

Tiffany Hill with Think Pink Bakers

David Crabill: Welcome to the Forrager Podcast where I talk with cottage food entrepreneurs about their strategies for running a food business from home. I'm David Crabill and today I'm talking with Tiffany Hill.

[00:00:10] But real quick, I wanted to check, have you created a website for your business yet? And if you have, do you pay for it?

[00:00:17] A lot of entrepreneurs still think they need to spend money to get a good website and that is simply not true anymore. I am a really big fan of Square Online. That's what I use for my fudge businesses website and I created a free tutorial that will walk you through how to set up a totally free website in less than an hour.

[00:00:32] And in case you think free also means cheap, it's actually quite the opposite. I think Square Online is hands down the very best website tool for most cottage food businesses. So, if you want to learn more you can watch my free tutorial by going to forrager.com/website. All right, so once again, I have Tiffany Hill on the show today.

[00:00:51] This is the second part of my conversation with her. If you haven't listened to the first part yet, you can go back to the last episode and check that out. In the last episode, she shared how she started and grew her cottage food business, The Pink Crumb. In this episode, she shares how she built off that success by starting an online course business called Think Pink Bakers, as well as a packaging business called Pink Design Company.

[00:01:15] As you will see, Tiffany has experienced phenomenal growth in all of her businesses and I have never seen anything quite like it. She now has over 300,000 Instagram followers and even though she started Think Pink Bakers just last year, she's already had over 10,000 people join her membership. And in just the last six months, her new packaging business has grown so fast that she's already building a warehouse to manage it all.

[00:01:38] But let me just say, no matter what stage your business is in, I think you'll find this episode contains a lot of relatable and valuable business advice. And with that, let's jump right into part two of my conversation with Tiffany.

[00:01:54]

[00:01:55] **David Crabill:** All right, so you decided to quit the market. I understand you, you had to, it was all or nothing. You, you had to quit. You couldn't just shrink your time. So that makes a lot of sense. And you had a loyal customer base, but still customers don't like change. So what was it like when you switched to porch pickups?

[00:02:11] What did you learn through that?

[00:02:13] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, porch pickup for me was a little unique because I also live very remotely. And so I knew I really want to do this. I want it to be successful. I want to have this experience so that I can share my experience with others. But I have an added challenge in that. don't live super local.

[00:02:32] It's a little remote. And so I moved to porch pickup. I first found a little local business who would allow me to stock some of my baked goods in her little shop. And I could also meet people there once per week for pickup. So that was kind of a little bit of a middle ground for folks who didn't want to drive all the way out to my house.

[00:02:53] So, I was kind of doing both for the first couple months. My sales were okay. They weren't what they were at the market, but I knew that that likely would be what happens because anytime you expect people to come to you instead of going to them, you're going to be faced with a bit more challenge. So I would say that I probably lost about 30% Of my sales by making that shift.

[00:03:20] And I thought, well, you know, I don't believe if I would have started porch pickup in this model a couple of years ago, I would have had many cells at all. So I'm happy with that, but I somehow got this idea that what might I do to make the experience of driving out to my place. And that is when I decided, you know, what if I had some type of cute little stand and my little stand, which eventually evolved into a little mobile cart that I could drag around on my property I felt might provide something unique enough To warrant the drive out to my place.

[00:03:56] And I added some other things. I added a little treasure box for kids. I would decorate the cart if it was back to school week or if it was Halloween, or I would try to do some things that would spice it up even a bit more. And that solved my porch pickup dilemma that it actually did work. And I was back in the mode again of how do I bake enough?

[00:04:20] To supply. the demand that my cart is having.

[00:04:24] **David Crabill:** So I know that you moved to this new model to try to free up time to be able to help other entrepreneurs, right? But it didn't sound like you had any kind of revenue coming in from that at the time. So what was that like when you tried to put some more effort and focus into sharing and helping other entrepreneurs?

[00:04:46] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, you know, right around fall of 2022, when I was still attending the market, Instagram actually launched this new feature of creators being able to offer a subscription. And so I thought, you know, why don't I just do that? It was like 4.99 a month. You could choose different tiers, but that was the one that stood out most to me.

[00:05:10] And I thought, you know, why don't I. Do that, and I'm sharing so many tips on my Instagram, maybe in that subscription area, I could even share. Pieces that were a little more meaty. Maybe I could even create a course and house it there. And maybe I could share some recipes there or whatnot. And so I launched that in the fall, while I was still attending the market. I actually created courses and put them in there. I, I found. A less than ideal workaround because Instagram is not for housing courses. But I did the best that I could in a manner where people could actually view a course in there. By the beginning of when I started to think about how might I launch my bakery cart?

