:** I took Ayurveda pulse reading class.

**Jamie:** Cool.

**Eric:** Two-week class with Dr. Vasant Lad in Albuquerque. Very fascinating because the seven levels of pulse and how the deepest level, the pulse is constant. And that is what they use in our Ayurveda to define your constitution, whether you're Pitta Kapha.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Yeah. And how the highest level of pulse, the one that's closest to the top, the most superficial one changes every 90 seconds. And the idea is that you want your highest level of pulse to be in balance with the lowest level of pulse. It's just like, this science that you talk

about. It's thousands of years old and the level of subtlety that it has and knowledge and wisdom it has about how the body operates is just insane.

**Jamie:** It's mind blowing. It really is. It's fascinating. I think there's so much we can learn from the past. I'd love to do more Ayurveda and learn more about just it's a lifelong learning. There's so much to learn.

**Eric:** Because it's not really the past. I mean, it's learning how to work with what's here, our bodies.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Which is one of the most important things to understand. You mentioned earlier that you really were not a very technical person. So, what was the process like for you getting your first and now your second membership site up? What things did you run into and how did you get past them?

**Jamie:** I'm the kind of person, once I set myself a challenge or a task I don't give up, maybe it's stubborn or just the will not to give up and to figure out a way. I knew I wanted to create all the recipe site and I had the vision of how it was going to work. And I didn't realize how much there was to it, how much there was to learn, but it's just learning a little bit each day. And I think there's great resources there from the WordPress team I used to the plugins I use and MemberMouse, all the Facebook group communities that are there to help and support and ask any questions.

And then also the tutorials, every little aspect I need to learn about a login page or a core page or tags or every little new little hurdle or challenge I come to that I need to learn. There's a little tutorial there for it. And then it's just about listening, keeping that focus and just listening to it and then playing around, getting it wrong, which is part of the process, getting it wrong or figuring it out. Oh, that's what I meant.

**Eric:** You can't make a cake without breaking eggs. Right?

**Jamie:** Well, that's it. And I really think failing is part of the process. In cooking, how you learn to make a soufflé is like by learning how to do it the wrong way five times, then you learn how not to mess it up the next time. And I think failure is a part of the process and it's okay. I think in kitchens when I was working with my junior chefs embrace failure and not make people scared of making a mistake.

**Eric:** Now, where did you get that mindset? Because that's critically important, right?

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** Was that from experience? Were you just born with that?

**Jamie:** I think from experience, I think I'm very lucky throughout my culinary career to have of such good mentors from Michael Caines to Gordon Ramsey and Thomas Keller. Thomas Keller was an incredible mentor. It wasn't just about the cooking there, it is about the philosophy and the mindset and your respect for ingredients and your attention of detail and all the little small aspects all added up. For Thomas, perfection isn't one thing, excellence isn't just one thing.

Well, there is no such thing as perfection because perfection for different people are different things, but striving for excellence is what it's all about. And excellence is about all the small minute aspects done well. All build up something that's excellent. So, I think in the kitchens of Thomas Keller, learning failure and being able to ask for help with what I learned there, amongst many other things, you have to ask for help. If you don't ask for help and you go down on your own, then you let the whole team down.

So, you have to swallow your pride and swallow your ego and just say, "Okay, I need some help here. Can you help me?" Or ask the question if you're not sure. And if you make a mistake, the sooner you own up to it, the better for everybody. If you try to hide the mistake and cover it up and not tell anybody, then the whole team is going to suffer because it's too late then to rectify it. And then coming over to my time here in Thailand, part of the cultural dynamic here in Thailand is that people here are afraid to make mistakes.

It's a thing about losing face. So, that was a big challenge for me in the kitchens over here. And I really put a focus on developing a culture around it being okay to make a mistake. And that's how we learn. And I think once they do make a mistake and they realize they're not going to get shouted at, they're not going to get fired, they're not going to get ridiculed or embarrassed, that it's okay. And then I'll teach you how to make it the right way. And then once you create that culture, everyone just feels a bit more at ease, I think. So, I think it's developed throughout my career in okay to make a mistake and learn from it.

