

The Empowered Entrepreneur Show

Episode 029

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Intro: Welcome to the Empowered Entrepreneur Show. Discover your life's purpose, reprogram your mind for success, and attract an abundance of paying clients to your business. Now here's your host, Tom Tenaglia.

Tom Tenaglia: Aloha, empowered entrepreneur, I am Tom Tenaglia and you're listening to the Empowered Entrepreneur Show. Today I want to revisit a topic that comes up time and time again with a number of marketing groups I'm in and people that other entrepreneurs that are building a business, and that is refunds. I want to connect what I said in Episode 13 on refunds, which if you haven't listened to it I highly encourage you to listen to it. I've shared it with people that anytime they ask me a refund question that's the episode that I send them.

I want to compare it ... Not compare it, I want to connect the refunds episode to beliefs. A lot of times the question of should I refund to this customer, here's the experience, it comes up. While my answer in Episode 13 is, well, pretty true and it's the process I use and it does require you to figure out what's right for your business, I also think that some of the resistance to a streamlined process with refunds or to a process that is energetically sound, meaning what you're doing is wowing your customers even when they're asking for a refund, some of the resistance that I hear is, "Oh, well we already used the money. Oh, we already put it to something else. Oh, the person didn't ... They're asking me so many months later. Oh this, Oh that."

Look, this is also coming ... Yes, this episode's airing in February, January, February timeframe but we're recording it at the end of the previous year and beginning of December. At this point, people are also preparing for the holidays. People are wanting to recover money, often, to put towards what they spend on black Friday and Christmas shopping. That can be the nature with some digital goods, with some digital products and services, because they're easy to refund, or at least from a customer's point of view.

One example, I saw someone saying, "Well, they gave all these excuses for why they didn't want to refund the customer, it's been many months, they didn't go through the material at all, they have lifetime access, oh, life got in the way and they want a refund even though they have lifetime access. Life getting in the way is often the holidays for people that ask for refunds but I'm not as concerned about the customers ask for the refund as I am about the empowered entrepreneur who has resistance to it.

They might say, "Oh, we already put the money towards other things. Oh, we have this strict policy or oh we have this or oh we have that. I talked about in Episode 13, yeah, there are times where you have to enforce the policy and there are other outcomes of enforcing the policy that they could have negative effects so we want to be mindful of what we're doing. We don't want to be walked all over, we do have to enforce boundaries from the heart. At the same time, if the entrepreneur believed that the money would replace itself, that in

abundance more money would come in, and the right people would follow, then they would just refund.

I had a long time customer ask for a cancellation of a subscription, I just, I canceled the subscription, you know what I mean? She went on to say things before that that were in the note asking for the cancellation that I then had to clarify with her and say, "Okay, that's not what actually occurred here," but I honored her request to cancel the subscription because that's what she had asked for. I believed that when canceling that subscription that the money would come in in abundance with people that would love to work with me.

The crazy thing is, there was a valley of income, there wasn't that much income flowing in. I canceled that lady's subscription with the belief that more money would come right in. I got ... One astrology reading popped right up. Somebody said, "Hey, where's your calendar link, I want to schedule a call." I had one Reprogram Your Mind weekend pop up and after the Reprogram Your Mind Weekend even I had another astrology call pop up and all within a very short period of time, no marketing on my part.

Just the belief that letting go of this subscription client the money would take care of itself. My goal is I wanted to make sure she was happy, I wanted to make sure that I was happy, and I also wanted to know that business would remain viable. It doesn't matter ... If someone has an abundance mentality then they do what's right, then they do what they would normally do. This entrepreneur who was saying, "I don't want to refund them because we already spent the money," is saying they don't want to do what's right for a customer because they made a business decision.

That can really ... There's a time and a place for it but often it's best to just let those people go. Say, "Look, if they didn't even use the course or the material or whatever they bought, then refunding it ... Look, they didn't get any value from it yet because they didn't invest time in it, what difference does it make?" If they do it with a loving heart, then that gets shared with the client when you're letting them go.

There are times where you have to say, "Here's our policy, you agreed to it on the sales form, on the checkout page, and it is a strict policy," Yeah, those people could take to social media or they could attempt to charge back or anything but at the end of the day no one's really going ... Even if they went to the bank, I'm definitely not an attorney or anything of that nature, but my understanding of it is the bank does ask the merchant for the refund policy and then figures out, "Hey, was the client aware of it?" If so, then they find in favor of the merchant.

As long as you've made it super, super clear what your terms are then there is opportunity to enforce it. However, in the world that we're in with social media,

there are times with business decisions that we do have to make. No one's going to go and ... It's crazy but I don't think I've seen people say, "Oh my gosh, if you bought this product within the last 34 months you can ask them for a refund, they totally gave me one."

People don't go to social media to write those things usually, I don't think I've seen anything like that. They'll go to social media and they'll go, "Don't buy anything from this company, they won't refund you," if you don't like it or whatever. They won't even say, "Well, they asked for 34 months later," or whatever the case is, they won't tell the story.

There is sometimes a business case that has to be made but I do believe that if you put your heart into what you do and you're making decisions based on your purpose and your spiritual path, and you're doing what you feel is right and with integrity, that it all takes care of itself and it all works itself out. If your gut tells you, "Yeah, let's refund them," then refund them. If your gut says, "Nope," enforce the boundaries and enforce the boundary from your heart in a loving and caring way and then go from there.