[00:05:57] What am I going to do with this little subscription? It was going just fine in Instagram. It was providing me a bit of income, not a lot, but a bit. And that was another moment that I knew I needed to pivot. I knew that I need a platform for providing courses. I won't be able to do this for long on Instagram's platform, but the idea had been triggered of what if I offered some type of membership.

[00:06:21] And so I found a platform. I chose Thinkific to house my membership. And I launched it, I want to say late February of 2023, late February, early March, right around there, and I launched it with four courses. And again, now I was moving into visionary decision making in a realm that I didn't have a lot of experience with.

[00:06:47] And so I was again kind of flying by the seat of my pants, so I didn't have the answers, I just knew I was going to take action. And so I launched it with four modules four mini courses all focused on operating an efficient and profitable home bakery which had really been my primary focus. And I had questions in my head.

[00:07:09] Well, why, why would they pay monthly? Once they finished these four modules, why would they continue to subscribe? I didn't know. I didn't have the answers, but I did it anyways. And I mean, that is, the rest is history on that one. Because it just kept building and I just, I spent the whole year.

[00:07:28] Little work life balance again, but I spent the whole year really building that out and kind of building the plane while I was flying it. And It's an amazing resource for home bakers. I'm super, super, it's my proudest work I've done to date. even when I consider my prior career.

[00:07:47] **David Crabill:** Well, this is quite different than what most people would do. Like, a lot of bakers think about teaching online or, or doing what you've done. But I think most of them would say, okay, if I'm going to do a signature course, I'm going to put all this effort and time into making it. And then I will try to put it out into the world. But it sounds like as you said, you were just, sort of building the plane while you were flying it. why, cause you said that you're a planner, like, Why did you do that?

[00:08:19] That doesn't sound like something that you would intuitively do, or most people would intuitively do, even though it's a very effective way of building this kind of business. Like, how did you know to do that?

[00:08:30] **Tiffany Hill:** You know, I think that entrepreneurship had already taught me a significant lesson by that point in my little journey. And that was that. My plans don't work out and I just have to take action and I have to be open to change. To having the confidence to make changes where I need to make them.

[00:08:53] And I will make those changes, but I won't know what those changes are if I don't take action. And so I knew that my four modules were high quality. I knew that the first one was focused on just getting licensed. I knew that the second one was focused on what to sell, where to sell it. How to just start getting those sales.

[00:09:16] I knew the third one was focused on marketing, which was my biggest weakness when I first started. And I knew the fourth one was boosting your income with all of the non perishables. So I knew that that was the winning ticket for me. When I looked back on what finally transformed my business. So I knew that that was great to start with that.

[00:09:38] I also knew that I wanted it to be quite inexpensive because when I was getting started I was trying to get sales. I did not have the means at the time

to just be investing in myself or investing in taking courses. And that just was not, I was trying to make income, not spend what any little bits I was actually earning.

[00:10:04] So that was really important to me to just make it. I knew I was going to create it once. And I wanted it to serve. Many, many, many people. As for the other part of your question of, you know, just having faith that I didn't have all those answers I think I had just become comfortable with that.

[00:10:20] I think I had started to change a little bit and adapt to what being an entrepreneur means versus being somebody who operates in more of a traditional career, that risk taking was feeling a bit more comfortable to me.

[00:10:33] **David Crabill:** Well, I know that this was not the first time that you tried to sell an online course, because you, you did create a course when you started your Sprinkle business too, correct?

[00:10:47] **Tiffany Hill:** Yes, and I'm so glad you brought that up because I did. Because again, kind of like what I was saying at the beginning of this interview, I really operated initially on only what I knew. I wasn't able to see beyond. Only what I knew. So I knew my daughter launched a product, so that must be just what you do as an entrepreneur.

[00:11:09] I also knew that I was a teacher, so it would make sense to offer a course. That is just what I knew. What I didn't know was that you have to be skilled at connecting with people, you have to be skilled at marketing, you have to be skilled at all those pieces that lead somebody to purchase something from you.

