



## EPISODE 211

# Five Things I Said “Yes” to In the Early Years (But Say “No” to Now)

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**AMY PORTERFIELD:** Hey there, welcome back to another episode of The Online Marketing Made Easy Podcast. I'm your host, Amy Porterfield. Today we are going to take a trip back to my early days.

Those first few years nothing seemed to be going as planned and everything that came my way felt like a big deal, or a big opportunity, or a really big challenge.

Those early years! I wouldn't trade them for the world but I never want to go back to them.

In [Episode #152, How to Avoid FOMO](#) (Fear Of Missing Out), in your business to make better decisions I talked a lot about what I say “no” to today and why I say “no.”

It was a popular episode because many of you realized, like I did, that I was saying “yes” because I just didn't want to miss out on a potential opportunity. But when you say “yes” you are saying “no” to something else.

In that episode we explored what your FOMO yesses were costing you. I'll link to that episode. If you missed it I definitely think it's worth checking out.

In today's episode it's a little bit of a follow up on that episode because we're talking about these yesses and these no decisions but there's a twist because we're going to go back to my early days and look at what I said “yes” to.

In my brand new podcast Facebook community that many of you are a part of (thank you for being there) I asked you what you wanted more of. So many of you said, “Give us the details about what life and business looked like in the early years.”



You wanted to know about my business and what it was like starting out, the decisions I made to get to where I am today, and the challenges I faced as I went along building this business.

My dear listener, your wish is my command. In this episode I'm going to share some specifics about what I once said "yes" to in the early days, the yesses that got me here into a place where I've built a million-dollar online business with engaged audience members and a suite of online training programs.

I'm also going to share with you when and why I shifted out of the "yes" and into the "no" as my business grew. Every time my business hits a milestone or pivots in one way or another I need to ask myself, "Is this the right decision for where I'm at today with my business?"

That's a question you can be asking yourself as well. I've said this before and it's worth saying again, "The business you have today will look dramatically different just a few years from now," especially if you're just starting out.

The business you have today will look dramatically different in just a few years from now. That means if you're saying "yes" to things now you're likely going to be saying "no" to those same things down the road.

Ultimately, my goal is to help you choose your very best yesses for your specific phase of business. Your best yes is an educated one, a thoughtful one, what you really think is right for you right now.

Before we dive in, this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, How to Confidently Create Your First Profitable Course in 60 Days.

If you've been thinking about creating an online course, if you really like my business model, and you want to do something similar in your own business or if you've had an idea for a course for a long time but you're just not sure how to get started this free masterclass is perfect for you.

Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/courses> and it will take you to a page where you can choose the date and time to sign up for my free masterclass. You can learn what it takes to get started with your own online courses.

I won't make you wait any longer. Let's go ahead and dive in.



## Yes to Speaking Opportunities

I've talked about this one before. When I was first starting out and began to get offers to speak I said "yes". I did it because I knew I had to put myself out there, to be seen, to get exposure, and to make the right connections.

I couldn't hide behind my computer when no one hardly knew me. In the early years it made sense for me to do a lot of speaking gigs and travel all over the world to get noticed, to network, and to meet the people whom I would eventually call my ideal customer avatar, my potential customers.

I needed to get out there and meet them. Just doing it online wasn't going to be enough for me. I needed to push myself. It wasn't easy. I never have loved speaking on stage. But I did it because I knew it would stretch me and make me better in so many ways.

You likely know the story of my current-day view for business and for speaking on stage. I don't love it. I like to be home in Carlsbad, California, with Cade and Hobie and Scout.

If I travel I prefer it to be for fun. I also don't do tons of speaking. I choose about two main speaking gigs a year. I do this because I don't enjoy being on stage and the great thing is I don't have to be. I intentionally set up my business using a model that would allow me to be successful every single day but I don't have to get on a plane or get in a car to do so.

I feel very grateful about that because it works for me. That doesn't mean it has to work for you. You might say "yes" to speaking now if you're just getting started and you might continue to say "yes" to speaking because you love it, because it fuels you.

By all means, do what works for you. But you asked me to share some of my early day experiences and speaking was one that I said "yes" to for a long time, for at least three solid years.

I believe in sacrifices when building your business or going after something you really want, you really believe in, and that you're passionate about. Sometimes that takes sacrifices.



For me, traveling to the Philippines and the U.K. and being away from my family did feel like a sacrifice for me. For you travel bugs, you might look at that and think that feels like a dream come true to you.

