

SEASON THREE - EPISODE FIVE

BEHIND *the* MEMBERSHIP

JODIE CLARKE

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Callie: Welcome to Behind the Membership, season 3, episode 5. Today I'm talking with Jodie Clarke from The Empowered Educator all about her membership. While Jodie's membership is only just one year old she's made awesome progress during that time, surpassing her member goals and even managing to retire her husband, which has had as you would imagine an enormous impact on her family's life.

In this episode Jodie's talking all about how she succeeded with her membership from nurturing her wait list to her webinar strategy that's bringing in 5 to 10 new members per day. Jodie also talks about moving from a closed end model to an evergreen model and why she's chosen to do that, and we cover so much more as well. Jodie shares a lot of great insights in this episode, so let's dive straight in.

Automated: Welcome to Behind the Membership with Callie Willows, real people, real stories, real memberships.

Callie: On today's show I'm joined by Jodie Clarke from The Empowered Educator. Thank you so much for joining me on the show today Jodie.

Jodie: Thanks Callie, it's great to be here.

Callie: I'm really looking forward to actually talking with you about your membership journey so let's dive straight in. Could you start by telling me a bit about your membership, like what it offers, who it's for?

Jodie: The membership I've set up is for early childhood educators, so a little bit different to a lot of what's out there on the internet at the moment with the primary teachers and high school teachers. I'm more aiming at childcare centre teachers and kindergarten, preschool, the terminology is a little bit different around the world but basically for the zero to five age group, that early learning stage., and it's an area that doesn't get a lot of professional support.

There's a lot of mixed messages, so a lot of new regulations and things both here in Australia and the US, there's a lot coming in. I've tried to put a lot of really simple back to basics type resources and training in there that they can access all in the one place, and the plan, planning and things like that. They can just come to that one hub and use that alongside the information I put out on my blog, and all those other various avenues.

Callie: Awesome, that sounds great. How long have you had the membership for now?

Jodie: I started, I was just thinking I'm nearly up to my membership anniversary as you like to call it. June last year, it was just near the end of June 2018, so it's been nearly a year now. Yes, time has flown. I'd like to say time's flown, but it's been a lot of work.

Callie: Yeah. Do you run the membership on an open or a closed model at the moment?

Jodie: I was running on an open and I was launching... Last year I did three launches. In January of this year in 2019 I did another launch, open and closed, it was about a week and I would do a closed cart at the end of that. They were both very successful both times. The one this year, I actually did a live webinar and I got about 150 people signing up on that night just from the

webinar, but they were going to a bonus page that was only available for that night, we sort of ended at midnight.

That was a lot more popular than I thought and a lot, lot more exhausting than I thought it was going to be, because as well as launching the member hub I also have a lot of products and things that I do, and other courses that I do launches for through the year. After listening to quite a few podcasts and looking at a lot of the comments in Member Site Academy I was starting to think, it didn't even occur to me to do a closed sort of evergreen funnel rather than the closed model in the launch because that's just what I knew.

I got to the point where I was thinking, I can't do this for another year to keep that build up. And then, there's also the influx of customer service side, I wasn't prepared for that either, a lot of people wanting their passwords... Things just weren't working. Now I've gone to a evergreen model so I'm open all the time. Basically the main way I'm feeding into new members, grabbing new members, is by doing that same webinar. I've taken it and I did it again but made it into a recording that I'm using through Easy Webinar.

Yeah, I've got that set up and that's working really well. I'm getting between 5 to 10 members each day after those webinars and I have to say it's a lot less stressful, just that gradual drip. I feel like I can onboard people better, I can get them into the group and all of that sort of thing, so at the moment the model's working. There'll be other things I need to do but so far for me that's working a lot better than having the open close part, yeah.

Callie: Awesome, and I love that you're experimenting with that and seeing what does work best for you, so yeah, trying both models and seeing which works. I think that's a great approach. It's awesome that you're getting those results from the webinar as well. Are they people that are coming in cold to the webinar, or are they people that are already on your email list?

Jodie: Yes, yeah. I'm trying to work out the figures on that at the moment. It's a little bit harder because I am running Facebook ads to the webinar and I'm retargeting and things like that. It's a little bit hard to tell, but because I'm running it to warm and cold and because I've been blogging for five years now I have built up a lot of that trust factor and people know me. And so I'm able to feed through my grouping to the webinar.

I've got a free group that's got about 13,000 members in it, so that's always fed in. I've had a regular newsletter for many years so that's a lot of warm people coming in as well that are constantly knowing. We're getting a lot of people coming back as well. If they've dropped out because they haven't had the money, especially at the end of the year, I noticed that was a big thing. I think they're coming sort of from everywhere. The webinar is bringing a lot more of that cold traffic, even though then it would've just...