[00:11:32] And that course is still, I still offer that course. It's only available in my membership. It was a cake baking and decorating course. It was good. It was a good quality course. My courses are better today, of course, because I'm a bit more experienced, but what was missing from that course was all of the trust building, the knowing how to connect with your audience. I want to really be clear about that because if there's anybody else who might be struggling out there, I just want to bring to light that trust building and leadership was my wheelhouse in my other career and I still wasn't able to transfer it. I still wasn't able to say, here's what happens in my normal job.

[00:12:19] This is exactly what needs to happen in my career. My small business. And I really think it comes back to what I said earlier. Most of us have never ever had to think about where our paycheck comes from. How do you get

people into your program or your organization or target? If you work for target, we do the job that's assigned to us, we receive our paycheck.

[00:12:46] We don't typically have to think about, well, what gets the customers here to begin with? And that's what I was missing was just not knowing how to do that. So I want to say that first year I sold that course, maybe four times. and I set it aside and I didn't come back to any type of course creation until I had actually mastered operating a home bakery.

[00:13:08] **David Crabill:** Well, I think that's a very fascinating, like, comparison because you said it was a very good quality course. You had a lot of previous experience creating courses, so I'm sure it was a very good course, but the quality of the course didn't really matter. So what was it that you implemented

[00:13:28] when you started up Think Pink Bakers, more entrepreneur experience, of course, more sales experience, how did you actually get those eyeballs and get people to pay attention to the course you were offering?

[00:13:42] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, I think it always comes down to trust building. It always comes down to does this person feel a connection with me? Do they feel that I care about them? Do they trust me? Do they feel that I have their best interests at heart? Unless you are a very large corporation, the only way that you're going to be able to tap into the market is by people getting to know who you are as a person.

[00:14:12] And that meant I had to get over my fear of showing up. I had to get over my fear of talking on camera. I had to really get over any advice that was out there that I really was. Finding myself disagreeing with I was finding myself disagreeing with advice that you should never share your recipes or that you should not give out things for free.

[00:14:33] It's kind of like when you are a teenager, I was a teenager at the beginning of my business and I was just believing everything my parents were telling me. And then I grew up a little bit and I started to say, I don't really know. This is what I think is. What should happen? You start to get your own opinions.

[00:14:50] And for me it all came back to, I'm just going to build trust. I'm just going to give and give some more. And every time I do things without expecting anything in return that is when I see the most growth in my business. And so by the time I launched my membership, I had spent. About eight or nine

months, just fully invested in just building relationships with people via my Instagram.

[00:15:18] Answering questions, making sure that they had an ear if they needed one. Whatever, whatever it was sharing what had gone poorly for me. Just, building friendships. And so by the time I launched that membership, I think that people they knew that, I hope they knew that I was a good person and that.

[00:15:37] I wanted them to be successful and have some support and help as well.

[00:15:42] **David Crabill:** So, it sounds like you were showing up on, what, Instagram Lives?

[00:15:47] **Tiffany Hill:** I've never, ever done not one Instagram live, interestingly enough, but I was showing up in my stories a lot and my reels always had a story to it. There was always lots of long captions, kind of telling them what I had experimented with what the result had been Whatever it might've been in regards to I'm offering this in my booth or I made this change to my booth just really sharing how everything was going in my business in the event that they might be experiencing the same kinds of things and lots of DM messages.

[00:16:23] **David Crabill:** Well, that's very interesting that you've never done a live. And clearly your Instagram growth is just unprecedented, you know, over 300, 000 followers at this point. And There are a lot of people out there who do show up, who do share themselves, who do try to build that trust, but they have not experienced the level of growth that you have.

[00:16:46] Are there any specific strategies that you've implemented that you feel like have worked really well? To take your Instagram to the next level.

[00:16:55] **Tiffany Hill:** Yeah I have an Instagram course in the membership and Everybody talks about the algorithm and it took me a bit of time before I understood that Instagram is a business as well and they don't care who I am. They don't care, you know, what I'm doing.

[00:17:13] What they do care about is Who wants to remain on their app? Who wants to stay there? Who wants to spend time there? And so for me, when I realized that they're not out to get me, they're not intentionally not sending my,

because there are times that I'm like, you haven't sent my reel to anybody, like nobody's even seen it.

[00:17:34] Once I realized that, That was on me. You know, I had to create content that led individuals to want to spend time with me on Instagram and with my account. And for me, it came down to just a real key formula. Are they going to save this post? Are they going to comment? did I include anything in this post or reel that would lead them to want to engage in a conversation with me on it?