You also have to remember that before I started my online business I traveled the world for six years working with Tony Robbins. We were on the road all the time so I had already experienced that. I loved it, enjoyed so much of it, and so when I went into my own business I was ready to slow down the travel.

But I didn't for a few more years because I believed getting on stage, getting out there, even if you don't go far, even if you just go to another state, I believe it makes a difference when you're just starting out.

For you, I highly recommend you take advantage of the speaking opportunities that are coming your way or maybe coming your way very soon. It's a great experience. You will learn so much about your ideal audience and about yourself.

Honing in on those speaking skills will help you so much when you do video, when you create content in your courses, and for your webinars. But if you reach a point where you don't enjoy the travel and the speaking you've got to look at where your business is, look at your business model, and ask yourself, "Do I have to keep traveling and speaking on stage to make this business work?"

If the answer is "yes" change your business model. If the answer is "no" don't do what you don't want to do anymore.

### Yes to Trades

When I was just starting out I was still working part time in corporate. If you remember my story, for a while I was working part time at Tony Robbins while working from home and still traveling to Unleash the Power Within, the event I was working on in terms of marketing.

I would work part time there and then part time on my business. I would always take on a good trade. I would give feedback on somebody's social media strategy or their content strategy and they would design a landing page for me or help me troubleshoot a problem where I wasn't knowledgeable in that area.

I loved doing trades. When you're just starting out and you don't have a lot of money and you don't have a lot of expertise just yet trades are a great idea if you make smart



decisions around those trades. You're not saying "yes" to every trade that comes your way but if you see it as a win-win, go for it.

It's always a great way to get testimonials. If I were to help a friend on their social media strategy they could give me a testimonial. Testimonials are not just valuable if someone paid you for it. It's all about the results you got them.

I would use those trades for testimonials when I didn't have any paying customers yet.

After a year or so of doing this, I didn't do it for the whole three years. I called my first three years "my early years". I did trades for about the first year. After a while I realized I didn't have the bandwidth to take on trades. I either had to work with someone that paid me or not do the work.

I was finally starting to get more social media clients. Remember, back in the day I did social media for small business. I did their strategy, their posting, and everything in between. My bandwidth was getting shorter and shorter.

More importantly, I discovered that when I did a trade and didn't pay for a service (like somebody writing my copy or something getting designed) I wasn't a priority. Today I always pay for it. I want to be a priority. Even when it's my closest friend I want to pay for it.

Again, I want to be a priority. I want them to hit a deadline and paying for it helps insure that. When I didn't have the money to make that happen you can bet I did really strategic trades.

For you, when you're in your first few years of business and you want to save some money, trade strategically. Make sure it's a win-win.

As you start to scale and as you start to get busier you don't want to have bandwidth issues. I want you to think about saying "no" or at least limiting those arrangements to a few core a year.

Here's a side note. If you want a tell-tale sign that you've outgrown the trade model, the next time you do a trade if you feel resentful about the relationship in any way it's time to get out, my friend. It's time to move on and pay for those services.



## Yes to One-Off Chats and Coffee Meetings

I know you can relate to this one. A friend or a friend of a friend calls you up or messages you and ask for a coffee break or if you can chat or meet up or would love to have a conversation with you over lunch.

These are going to start coming to you more and more if they are not already coming your way.

In the early years I said “yes” to these invitations. I never knew what to expect. I never knew what they might lead to and I was curious enough to go meet with a lot of people. I did a lot of coffee dates.

If I was being really honest I was hoping some of those would turn into clients. When you do service work you definitely want to say “yes” to these coffee meetings.

In some situations they would lead to me getting a new client. In other situations they were just really great opportunities for me to meet people in the industry, learn about what they were working on, they could learn about what I’m working on.

Maybe from there a client could come because they would recommend me. It was important for me to be seen and heard and get out there and meeting people. But then as time went on and I became more knowledgeable and more in demand those chat opportunities became opportunities for people to pick my brain.

If you really think of that term it’s a disgusting term, pick your brain. Then if you think about it as an entrepreneur it’s like the death. We do not want people to pick our brains. We usually hate those opportunities.

Just as a side note, let’s never call anybody and ask, “Can I pick your brain?” Nobody wants to hear that.

These opportunities to meet with people and maybe get some clients and put myself out there soon became opportunities for people to ask me a million questions about social media.