If I was doing that launch, because usually I was just launching to my email list, which is, I think when I first launched it was, I've cleaned it out a bit now but it was around the 25,000 mark on the email list. That was mainly who I was launching to. I did do some Facebook ads but I'm mainly targeting them to warm traffic anyway. Doing the recorded webinar's really opening up to a lot more of that, people that might not have heard of me before and that sort of thing. That's another bonus as well, yeah.

Callie: Awesome, and so you mentioned cost though. How much is the membership?

Jodie: The membership is, they've got two choices. They can do \$39 a month as the ongoing monthly payment or they can do a discounted annual rate of \$397. That's actually fairly high for my niche, for my group, because most of the teaching sites out there are still under \$20, there's a lot out there just for \$12, and it's a very... Because they're not well paid, so it's very different to that, the business model and the other side of the world, the online sort of business and that sort of thing because I have to take that into account.

I'm actually quite happy with the fact, I never thought that I would get at that price. I really wavered. I'm lucky I have a business coach who really pushed me to set it at that price. For the amount of information that I have in there, the number of resources and things that I have in there it is really good value, but it's also hard to ask someone to part with their money when I know they're scraping and they're already buying their own resources and all of that sort of thing for their rooms anyway, so yeah.

Callie: Yeah, I think that's definitely something you find with kind of education based memberships where they're aimed at teachers and things like that where, yeah, money is definitely kind of an overriding factor a lot of the time with the pricing of the memberships, because they are paying out of pocket and things. I think it's great that you've actually been able to put a good price point on that because as you say, most people in this kind of area have a much lower price membership. I love that you've got that working for you. Are you actually, are you aimed at the educators themselves? You mentioned it's the kind of early years, nursery. Are you aimed at the individual workers or do you actually aim for kind of the nursery owner who's going to buy that to support the business in general?

Jodie: I started way back and I narrowed down my niche from parenting down to, we call them family daycare. I forget what they call them in the UK, I think it's family childcare or something along those lines, but home based daycare basically, so where they're looking after children at home and they're still trying to qualify. I started off with that because that was really an area where a lot of teachers weren't getting any support or help.

Then I gradually started to realise, once more and more blogs, I was putting out, this was before the membership, I started to realise I was reaching larger childcare centres as well. And then I've slowly gone up and also now realised that the educational leaders and the directors and the managers are also not getting the support they need and it's coming from right down from the top. If they're not in a good place it's not feeding down to these

educators down the line, so now I've sort of broadened it and Member Hub has become something that's got a little bit for your day to day educator just as individuals, and then also the family daycares because they're running their own business from home as well, it's not just that they're a teacher.

Then there is, yeah, educators, then it's going up to the leader. I'm sort of putting a bit of everything, which does have that... It can very easily bite you, as I'm finding out. Because I'm listening to them in my group saying, oh, but we really need this, or, we really need that, which, it's a great supply of information for what to create and what your audience wants and all of that sort of thing, but then I have a real problem with then continually creating. Now I have pretty much within this one niche there's about five different sort of levels of different people I'm aiming at.

Even though there's a lot of core stuff, there's a lot of the same sort of stuff that they all need to know and they'd find helpful, but yeah, it's sort of growing. That's something I need to work on and decide what I'm going to do about that. I didn't expect that. When I opened the membership it was more just for, as you said, the individuals because I thought that's where the majority of the help needed to be. Now I've started to realise, and as word's grown, obviously, which is good, they're sharing it around with their colleagues and all that sort of thing, which is wonderful, but it does mean that I've diversified a little more than I thought, so may have to rein that back in a bit.

Callie: Yeah, yeah okay. It can get complicated when you're trying to cater to several different audiences at once I think.

Jodie: Yeah.

Callie: You mentioned that you offer other services and products as well, so where does the membership actually fit in with the overriding business that you have?

Jodie: The membership is a separate thing, I've got the host on a sub domain and kept that away. Inside Member Hub they get just

about, just about access to all of my current resources, I sort of drip them in. To start off with I put a lot of that content in because I've got a lot of content. Some of it's small, it might be the checklists and cheat sheets and planning lists and those sort of things, templates for them to just print off and use, but other things are ebooks, there's also a whole ebook library that I actually do.

I turn certain blog posts into ebooks and they're called my Simple Series. I just have them in there because that's where a lot of my core members have come from, from reading my blog posts. I like to keep it a real back to basics sort of style so I know that's what has attracted them. They get access to most of that but I keep all of my resources and other things separate, you know eCommerce store on my website. It is very separate to Member Hub and that's set up through MemberMouse and they pay, all goes separate that way.