[00:18:02] Are they going to forward this to somebody? Is this valuable enough to where they might send it to a friend or they might send it to an aunt or, you know, is there any value here? Because we were coming off of an Instagram era. Where I could have just posted a picture of gorgeous cookies and we all would have kind of had a good time with it and it would have had a lot of views.

[00:18:25] That had significantly changed to where there had to be value there. And so that's what led me to what am I going to provide to the baking community that would be valuable for all of us. And once I really started to think about it from that terms, any growth is almost always attributed to something that's going viral and that is when I always see rapid, rapid growth of my follower count.

[00:18:52] But you have to have something there for them to want to follow you because you could have something that goes viral. Somebody sees it, they go, Oh, that's so cool. Let me go check out this person's account. And then when they get there, there's not a whole lot there. So I made sure that It was a catalog of every piece of information you might want on operating the home bakery. So here's how I priced my products. That was a title on one post. Here's what happened when I changed my booth at the market and it went terribly wrong. So they could see a catalog of topics that they might be able to relate to.

[00:19:24] They could click on the ones they wanted to see. And once that started happening more and more and more of those posts start to take off. Sometimes it'll take a couple weeks and then all of a sudden there's a topic that everybody just seems to be clicking on. And that's what leads to significant.

[00:19:39] growth on social media in my experience.

[00:19:42] **David Crabill:** So you obviously had the idea of building an online course business at the beginning of your cottage food journey. That didn't work.

But when you started it this time, you obviously had Built a successful cottage food business. So what I'm wondering is would you have even had the content or had the knowledge to be able to attract people to your Instagram page?

[00:20:09] Even if you had all the strategies that you know today, did you have to have run a successful business first before you could pursue this goal of selling your courses?

[00:20:21] **Tiffany Hill:** I would say any time you want to share your knowledge with others, it helps if you are also in the same boat with them. I hope I'm understanding what your question was.

[00:20:34] **David Crabill:** My question is because you, you know, you said that you needed to learn how to actually get eyeballs, how to get people to pay attention to you in order to be able to sell your course that didn't sell. You only sold four courses in maybe the first year. And that the strategies you've used to do well on Instagram have been to make sure that every piece of content is valuable.

[00:20:57] But do you think you would have been able to create that much valuable content At the beginning of your cottage food journey, when, you know, you were trying to sell that course.

[00:21:07] **Tiffany Hill:** I think it depends on what your course content is. So my original course was cake decorating. So if I would have been spending a lot of time building trust in regards to cake decorating, then yes, I think I could have gotten that course to a different outcome than what Actually was the outcome because I would have needed to utilize my platform to not sell in a home bakery, but to master cake baking and decorating.

[00:21:41] So that would have been a different niche, I guess you could say. Trust building still would have needed to be required, but I would have had to demonstrate that I was successful with all of these different hacks, with all of these different tools, with all of these different strategies. That would have been the value I was providing so that they trusted, wow, she's a really strong cake decorator.

[00:22:04] If I'm going to take somebody's course. I'm going to take it from her. And if I can't afford her course, or I'm not at the point in my life to sign up for her course, her account is still so valuable that I can learn a lot from it. And I think we fall into that trap of. Well, I don't want to share all my secrets because then why would they ever purchase my product?

[00:22:25] And that's really not how it works. They purchase your product because you've given them so much that they don't necessarily even have to, but they know that they're going to get even so much more because you've already proven to them that you are somebody that they connect with or that they like to learn from or that they.

[00:22:45] You know, however, they're viewing you as a positive resource for themselves. So I don't think I would have necessarily needed to be successful in selling my baked goods, but I would have needed to be successful in the content of that specific course.

[00:23:00] **David Crabill:** Well, you said you felt like a teenager when starting this business and that you weren't necessarily agreeing with what everyone else said you should do. And I can see that you have sort of taken your own path in particular with your pricing. Very low pricing. 5 a month for the base level and 10 a month for your premium level.

[00:23:26] How did you come up with your pricing and decide on that as a strategy?

[00:23:30] **Tiffany Hill:** I don't know if I would have landed there had I not started with Instagram subscription. Because again, I tend to get little ideas planted in my mind and then I can't think beyond them. I think that's kind of a weakness of mine, but in this particular instance it was probably a positive, but their initial pricing was 4.