At the end of the day, that's basically what we're up against here is we want to grow our business and we want to do it with people that are absolutely fans of us. There was a company that came across as ... I was going to buy this company's product and the product looked very solid but when I looked at ... I tried to find their refund policy, I couldn't really find it, I didn't buy it and I was wondering what were other people's experience of this.

I was looking for reviews and instead of finding actual reviews of the product I was finding people complaining about the refund policy. In particular, this company had a policy where they wouldn't refund after a re-bill. In other words, if you had an annual subscription and on the day after your credit card was charged, or the day that your credit card was charged, they would not refund the re-bill.

You could not say, "Oh, you know what, I really want to cancel this subscription," after a charge, they would not refund it. A lot of people were complaining about that. It actually wasn't that that I was concerned with because I figured, "Okay. Well, I can manage my subscriptions and if I want to cancel it I'll just cancel before the re-bill date, no big deal." What actually convinced me not to buy this company's product, even though it looked pretty solid, was how the company wrote to customers in public forums.

In public locations, the company was responding in ways that even the forum moderators were saying, "Yo, cool it." Or forms of it like, "Hey, there's no actual issue here that I need to moderate," as whoever the moderator was, it's just you don't like what your customer is saying but they're telling you what occurred. The company was trying to basically have the negative press, so to

speak, removed but the way that the company did it actually created more negative press. Gave me an idea for a podcast episode, this one.

I have purchased products that are less solid from a technical perspective if I've gotten more solid customer support. If I've been treated like a human being, really, and I have avoided products where I see that they treat either current or past customers or even potential customers in a way that I don't want to do business with. In that case, look, if somebody asks for it right after the re-bill, if it was within 24, 48 hours after a re-bill, they didn't get any value from that new year, why not cancel? To me that's, why not refund it?

That's what happened when someone did email me and they said they wanted to cancel their subscription, they didn't ask for a refund and I canceled it on the day that I got the cancellation, within a matter of minutes or a very short period of time at least. It was less than 12 hours. It just so happened that earlier that day before the person had even messaged me there was a re-bill and so when he got his statement he saw it and he said, "Well, I was recharged."

I'm like, "No, you weren't," but I didn't say no you weren't. I explained this on Episode 13 where basically I looked, I said, "I'll help you out because you're not supposed to be charged again, let me figure out what happened here." Actually, in that particular case, what he saw was a refund because ... He was wondering why he was charged and it just so happens that what we ended up doing when he messaged in was I saw that he was recently charged that day that he asked and I processed a refund for that charge without him asking.

What he saw in his credit card statement, I said, "Oh, actually," I reminded him, I said, "Actually, we did a refund and so is that charge that you see that's on your new statement actually negative?" He looked again and he said, "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry, yeah, it is." I knew that his message to me to say can you cancel my subscription, when I saw that it had actually re-billed, and when he mentioned something to me about it I went and I just automatically, I saw that and I issued the refund.

I didn't ask him, "Hey, do you want it refunded?" It seemed pretty clear to me that the reason why he was messaging me on that day was to get a refund so I just refunded it and I basically wowed him in this experience. As a result of knowing that, yeah, you know what, I'm actually going to do something that he's going to want to do business with me again in the future. He's going to want to tell people about me in the future because even if you need something canceled I don't give them a hard time.

People will remember those times where the companies are just pushing back. Just thinking about it, there was a company when I was looking for different meal prep options and they had one date on their website for delivery and one date on the email that was a completely different date. Therefore, when I got

the food it was actually basically expired, close to it, because the date they said on the website was not the date they put in the email and the date that was in the email was accurate and I went by the date that was on the website.

Yeah, could I have compared the email to the website, sure. At the same time, how many companies send you two different delivery date, that's just so strange to me. Either say check your email for the accurate delivery date or keep the delivery date the same. I went back and forth with this company a bit on how can we make this right, how can we fix this, and they just kept saying, "Oh, it's our apologies that the email was different than the website, yada yada." I'm like, "That's not what I'm asking, I'm asking how do we make this right?":

Eventually, I just got more direct with them and I said, "Can you give a partial refund for the food that I had to throw out?" They said sure and they did. Because of the back and forth that I had with them, I'll never shop from them again. It's just because those experiences, I don't give these company names, I don't think it's important to share the names of the companies. I want to share the experiences though because that's where the lessons are.

In my business, I want to wow my customers at any given time, whether that's in pre-sales, whether that's while they're an active member or whether that's if they want to cancel. I don't try to save clients as much. I really, I believe that I over-deliver, I do what I need to do, retention takes care of itself. At the end of the day it's am I helping you to have a better quality of life? If someone's going to blame me for something, I'd rather they just not be associated with me. Therefore, they can go work on what they need to work on. At the end of the day, I feel good about the people that I'm helping and people that want to be there.

With an abundance mentality, with a belief that the money will take care of itself, there's really, there's nothing to worry about with giving a refund, absolutely 100% nothing to worry about, from my point of view. I hope that helps as a continuation, as a follow-up to Episode 13. With that, *Aloha; a hui hou*. Talk to you again soon.

Outtro:

Thank you for listening to the Empowered Entrepreneur Show.