**Eric:** And that's super important in entrepreneurship because a lot of times I see part of the reasons why people fail is because they have that inner voice that says it's not okay to make a mistake. Basically, there's nowhere you can go from that point.

**Jamie:** Yeah. It's part of learning. So, yeah, a lot of mistakes I made on the website, but I like to learn from other people's mistakes too, which is why I check a lot of the Facebook groups. I don't do much on Facebook, mainly groups for all my plugins I have and I listen to questions other people have. And generally, there are questions that I don't even know I need to ask yet, but they're already asking and I'm thinking, "Oh yeah, I need to know that as well."

So, then I'm learning from their questions and their answers and also their mistakes that bloggers might have made that are way ahead of me. And they might be making some mistakes now and I'm trying to learn from them. So, I think learning from other people's mistakes too, and just going slowly, I think being patient is quite important as well. Just something I'm always

learning as well is more patience. Just trying to get everything done now, then you got to rush it. You got to push it and maybe make mistakes then that are very hard to fix.

**Eric:** And there's an arrogance to that too, because it implies that you know how fast something should take.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** And how it should go. Whereas, patience implies that more of allowing for awareness and therefore there's more space in the process to actually listen for these other things that could tell you and guide you in a more organic way.

**Jamie:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Eric:** So, the membership project that you have is called Life on Plants. So, can you talk a little bit about why you created this and who it's for and what you offer within the membership?

**Jamie:** Okay. So, Life on Plants was born about six months ago, during lockdowns here in Thailand, when everything was closed, couldn't go anywhere. And we set up a meal delivery service here out of the jungle in a little villa here from the jungle to the local community and expats and friends around the island. So, we called it Life on Plants and it's a meal delivery, we make all the fresh meals here. We have some local organic farms we connect with each day of the week. We did a different menu. So, we'd have Middle Eastern Monday. We'd have a Mexican day, we'd have an Italian, a Japanese, a Vietnamese, a Thai, an Indian. So, all 100% plant-based delicious foods, all a nice meal package. And we had some regular clients sign up for that. And we were sending them out all around the island and it went really well for a few months through lockdown.

And I started to think, okay, business head on me, how can we scale this? So, two ways we can scale it as either one is go online and share it there in some formats. And the other is offline and develop a bigger production kitchen and scale it up and invest in more equipment and so on and go for it. In that sense, these are the two ways I'm going to approach it. So, that's when I got introduced to MemberMouse and started looking at all the ways I can introduce that concept to online.

And I started to see a big problem around the world, in that many people don't know how to cook healthy food at home. A lot of people want to go more plant-based or go vegan, but they're not necessarily doing it in a healthy way or they may not have the correct recipes to do it or the tools or the inspiration.

So, then over the last six months, I started to formulate the whole concept of Life on Plants, in a membership format. So, the format I created is around a meal prepping format. So, what I do every week, I send out 10 recipes on the membership platform, two breakfast, two lunch, two dinner, two snacks, and two juices. So, that's the format each week that all the members will

get used to. And then I have on the membership site, a meal planning software, so they can add the recipes into different days. They can add their own notes, they can generate the shopping list. They can calculate the nutrition.

So, they can really customize the meal plan to suit their home environment and how many people they're cooking for and everything. So, that's kind of in a nutshell, what it is, is to provide people at home, the tools, the recipes, the community group, the inspiration, the support, the encouragement along the way to help them cook more at home and teach them how to meal prep.

And with the main underlying benefits is that you save time, you save costs and you have healthier food in the fridge, more for yourself that you've cooked yourself. I do a live happy hour every Friday in our community group. And I introduce all the recipes. I talk through them. I talk about some seasonal varieties. If something isn't available in your area, how you can adapt the recipe. So, I give a little live introduction to the recipes and tips on making them a little shortcuts, things that are hard to get across through written word or may take time.

So, I just like to do it in a live way and invite questions. And I do a little Q&A that as well and invite anyone to join. That's it in a nutshell, the online version. It's quite affordable, it's 10 Euros a month. If you sign up for a year, it's 90 Euros. So, it's quite affordable. And I want it to be affordable. There's access currently to 300 recipes. I also have about 20 hours of pre-recorded cooking classes on there. I've got some recipe collections, all the recipes we did from the Mexican recipes, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, Thai. They're all there as well. So, they can take all of them recipes and add it to their own customized meal plan.