[00:23:50] 99. And so when I decided. That I'm going to move this onto my own platform. I'm just going to keep the price because these people are going to follow over there. And I don't want to say, well, it's going to be more now. I knew that that price was low. I knew that it would likely be extremely low. Once I was done building out the program, I also knew how I felt when I was trying to get my home bakery profitable.

[00:24:15] And I knew that I'm going to create these courses one time. Outside of going back in and making some course corrections or modifying the content a bit here and there this is, you know, digital products are an amazing product to sell because you really can create them one time. That's not actually what happened because I'm still very active.

[00:24:37] I'm still creating content all the time for them, but I feel really, really good about the price and what People are able to obtain, and it also frees them up to go take courses from others, to learn other perspectives, to continue to

grow. You know, my program isn't so pricey that they invest in it and now they're only hearing from one voice, mine, because my perspective is only one perspective.

[00:25:03] I had pushback from other course creators who said, well, you know, people only finish a program if they pay a lot for it. And I don't know, I don't know how I feel about that. I feel like we're all adults and when we are ready to do something, we do it. And when we're not quite ready, we don't. And I don't know, that's kind of an uh, Beyond the point or aside from the point, but I feel really good that a lot of people have been able to take the courses and a lot of them have completed them.

[00:25:32] **David Crabill:** Well, you obviously could increase the price now. your Think Pink Bakers is well fleshed out, right? You could easily charge more for it. So is that something that you're considering? Or have you decided to stick with the 5 a month price?

[00:25:48] **Tiffany Hill:** I have considered increasing it. I've landed on leaving it. But I have also found a happy place that I think is a win win for me and for everybody else too. And that is really the difference between my pink and my platinum. And that is that. My pink program, that's my 4.99 program, that is really, really focused on just operating an efficient bakery that you're not going to burn out on.

[00:26:15] and it's going to provide you with a consistent income. That entire program is dedicated to that. There's lots of courses, pricing courses, farmers markets courses, everything that you need for that. in my opinion, that is the entry program for anybody who wants to do this and they need to learn how to do it.

[00:26:34] And I don't want that to be out of their reach. And so that program goes on sale. It goes on sale for even less than 4.99 a month. That is my, if you want to do this, let me. Share with you what I have found my platinum plan. However I rarely, rarely put that on sell. It is definitely for those bakers who are, they want to offer digital products too, or maybe they want to open a storefront.

[00:27:01] They are really taking their business to the next step or think they may. And so I don't know, I, I, I feel good. I feel good about the pricing and I feel really good about the revenue it's generated for me. I think it has served all of us very well. It is truly a community. I don't ever refer to the Bakers intentionally, do not ever refer to them as my students.

[00:27:25] I am just as much a student of theirs as they are of me. This is our community. It's 4.99 to join. And I think it's been wonderful for all of us, myself included.

[00:27:37] **David Crabill:** Well, it sounds like it's important to you to impact a lot of people. Why do you do a monthly charge instead of just having a one time fee to join?

[00:27:48] **Tiffany Hill:** I do both. So they can pay a one time fee to join. So, they have the option when they sign up, if they are. A Pink Plan member, then they can pay 50 if they'd like, and that's their one time fee.

[00:28:05] **David Crabill:** Oh, so that's not a yearly fee?

[00:28:06]

[00:28:08] **Tiffany Hill:** that is yearly, so if they want to remain a part of the membership for a year or two, then they continue to either pay their annual fee or their monthly.

[00:28:18] So, I think what you're asking me is why is it subscription based instead of monthly? You have access once you make the one time fee. You have access forever. Is that what you're asking?

[00:28:27] **David Crabill:** Right.

[00:28:28] **Tiffany Hill:** I think because my original concept was a community where there will always be additional resources. So there's a forum in there where they are asking questions. They are networking with each other. I'm trying to answer questions. I'm asking questions. There is an ongoing community that we all participate in.

[00:28:50] There's also label templates that I now create that go into the community. So they have access to every time I launch new bakery boxes for my packaging business, there's new label templates that they get. So, I think it's just, it's an ongoing resource versus here's what I made, here's what you get it's all that you'll get and you only need to purchase it one time.

[00:29:17] I think there's just so much being added to it all the time that it made more sense for it to be a subscription.

[00:29:22] **David Crabill:** Well, so you now have had over 10, 000 people buy into this membership. I know that they might not all still be members today, but that still is I know from a content creator perspective that there's a lot that goes into managing that membership. Like what kind of team do you have behind you to help you run this pretty large business at this point?