In Member Hub they do get extras. They get training videos, they get a monthly webinar with me or a guest presenter, and there's lots of little extras that they tend to get. Any new resources that I do they get them first before they eventually go into the shop. Later on down the track they also go into a Teachers Pay Teachers Shop, but that's not really a core thing. They're quite separate but they're a good lead in. Everything now leads into a call to action to Member Hub if you want more, sort of thing. I'm slowly going through and adding that to everything, so if they want more in depth, and they also get then access to me, obviously.

Callie: Awesome, awesome, let's go back to the start now then. What actually inspired you to create the membership in the first place?

Jodie: That's a two part. One was my actual audience, because I noticed in emails they were starting to tell me that they do have that all in the one place, because they were buying resources through my shop, I was also doing webinars like online training, I call them, for teachers. Webinars wasn't a big word back then. Then they started asking me, I noticed more and more saying, can I get this

all in one place? I'd pay a monthly fee for that. I was saying like, oh yeah, I played around with it and it's probably been about three years that I've wanted to get this done that it's taken sort of that long.

The other thing was, I think the final tipping point for me was the constant launching, and also just not having any recurring income. I was starting to do quite well monthly, but you never knew... If I had a launch that month or I did a promotion to my subscribers, whatever, yes, it might be a really good month, but it was that uncertainty and when you've got a young family and you've given up your day job, your day job, yeah, it was just, I wanted to try and see if I could get even just a small amount of recurring income so I could have some sort of baseline to say, yep, we're going to have that this month to pay the bills, or just to meet costs and sort of say...

Because I just felt like I was on this treadmill constantly doing all of this. I was doing resources, I was doing blog posts, I was doing launches, I was doing everything and yet you might only come out with a small month even after that, whereas next month might be brilliant, but... I found it was really starting to do my head in because I'd be up in February say, because we had a really great, a big sales month, and then we'd just drop down again and I'd think, oh, what's gone wrong, what's happened? You know, what's doing what, all of this stuff would start, all that imposter syndrome and everything would start coming in and then it'd go up again.

But yeah, now at least I'm not really noticing when the sales of just books and other things that I have in my WooShop on my website because I'm not noticing that as much because I've got that stable income. I didn't expect that Member Hub would take sort of over as quickly and as much as it has. It really has become very much a full-time job. I'm madly looking at a lot of stuff in Member Site Academy at the moment about content creation and batching and... Because that's something that I really wish I had considered a bit more before telling everyone I would do this, this, and this every month.

Now I've got to... Because it's really important to me that I've always come across as professional. I keep things simple for them but I've always wanted to be seen as professional and good customer service because that's important to me when I'm joining something if I'm paying money. I know that it's a big amount for them to join, to come to my Member Hub and it's a really big commitment, so I want to give that back to them, but at the same point it's that really fine balance between suddenly realising you're hitting burn out after not even quite a year yet, but in a different way to when I was launching all the products.

So yeah, I think it's just something, a little bit more thought about that instead of worrying about if the website was perfect and did I have the number of pages, all that techy sort of stuff that I stressed about because I'm a real perfectionist. I think it would've been better to think forward a little bit more about how I'm going to do this each month.

Callie: Yeah, yeah. It sounds like the membership actually took off a lot quicker and a lot more than you initially thought it was going to, which is great.

Jodie: Yeah, yeah it did. I sort of hit 200 members quite quickly and we're up to nearly 700 now, 660, something like that, which is great within the year. It's also that people when they're pulling out as well, that having to do with the mental, when you're seeing people, I want to cancel, I want to cancel. Even though it's not that many, it seems like when you've had those big launches and you've got people joining in all at that one time because it was an open and closed hub. There's this big bulk couple of days and then suddenly you lose people because they've been charged again.

The payments come out and you think, oh no, you know all that work, I did all this work up front for you and now you're pulling out. So yeah, that's probably what I struggle with most at the moment. I get those notifications now, I've set up another email inbox and those notifications I get from MemberMouse to say such as such has changed their account or cancelled. They

actually go straight into another email address now. They're all set up with a tag, inactive campaign, but I don't see them every day, so yeah.

Callie: It's not a focus point. I think that's one of the things that you forget. I had this discussion with someone the other day where your churn rate might not actually change but the larger your member base the more members that is. 5% of 100 members churning isn't a huge amount, but 5% of 1,000 members it starts to look a lot more even though it's actually the same churn rate. I think the larger your membership gets the more you can start thinking, oh, well that's a lot of cancels this month, when actually proportionately it's the same as it always has been.