So, it's going to grow and grow. It's only live the last two weeks. So, I think getting it live was a big learning curve and I learned a lot and it's live now, it's ready. The way I see it, it's like a plant. You put the seed down, that's what I've done. The seed is there. Now, it's a matter of watering it, nurturing it, growing to it, listening to it, adapting it and building up them relationships as well as what it's all about.

It is scalable, but it's not all about just scaling and getting the numbers in each member is something of huge value. It's a person there, it's their lives. They're doing it to try to get some benefits from it and I'm doing it to try to benefit them. So, I've got the community group and email, one-to-one as well. So, it's really about building them relationships and I'm sure that I will adapt the membership content as well to feedback from the members.

So, I wouldn't say it's a big project, it's a commitment ongoing to continue evolving it. And there's still loads I can learn from MemberMouse as well. And I know there's loads of other little cool things and add-ons I can do and evolve that as well. So, I'm looking forward to growing it more. So, that's Life on Plants online. We'll leave the offline till another day.

**Eric:** Yeah.

**Jamie:** That's another way of doing that in another format.

**Eric:** Well, it's a really cool through line. You talk about the very beginning when you were 15 years old, trying to hone in on what you wanted to do with your life and this knowing that, "Okay, I want to create something with raw materials, build something and then deliver it to people." I mean, you go through your whole arc and now, yes, Life on Plants is a seed, but it's also, you're not at ground one here. You're bringing all of this experience that you've gained. So, when people join this site, because there's a lot of people who just in quarantine, they're like, "Oh, I'm bored. I know how to cook this dish and whatever. And I'll share it with people and they can make some money." But to have access to somebody like you, who has this wealth of experience and all of this content that's been created over time.

Sure, there's a business side to it. And also, it has this vibe to it that this is just your passion. And again, going back to the food that we eat and how energy plays a really important part, I think it's the same with consuming things that we watch, communities that we're a part of. And so your energy being in the right place, your intentions being in the right place really means that whoever's going to be a part of this community. Of course, they're getting the product that you're offering. They're going to eat good food. But also, I think that the results of it will be probably far more reaching than you can see right now.

**Jamie:** Yeah.

**Eric:** It's really exciting to see it all in the place it's at now.

**Jamie:** Great. Thank you, Eric. Really, thank you sincerely. It's like we're having a partnership, MemberMouse it's like we never met before, I've listened to all your podcasts and all your tutorials. So, it's a great honor and a pleasure to really here to have a chat with you today and to continue working together, which is the way I see it moving forwards.

**Eric:** And the food that I created, you are consuming and using it to feed others. Right? It's really cool to just think about how my food obviously is software and you don't really consume it, but it's something that's a foundational aspect of you doing what you're doing, which is really cool. So, just to wrap up here, tell us again, the places where people can find you online.

**Jamie:** Okay. So, the best place to find me is through [holisticchefacademy.com](https://holisticchefacademy.com). That's my free recipe website. So, you can sign up to my email list from there. I send out a newsletter every week on a new recipe of the week and to engage with you from there. And if you're interested in Life on Plants, you can join [www.lifeonplants.com](https://www.lifeonplants.com). There's a free trial, you can sign up for a week, check it out, see how you like it. It's 10 Euros a month. You can cancel, rejoin any time.

**Eric:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for sharing your story with us, Jamie. I really appreciate you taking the time and it was a pleasure.

**Jamie:** Thanks, Eric. Pleasure to chat today. Thank you very much.

**OUTRO:**

Thank you so much for listening to my entire conversation with Jamie.

I hope you're feeling energized and excited to continue on your own entrepreneurial journey.

Many thanks to Jamie for coming on the show and sharing from his experience.

To get links to all the resources we talked about in this episode, you can head on over to [SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/175](https://SubscriptionEntrepreneur.com/175).

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Thanks for being here and we'll see you next time!