This was many years ago so social media was still very confusing to most, especially those with small businesses. They didn’t even know what to do. They didn’t even know how to get on Twitter or how to even start a Facebook page. They really wanted all the information.



Again, I was saying “yes” to these coffees and I was even saying “yes” to people that wanted to pick my brain. For one, I thought I had to say “yes”. I thought that if I was going to build a business I had to have these types of meetings, which is part of it, which is not true.

I also did get something out of it. Like I said, in the early days when I was meeting with people I did have a lot of opportunity just to meet with people. It was a pitch and catch and great conversations.

Then it turned into more of a pick-your-brain scenario and that’s when I started to say “no”. I had a former hair stylist that every time I sat in her chair she would pick my brain.

Here I was paying for the service and I had to give her advice the whole time. Then I would go home and a day later I would get a text asking me more advice. Notice, I said “former” hair stylist. Nobody wants to do that. You’ve got to have that down time, right?

I think with this one, “Saying ‘yes’ to one-off chats and coffees you have to be careful about it. I still want you to do it but when you start, again, to feel resentful you have to pull yourself back.

You can’t be mad at anybody. They are allowed to ask you to pick your brain. You’re the one that has to say, “You know what, no. I’m not going to do this anymore.”

I eventually realized it wasn’t my “best “yes” to say “yes” to these types of meetings. I needed to get my time back. Remember, every single time you say “yes” to a coffee date or an opportunity to have lunch with someone you are taking yourself away from your work.

You’re taking your focus away time, your effort, possibly money. Say “yes” to what feels right to you but be mindful of that as well.

For you, I know you’re getting these requests or you’re going to start getting them soon. People will want to meet with you. I want you to limit them and also just be really mindful and go with your gut.

If someone asks you to a coffee date you can even ask a few questions just to make sure it’s not a whole session where they’re going to ask you a million questions and you don’t get any value from it.



I will say that going with your gut is important too because just a few years ago Rick Mulready asked me to a coffee date. I didn't know him. He was a referral from Pat Flynn. Pat introduced us.

I wasn't really sure who this guy was so I didn't know if he was going to pick my brain. But I just had a good feeling about it. I felt like he just wanted to get together to meet other people in the industry.

Now we are best friends so I'm glad I said "yes" to that coffee date. So go with your gut on that. But I have a great resource for you. I want you to watch a short video that Marie Forleo did about how to respond when someone asks to pick your brain.

It is a really good video. It's short, sweet, and to the point. But it's full of responses that you can use the next time you're asked. Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/211>. If you scrolled down in the show notes I'm going to link to Marie Forleo's video, the exact one I want you to watch.

Let's keep moving on.

### **Yes to Creating Bonuses for Other People's Programs**

When I was first starting out this was a great strategy for me because I was trying to get in front of other people's audiences and grow my list. I would build bonuses or trainings for other people's programs.

I was able to grow my list and reach a bigger audience because of this strategy so I was happy with it at first. Then, once I reached a certain phase in my business I realized I should be using my best content for my students.

I should be spending time on my courses. So again, in the early years, probably the first two years, I probably contributed my own content into bonuses for other people's programs about three, four, or maybe five times throughout two years.

Then I said I was going to shift gears. It was great for me. I would have never gotten in front of those audiences if I didn't get to be a part of their programs. Now I'm very selective. I only do it once a year and I do it for Marie Forleo's B-School.

I have a bonus in there all about getting started with Facebook advertising for list building. It's actually inside the B-School program as a bonus. It makes perfect sense. 1) Marie has a massive audience and I would love to get in front of more of her





audience because I know we have great alignment, 2) I'm a huge affiliate for that program so it gives me more clout to say, "I'm promoting this program and I'm inside this program as well."

That is a perfect fit. However, if I were to do that for a lot of other people, especially if I didn't have a connection with their product, I should be spending that time now, for where I'm at in my business, on my own content and my own bonuses and my own programs.

For you, if you're just starting out in those first few years, getting your own content or a special bonus you put together in another person's program, especially if they're going to attract an ideal audience for you (that's a big factor there), it's a great way to get exposure for your content and just for your own personal brand.

I highly recommend it. As your business grows I want you to think about the opportunity cost. Yeah, there's a cost to that opportunity as well. Are you wasting time building content for other people that would be better served for your own platform?

This is a "best yes" that should eventually turn into a strategic "no thank you" for most offers you get to put your content into their programs. Be strategic but I loved doing it in those early years.