Jodie: Yes, and I still get, I've had to be a lot clearer, that's something else I've found I needed to do on my check out page and in a few other places inside on their account pages to make it really clear that if they're doing a monthly payment it is a monthly recurring payment. I've had a lot of people say, I just thought I'd pay the \$39 and have access, and I was like, well, what, forever? There was a lot of confusion about that too, well I didn't know... I don't like being thought after, people thinking that I'm trying to pull the wool over their eyes or alt.

I've been a lot clearer that it's a recurring payment, I've even likened it to Netflix and something like that. I think it's important to be really clear exactly what's happening, especially if people are giving you money. I'd rather do that and perhaps lose a few at the checkout because they see that and go, I'm not doing this every month. I also make it very clear that they can, with one click of a button, cancel. It's hard to tell if that's having any sort of effect, but I know it has had an effect on less customer queries around that topic, which is good.

Callie: Awesome. You might have already answered this with what you've just been saying, but what's been your biggest challenge you've had with the membership would you say?

Jodie: Probably, those things I mentioned but also customer support. I didn't realise that was going to be such a time consuming task. I didn't realise the level of... A lot of my audience I knew from my resource and things. A lot aren't very digital savvy, they're not very computer savvy. A lot are, but there's a lot that, and you need to walk them through the buying online process and how to download and do all that sort of stuff. Now that I'm getting in the hang of it and setting up systems like, oh, you might want to watch this video and that shows you how to insert the photos into the PDFs, or things like that that I can redirect them to, that's starting to cut down on that.

I'm using Intercom inside just inside the Member Hub so that I can help direct them where they need to go so we're not getting as many emails. Yeah, I think that's been the biggest struggle. I always feel like I'm on, I'm always switched on like, they might be messaging me or they're in the group or they're emailing me, and I sort of feel like, oh, all these people are paying me money, I need to answer them and keep them happy, and yeah, so that's been a big struggle, and the perfectionist side of me trying to keep the amount of content that I want to put in there for them, trying to keep up with that without just... Because I can't just focus on Member Hub.

You've got to still have all those other things like the blogs and the weekly newsletter and all that other stuff that actually gets people interested in knowing who I am and what I do and how I can help them. I think that would be the two biggest challenges for me. I won't say tech, because that was always going to be a challenge. I think deciding what to use, I think two years ago I was asking a question in Member Site Academy about that. I eventually got there but, yeah, it's small steps.

When you hear people saying, oh, and, I've set my membership up and it sounds great, and I'd hate anyone to think that because it's taken me a good three years to get to that. Even though it's been open for a year and it's doing quite well in this past year and growing a lot faster, as you said, than I thought it would. It was a big slog beforehand of all the mapping it out, and will I put this in,

will I not put that in, so yeah, I think yeah, being a perfectionist isn't a really great trait when you're opening a membership site.

Callie: No, definitely. Yeah, I can relate on that one, definitely. If that's the challenges then what's been the highlight for you? What's your favourite thing about having the membership?

Jodie: I think the favourite thing for me is, you know it's funny to say, I was just complaining about the customer service emails, but on the other hand I also get a lot of lovely emails or private messages saying, I was about to give up my job and go into another field altogether and you've just reignited my passion in childcare and doing what I'm doing, and, now I'm spending more time with my family because I've got less time that I have to do writing on the weekends and outside of work hours.

I think for me that aspect, just to know that these people who weren't getting the support and were right down to that level, which is a lot of the people in Member Hub, I've just taken them back to basic, given them some simple tools and some explanations that they weren't getting and that way they've been able to take that. The children are the ones that are benefiting from that because there's a lot of passionate educators out there but because of all the paperwork and regulations and all that sort of thing, much the same as any industry, they're thinking about leaving, which is really sad. I think that has been my main thing, that and having that recurring income.

We've gotten to a point now where I've actually been able to retire my own partner so that he can spend more time home with our kids and I don't feel as torn now. He had a really awful job, long hours, going at 4:00 in the morning and be back late in the afternoon, so it feels like I'm not doing all the housekeeping, all the childcare, plus being the business owner, plus all those things that women do on top of all the other stuff. A lot of men do too, but I did feel like I was reaching that point where I just couldn't take it much more. I think those have been really great life changing things for us, all within the last year.

Callie: Yeah, I mean I love that you've been able to retire your husband. That's absolutely awesome, and I can imagine that just makes such a huge difference to both of you and to your family in general.

Jodie: Yeah, and I was a little bit worried about, you know that, the women's guilt that you sort of get. I don't know that I should be saying I retired my... I've really worked hard on... I was like, what did you want me to say? What do you want me to say, thinking, I don't want to crush your ego or do anything like that, but he's been really happy. Since he got home he's back to the guy I knew before this job, because it just was sucking the life out of him, which wasn't good for any of us either. It's actually then in turn made me more productive because now I know I can just go to work in the morning and he's there, it was, just between you and me Callie, to see the man out there vacuuming past while I'm on the computer instead of me doing it on a Monday morning is just a rare thrill.