[00:29:49] **Tiffany Hill:** I have been very, very slim on the team side until recently. And I think that is, you know, we all have parts as entrepreneurs that we excel in too. And I think that that was mine was organizing systems. I carried that from my other career. It's was a strength of mine before, and it has served me well in this when Comes to small business.

[00:30:14] There were so many components that I was clueless on, but that was probably where my strength lied and that was systems. Most everything I've created is extremely automated. there are very few issues. There are very few tech calls. So that has been, I've been very, very fortunate. I do have a daughter who helps me with the community forums.

[00:30:36] I have another member who's been helping me with the community forums. That's where I tend to need the most help. And I have a second daughter who lives locally, who significantly helps me with my packaging business. But when it comes to. The community, it's really been primarily just me. And I will say that that was just kind of where I'm at in my career.

[00:30:58] I've mentioned that I'm a little bit older there are pieces that I could build out better. So I know prior to us starting the podcast, we were kind of chatting about email lists and there are pieces that I could add that if I hired a team, I would be able to implement those pieces and I'm just not able to take on, everything as one person.

[00:31:19] But again, remember how introverted I am. And so this business has been so aligned to how I work best and where I find passion. And, there are areas I could build out with employees and I haven't done so yet, but I'm super happy with where it's taken me so far.

[00:31:38] **David Crabill:** That's really phenomenal that, that you've built this mostly by yourself, have had very little help, because I mean, over 300, 000 Instagram followers, over 10, 000 memberships so far. I mean, that is just a little bit mind boggling to me, to be honest. Where do you find the time to do everything?

[00:32:01] You've been running a cottage food business since Still, you're doing this community, online community, I mean, there's a lot of moving parts going on there and now I know you have a packaging business, which we'll get to in a little bit, but, like, time management, I have to know more about what you do to make it all work.

[00:32:19] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, the six months at the farmer's market was definitely work life balance was suffering. then when I launched the membership, I spent a year again of really probably bordering a bit on some workaholic type tendencies that I've always struggled. And that's because I was creating.

[00:32:41] the content creating the courses, getting an idea for a new course that would be helpful, creating e books, writing up recipes, whatever it might be. So that first year of building that plane while I was flying it was pretty intense. I was spending a lot of late nights writing content, course content and whatnot.

[00:33:00] Now, though as with any evergreen digital product, once you've built it, it's really just maintaining it. And that's where I'm at now. So it's 2024, I can confidently say I have reached the point of work life balance where there might be a few tech calls, probably not many during the day.

[00:33:21] They come via email. One of my daughters helps me with those. It's really, really quite minimal and I'm really proud that it has, I do use Minichat as far as an automated feature on Instagram, which has been very, very helpful. So it helps me send out links and whatnot. It automates if somebody says they'd like a link to a recipe or whatnot, it'll automatically send it to them.

[00:33:44] But, rRelationships are really important to me. So I still spend a lot of time personally replying to those messages. But you know, work life balance is there. So then I decide to start a packaging business, but, for the most part, as far as my schedule, the community is kind of a well oiled machine at this point,

[00:34:04] **David Crabill:** I mean, just knowing that you still do bake, you still do run your, bakery business and you have this thriving business. online community, paid membership. I don't think most people would be like totally work life balance in the same situation that you're in. Are you just an incredibly productive person by nature?

[00:34:25] **Tiffany Hill:** you know, I go through moments of intense productivity and then I go through moments of, you know, Recognizing that I'm hitting a bit of burnout. So I think that I've done a better job as I've gotten older

at accepting that I'm experiencing a bit of burnout and giving myself grace to just slow down.

[00:34:44] But yes, I do have other periods where productivity is at an all time high. I've had to really, really become comfortable. With addressing my tendency to be a people pleaser and giving myself permission to not get sidetracked from that. And so an example of that would be my home bakery at this point.

[00:35:03] When I take something on, I tend to lose sight that I don't have to do everything to the highest degree. So right now I would say my bakery cart is in Big Bear, California, because we have a second home in Big Bear now and we spend 50 percent of our time there. So I've had to stop myself that I, I am not baking for an entire community.

[00:35:25] I, I need to remember that if I can put my card out, I can put my card out. And if I can't that week, that, that is okay. And I think as entrepreneurs, a lot of us fall into that trap of, I have to do this for others. Or if somebody messages me, I have to respond and that is very much me. And so I've really been working on, okay, in the evening, I'm going to sit down for 30 minutes.