### **Yes to Allowing Your Guest Bloggers or Guest Interviews on Your Podcast to Get Opt Ins From Your Platform**

This one sounds a little bit controversial. It's actually more recently for me that I turned this "yes" into a "no." Let me explain. When I first started the podcast guests would come on.

If we thought about an opt-in opportunity or some kind of freebie for that guest they were allowed to mention it on my show and drive traffic back to their own website. They would capture leads from being on my platform.

This made sense to me at the time because I was just starting out. I didn't have tons of people listening to my podcast in the beginning. So I wanted to incentivize my guests because I wanted to go for some really good names.

I wanted to incentivize them to come on my show so I would say, "Hey, if we can think of a really great PDF, freebie, checklist, guide, or whatever it might be I'm happy



for you to mention it on the show and you can send them to your own opt-in page to get leads.”

This was always, “Yeah, bring it on.” I didn’t do it a lot. Let’s not get crazy. There might be 20 people total, and that might be generous, on my podcast right now that had the opportunity to send traffic to a specific opt in based on the topic we talked about on the podcast.

Still, it was a great opportunity for them, especially now that the show has gotten really popular and has so many episodes and so many people going back to past episodes.

However, about a year ago I decided that I would keep all opt-in opportunities that are mentioned on my show to my site only. For sure, I would give a shout-out to my guest and link to their website in my show notes. But when it came to creating freebies, any kind of opt-in opportunity, I would collect the leads only.

I’m at a place now with this podcast after 200 episodes where I can do that. Guests come on because they know it’s a great platform. They know they’re going to get in front of some great people, all of you, but I don’t have to entice them with also getting leads.

For me, this feels right. Actually, you might say, “I don’t care where I’m at in my business, Amy, on my podcast if I create a freebie I’m not allowing those leads to go to my guest.”

I say more power to you. Maybe that should be a “no”. However, it did work well for me and I like to show you a few different options that you’ve got. So, if you really want a big name to come on your show and you are just starting out, allowing them to get leads, even if they got 100 or 200 leads from that episode, could be very valuable for them.

It’s a strategy that you want to just use wisely. Then, when you get to a place, I want you to turn that “best yes” into a strategic “no.” So be mindful of this one as well.

For you, think about how you’re giving other people opt-in opportunities or lead opportunities from your own audience. Ask yourself if that feels right for you right now and then as your business grows and as you start to scale I want you to pull back on that strategy.



Keep those leads for your own platform. You've done the work. You've attracted the big audience. You deserve to keep those in house. Again, it's a little bit controversial. Do what you will with this one but it worked really well for me.

Now that "best yes" has definitely turned into a strategic "no thank you".

Let's wrap this up. Let me run through that list one more time so you have them top of mind. In my early days here were some of my "best" yesses.

- 1) Yes to speaking opportunities.
- 2) Yes to trades.
- 3) Yes to one-off chats and coffee dates.
- 4) Yes to creating bonuses for other people's programs.
- 5) Yes to guest bloggers and guests on my podcast getting the opt in.

All of those yesses have now become a strategic no thank you. Hopefully these examples will help you figure out some of your best yesses in the phase of business that you are in right now today.

Remember, at any time your best yesses can become your strategic no's as well. Just pay attention to how you're feeling about them, how they are serving you, and how they are serving your audience as well.

Before we wrap up, this episode is sponsored by my free masterclass, How to Confidently Create Your First Profitable Course in 60 Days. If you've been thinking about creating an online course, if you like my own business model, or if you've had a course idea for a while but you're just not sure where to start this free masterclass is perfect for you.

Go to <http://www.amyporterfield.com/courses> to sign up and dive in. Again, it's totally free.

I cannot wait to meet you here again next week. Next week is going to be a fun one because I have Rick Mulready back on the show. This time he is not talking about Facebook ads.

Instead, he's going to share how he hit the \$1M mark in his business for his 2017 year and how he did it with a really small list, at least a smaller list than you might guess. He's also going to share some things he's never shared before about where he was



back in the day and how dark those days used to be and how he came out of it and where he is today.

He's getting vulnerable and I love it. Also, to still make it strategic and actionable and get down to the nitty gritty of online marketing, he's going to share a reengagement list-building campaign.

There were people on his list that were not engaging with him and he did a specific strategy that he's going to walk you through. I think you're going to love it.

Meet me here again next week. Until then have a great week. Talk to you soon. Bye for now.