Callie: Yeah.

Jodie: So yeah, lots of good things about it, but it's also good for him too because he's happier, and I think he's finally realised what exactly I'm doing. I still find it really hard to explain to family members and friends, I swear a lot of them think I just sit here and... I don't know what they think, I'm just on Facebook or are doing, answering some messages, answering some emails and then I write a little blog, something like that. I still find it hard whenever someone says, what do you do? I find myself stammering, I work, I've got an online business, and then it sort of goes down to, I do training courses for teachers. Oh, yeah, no, and sort of write some books. It's very hard to, as you know, explain the online world if you're not familiar with the work that goes in.

Callie: Yeah, it really is surprisingly difficult I think to anyone who's not familiar with this world to actually explain what your business is, as you said. Yeah, you can get a lot of confused looks or people who just think you spend all day on the internet doing something.

Jodie: That's so lucky to work at home.

Callie: Yeah.

Jodie: Which you are, it's good but I don't think it's lucky. We've created that, and it is a lot of hard work and it's not just during the day. I mean, most nights I'm still working, and so I'm yet to find that really good balance of not working all the time, but I'm working on some processes hopefully to get there.

Callie: So let's shift gears a little bit now then. You've already mentioned that webinars have worked really well for you, both in your launch and now as an evergreen webinar as well. What else has worked well for you when it comes to attracting new members do you think?

Jodie: I think what worked really well for me in the beginning, I'm not using it at the moment but I had what I called my VIP Wait List. In my free Facebook group and through my newsletters and ads I did a lot of hype, I try to drum up a lot of hype before I do a launch. I started that a fair way out, it'll be probably about two months out, which is, I know, it's not, a lot of the time you hear that, start that early out, but I find with my audience I need a really good lead in and they need to see a few things first and actually touch base and think, yeah, that could be all right. I would get them onto the list by saying, you can get onto the wait list now and you'll receive some samples and some freebies from Member Hub, and some training.

And then what I had set up was an automation, so they'd immediately get a welcome email and then that would lead into me sending some emails that had, here and there there'd be, they got a free mini guide... Sort of the pain points that I'm used to, that I know are the real main things, like for teachers it's planning and prep and time saving on writing, and things like that. It was things that were out of Member Hub that were also from my resource shop. It was just like a little teaser and they'd just be once a week, so it sort of became like a regular, like you'd send out a newsletter, but I gave them that feeling of connection.

In my group we're all called, I call them Empowered Eds, and they call themselves that now, which is really good. I wanted to give them a little better name, so I called them the VIPs, VIP Eds. That became a little like club and they knew that they were the only ones getting that email. I had special pages set up where they could go and view videos and things like that, and then they actually got a 24 window where when I launched, the emails leading up to it I said, you will have first access, I'm only going to be giving it to VIPs, I think we're going, I'm only taking 100 members for this intake.

It did give a number on that. I did stick to that even though we went over, I think it was 150, but that was because they just came too quick. The VIPs, I emailed them out and they had a full 24 hours. They had a special link and they got to go in special page, so they felt like they were getting in, I really hyped that out, get in before I open it up to all the list and I start running Facebook ads, all that sort of thing, and that worked really, really well. Both times, I think I did that three times and all those people were staying on the list. Those that didn't join obviously went off, but that did join went into the other list, the members List.

I've still got quite a list of about 700 on there that I've got to figure out what to do with them because I'm not using it now, but that was something that worked really, really well for me. I think I picked that up, little bits and pieces here and there, but I just thought I'd try it out and I think by giving that real collective sort of group spirit, and you're getting something first before anyone else, and I stuck to that, I did. I think I had 75 sign up just from the VIPs so then when I did the rest of the launch emails as I went through the next five emails that list began getting those emails as well as my main list.

It was very much, I could say then, oh, we've already had 75 members sign up from our VIP early introduction list, if you want to get in you better hurry up now, without making it sound like... It was real scarcity, it just, you know by the, and then the next one I sent, oh sorry, we're up to 120 now, something, I let it go over but... So, that worked really well. Obviously we didn't get as

many for the second launch because this was, it still, the premise worked, so I would do, if I was doing, went back to a closed, open and closed cart, I would do that again.

I think the list, focusing on that waiting list even before, two to three months before you open, I think that really helped, because it really drummed up that anticipation and, oh, we're getting something free, and then because I like to think my stuff is, my resources and training and things like that, they are good, it made them, and I specifically sent the ones on those clear pain points, so I knew that they would go, I want more of that. You can get it in Member Hub, yeah, giving them that 24 hours earlier than anyone else I think, I also did that in January of this year when I did that live webinar, I also did much the same thing.

I thought about, how am I going to do this? I've got the VIP list, what am I going to give them? While I was doing the webinar I actually said, and I'd sent out emails obviously beforehand but I said, if you are on VIP wait list, we were half an hour into the webinar and I said, if you're on the VIP wait list you need to know that the Member Hub is open now but only for you, go and check your email, you got a special link this afternoon and you've got until... I think it was... Until the webinar finished basically. I think I opened it up just before the webinar so those that got the email could've joined up already, but if they hadn't and they were listening to the webinar then they got another prompt to go and sign up, so we got quite a few from that, and at the end then everyone got to go to a bonus page.

Callie: Awesome, I think that sounds like a great idea

Jodie: Yeah, I think a wait list works really well. I think rather than just getting them on the list, which is what I was told to do, you know, just get them on the list, get them on the list. I think it was really important to keep connected with them. Especially because it was over such a longer period of time as well so I wanted to make them feel a bit special so they could see what they'd be getting if they got inside or started to pay.

Callie: Yeah, I think that, the way you've nurtured them there and created that community feel as well before you've even launched is really great, and as you said, yeah, obviously works really well for conversions then too.

Jodie: Yes, and it gives you something to talk about in your free Facebook group as well, you can sort of direct it straight to those, oh, VIPs go and check your email I've just sent out another one, or the weekly newsletter or something like that. It gives you something to mention and other people are starting to think, hang on, I'm not on that one, I'm not on that list, why am I not getting the free training? So yeah, that worked really well.

Callie: Yeah, people like to feel special I think.

Jodie: They do.

Callie: So, if that's kind of ways you've got new members, how are you keeping them? What are you actually doing to encourage engagement and retention in the membership?

Jodie: Yes, that's an ongoing thing. I think that's where I'm maybe spending too much time, but it's that real catch 22 isn't it if you don't? I installed Intercom after seeing what you guys were doing in the academy with your messages. I really like that so I've set up a little onboarding through the message books there just to welcome them to Member Hub, and, here's where you might like to go first, and I give them a direct link to that and to the video, watch the video on this page, and they're working really well.

I go on there, I'm available pretty much between 9:00 and 4:00 because I'm working on the computer then anyway. I don't always get back to them straightaway, but I'm finding it really easy to just say, yes, it's here, and give them a link to that page on Member Hub, and I think that's being really helpful for them to find what they need. I was finding a lot of people were getting confused. I don't know where that is, I don't know, because it's big, there's a lot of stuff. I've got six different main pages in them

but yeah, they were having trouble finding stuff so I wanted to work on that.

Having Intercom's been really helpful, but also I've just started setting up, I call them simple pathways, pathways, and I've pulled out roles like, I'm a new educator, or I'm a leader, or I work in family daycare I want to fill my vacancies, and then I've put drop downs under all of those on a separate page where they can go, different resources, different training, a webinar, wherever. I've linked them up straightaway so they can just follow down that path, a bit like your roadmap but not as good. Not as fancy, but small steps, but they're working quite well too.

Also the onboarding emails, I think I have about five or six in that first few weeks, obviously the welcome and then little snippets directing them to go and see certain things in there. In the last one, now that I've gone to evergreen I have their fortnightly, sometimes fortnightly sometimes monthly, I'm still trying to work out what's best, and just a little catch up newsletter like what's happening, what you might have missed, things like that and I pop that in the last of the automation. They're always getting that at the end before then they receive the next one, whatever, whenever they catch up to the current members, so there's quite a lot.

And then we have a Facebook group. That's probably been the biggest struggle engagement wise and I think that's mainly because a lot of those members that are in there have come from my free group, which is a really big engaged group. There's a lot of discussions and a lot of things, they're used to that level. When you've got 13,000 members and it's an engaged group, as you know it's a lot easier to get people talking, whereas when you've got 300, because not everyone wants to join the Facebook group and I really was, oh, do I have a forum, do I have a Facebook group, but a lot of them I know are on Facebook.

I really tossed that up and I just, I have found that hard to keep that level of engagement. I think because of what I'm used to too. I'm not, it's like you're back, right back to the start. I think the

way Facebook shows things, from what I've noticed is, when they're posting, a lot of the time members are posting in my free Facebook group and they think they're in the Member Hub group. I think because it's all meshing in they're, sort of aren't always able to make the distinction between that private content and the other two, but that's Facebook, it keeps changing.

Callie: Yeah, it can be tricky, although the plus side with members posting in the free group is, you kind of get that crossover kind of mention of the membership and things like that, and that kind of bonus there.

Jodie: Yes, yes, and I'll post photos of an activity they've done from it, oh this is great. You know, oh yes, and that's a little way of advertising too in that bit of, you know, the FOMO. It all comes together, but I think the group, I'm still struggling to find that, what's the balance of, because, am I posting? I'm in there every day answering questions and things and that I don't mind at all, but I'm used to doing like theme days and challenges.

I've done some challenges where I give them gift cards and things like that. I've also, I send out all members a little thank you and welcome card, which was okay for a while but when you're writing out 200 cards... And then it's been so long since I went to the post office I didn't realise here that stamps had gone up to \$1, and I was very much like, what? Stamps are \$1? I thought that was .30, and she said to me, oh, maybe dear you might want to think about doing some email. Yes, I do that, but this is just for the personal touch.

Every time I think about stopping it then you get one or two emails that come through that much saying, thank you so much, or they'll put a photo in the group or something like that saying it was so nice to have that. I know I once received one from joining one of Amy Porterfield's courses and I was just like, oh, that's come from... Of course I know she didn't write it but... She may have, but it was just, it's that feeling of, again, connection and community and you're not just a dollar sign to someone out there. I don't want them to feel like that at all, so lots of little

engagement things, but again, they all take a lot of time when it's only you doing it as well.

Callie: That was going to be my next question actually, do you have a team helping you or is it just you doing everything at the moment?

Jodie: I wouldn't call it a team. I've now got a VA who is a fellow blogging friend, but she's also a teacher so she knows this world and how we speak and what my resources are. We started on about 15 hours a month and now we're up to about 25. Her main role though is just helping me out with scheduling social media and she pops in to the groups and helps me now with answering and keeping those connections going. The biggest help, and this is what I would recommend anyone even if you've only got a little bit of money, this is the best thing I ever did.

She does the majority of the support emails now, just those, oh, where's the certificate, how can I download that, or I didn't get this, can I cancel, can I renew, all that sort of stuff that I was spending hours on every day she now just goes in mornings and afternoon and tidies those up and I don't have to see them as much and I can forward them from my other email, and setting up that actual support email address, so that's been really helpful. I'm hoping, my goal for this year is to start outsourcing all of it. I've just got to loosen the reigns on the perfection itself and do some videos so I can show others what to do.

I mean I've also had, I have to say my business coach, Melanie Miller, she is the one, if I didn't meet her four years ago I think I was ready to give up. We've come a long way. She helps me do the figures side of thing, I'm not good on the accounting. I don't like stats, I don't like all that stuff, but I see now after keeping those figures and those records why it's important, especially with doing a membership site, that you need to know the money coming in, money going out, members coming in, members going back out. All of that sort of thing is really, really helpful too but not the part that I enjoy. I've started outsourcing bookkeeping

too, obviously because I don't like numbers. I like to see it in the bank account, I just don't like to....

Callie: Yes, you'd like to see the end result, but...

Jodie: Yeah.

Callie: Yeah. Wrapping up then, is there anything you actually wish you'd known earlier or would do differently if you were starting again?

Jodie: I think just like I mentioned right at the beginning when we were talking, is just not worrying so much about what the actual site looked like but how I was going to keep up with, like some sort of system for what I had planned on for content. I knew what content I wanted to be in there and I'd done my pages and the fancy categories and worried about all of that stuff, and uploading and all of that great stuff that takes ages, and that I perfectionized myself over every minute. Then I realised after that first influx of members and people started saying, oh, have you got next months plans, where are next months plans?

I'm like, I haven't even got that done yet, I didn't think you'd realised it though. I think I would've done a better, better content planning and how I was going to organise that, and yeah, just thinking more into the future. I think you think it's not going to take off so you don't have all this time, you know, just opening and you have all this time, and it's great if it is popular and you do get that influx of new members, but suddenly you can't just sit there. It's not like writing a blog post where you just get to sit down, switch off, and write your blog post.

Suddenly you've got all the customer support and the new members and the payment processes and all of those great things as well, and you think, but when am I going to do my content? I think that's what I would've liked to have had in place, a content plan, and also to have set up a menu or search type system... Because I've got so much content in there now we're working on trying to get something but it's going to take a lot of fiddling to

now put everything into categories. I didn't think ahead that you're constantly adding into your membership site, and so, obviously you want to make it easy for people to find what they need to in categories, so that, a better search and menu type, I think.

Callie: Awesome.

Jodie: One day.

Callie: Yeah. So finally then, I'd love to know what's next for you. What are your goals for the next 12 months, for example?

Jodie: Well I was going to say, well my goal for this year was to reach 500 members, so I've reached that.

Callie: Rest of the year off.

Jodie: I know, right? My goal is to have more guest presenters to help me with doing those monthly webinars. I want to grow to at least 1,000 members, it'd be good so that it doesn't seem like such a big deal when you get that churn and it sort of offsets a little bit, but as you say, when you've got the bigger numbers you notice that more anyway because suddenly it looks worse.

It's not so much about just building those numbers but knowing that I'm making that difference. I've struggled a lot with that whole imposter syndrome because I don't talk, I don't do the speaking circuit. I've done talks and things over the years but it's not what I want to do now, so it's really on family. I don't want to do the travel. I can reach more people and, as crass as it sounds, make more money by sitting here at home in my pyjama pants doing a webinar and helping out 100s of people, especially in rural areas that can't get access to that sort of training.

I want to be able to do more of that and help people in regional areas that aren't getting access to that support, and also to outsource more, that's my big goal, so that I'm not, mainly have it as something that's working for me rather than me still being in

the business and working [inaudible 00:47:56]. But I'd also like to try out different webinars and different funnels to see what works. At the moment this one's working really well so I don't want to do too much to it, but [crosstalk 00:48:08].

Callie: leave it for a bit.

Jodie: Yes, so I'll just refine that a little bit first and then work on from there, yes.

Callie: Awesome. If someone wants to find out more about you and the membership where's the best place for them to actually do that?

Jodie: The best place is probably visit my website, which is theempowerededucatoronline.com, or if they're on Facebook they can join my free feedback group, just search The Empowered Educator.

Callie: Awesome, and I'll put those links in the show notes as well to make it really easy for people.

Jodie: Thank you.

Callie: Thank you so much for joining me today Jodie, I've loved chatting with you. I've loved kind of all the details about what you've been working on and things. I particularly love that you've been able to retire your husband, I just, I love that you've been able to do that, that's awesome.

Jodie: And he now vacuums, don't forget.

Callie: Yeah exactly, I think you should kind of create some training on how other people can get their husband to vacuum, because I know I could definitely do with that.

Jodie: Well he didn't want to pay for a cleaner so that's the offset.

Callie: Yeah there you go, that's a good approach actually. But yeah, so it's been wonderful to chat with you and I love everything you've done with The Empowered Educator. I'm really looking forward

to seeing where it goes next and how you continue to grow, because yeah, it's been wonderful watching your progress.

Jodie: Thanks Callie and thank you for your help in Member Site Academy and always being there with some wonderful sage advice, because I could not have taken that leap finally unless I had some of those tools from your membership site as well.

Callie: Oh, well it's been our pleasure, and I love that you've given back so much to our community as well with things like what you've been doing with your webinar and we've already got other members that are kind of taking that strategy that you've shared and implementing it and getting great results, so yeah, that been interesting.

Jodie: I saw that, that's wonderful, yeah, because that's how I learnt too, by reading what other people are doing, and I liked it when they lay it all out, so yeah, and then you can do some extra research, but yeah, if you've got those steps to start with it doesn't seem quite as overwhelming.

Callie: Yeah, definitely. I will let you get on with your evening anyway, I know it's later over there in Australia, but again, thank you so much for joining me and sharing so much of your journey with us.

Jodie: Thanks Callie, thanks for having me on.

Callie: That's it for this episode folks. Thank you for listening, and thank you once again to Jodie for joining me. I love how Jodie has tested different things in her membership and not necessarily taken the obvious approach, allowing her to commandeer what amounts for a premium price in here market. And of course, I especially love hearing the impact having a membership has had, from the increased stability and ability to support more people to recently being able to afford for her husband to leave his terrible job. Not bad for your first year as a membership site owner at all.

If you want to check out more of what Jodie is doing then be sure to head over to theempowerededucatoronline.com or head over

to themembershipguys.com/btm27 to find all Jodie's details and links as well as the episode, show notes, and the transcript. If you're an academy member be sure to also check out Jodie's posts in the forum too where she lays out her webinar strategy and what's worked really well for her. And that's me done, join me same time same bat channel next week for another episode of Behind the Membership.

Automated: If you've enjoyed today's episode of Behind the Membership we invite you to check out the membersiteacademy.com. The Member Site Academy is the essential resource for anyone at any stage of starting, growing, and running a membership website. Whether you're still figuring out what your idea is going to be or whether your website is already up and running and you're just looking for ways to grow it and attract new members, then the Member Site Academy can help you to get to the next level. With our extensive course library, monthly training, exclusive member only discounts perks and tools, and a supportive active community to help you along the way with feedback encouragement and advice, the Member Site Academy is the perfect place to be for anyone looking to start manage and grow a successful membership website. Check it out at membersiteacademy.com.