[00:35:51] I'm going to answer as many DMs as I can. In the past, I would have let that derail me and, put some added stress on my shoulders. So that has really been important to me that. My business has gone in directions I didn't expect it to. And like I told you, you have to make decisions. So right now, for me, I just recently made the decision that my cart will be out once per month, and that is all I'm going to be able to do.

[00:36:14] And I need to not feel poorly about that. I need to be proud that that's where I've taken this business, if that makes any sense.

[00:36:22] **David Crabill:** It makes a lot of sense. Why do you just not let it go? You know, at this point you're running a super successful teaching business. Why not just stop the cottage food business entirely?

[00:36:34] **Tiffany Hill:** So, you know, I've really thought about that decision long and hard and, I think for me, it comes down to, I really want to know. What it feels like to sell our baked goods. I want to know what happens when I do a pay what you can model. I want to know what happens when I operate on an honor system model. I want to know what happens when I put the card out and I have listed prices.

[00:37:01] What happens? Do I, do I have higher sales? Do I have lower sales? Do I build more trust? Do I hurt trust? It's important to me to Remember what it feels like for all the other bakers who are in my membership plan. And I think I feel so strongly about that because when I was a teacher and I became a principal, some of my relationships with my fellow teachers shifted and I began to recognize that I didn't understand anymore what it was like to be in the classroom.

[00:37:31] Like I'll almost get emotional even talking about that. Like I didn't know anymore what they were facing. I knew. But there was some distance between really understanding. And then when I moved to the county office, that increased substantially. And it is so important to really understand if you're going to teach on something, do you really know what's happening today in the world of the cottage food baker?

[00:37:58] And I think at some point I probably will just have to say, I've got to drop one of the balls and it'll likely be that one but I'm holding on to it as long as I can.

[00:38:09] **David Crabill:** Do you then niche yourself in terms of what you teach? Because you obviously, you haven't run a brick and mortar business. You haven't used a commercial kitchen as far as I know. There's a lot of things in the food world that you have not done. So do you just sort of kind of stay in your lane in terms of what's in the Think Pink Bakers community?

[00:38:30] **Tiffany Hill:** Yeah, I definitely do. I wouldn't be able to teach on those topics. I did spend some time that first year that I was building out the program, bringing in some guest speakers who could talk to me and the group about. Those types of topics and those are recorded sessions that bakers can listen to. But as far as any core course that I have developed or taught on, yeah, it would only be anything that I've actually experienced that I feel I could contribute to.

[00:39:03] and you know, there was, again, all those decisions. Once you're able to get your business to a point where, you know, you have some choices, that was a decision I almost made moving into a brick and mortar. And I had to step back and say, is that really where I'm going to shine? Or what might I become a little bit resentful because I won't have as much time to content create.

[00:39:26] So I think that everything, you know, we really have to start to assess. where we're going to excel and where we're not. And so I opted to recognize that I probably would not be the best person for that.

[00:39:37] **David Crabill:** well, you know, you've created this successful bakery. You created this very successful online membership community. And then you mentioned you started a packaging business on top of that. Why did you start a packaging business? It just seems like I, I just can't believe that you would add that to your plate, but what encouraged you to do that?

[00:39:58] Take me through that.

[00:39:59] **Tiffany Hill:** Yeah, I know. I'm right there with you, by the way. You know, it's those darn daughters. Truly it was one of my daughters and she said, mom, I watch your account because my kids have been like, you know, They've gone from, what is mom doing? Like, why is she on Instagram and what is she trying to do?

[00:40:19] To, we're really proud of you mom. And she said, mom, you know, I, I watched your reels that you post and I read the comments and so many people ask you about packaging. Why are you not considering Solving that problem and offering some packaging that you know you love to use. And at first, it's the same thing with, you know, encouraging me to go to the market.

[00:40:42] At first, I was like, no, no, no. And of course, as time went on, I started to recognize that she was correct, that there was definitely a gap in the market for packaging that I wanted to use, packaging that others might want to use. And what was interesting is I'm a firm believer at this point that you have to align your business to your personality.

[00:41:03] I'm also a firm believer, and this is contradictory, that sometimes you don't know what you might enjoy. And so I did say let's explore this a bit further and every step of the way I said I need you to understand this is not something that I'm gonna want to do daily. I am just, I remember I'm introverted, you know, I want to just sit quietly and create.

[00:41:27] What actually has ended up happening is I enjoy I think that that is my most enjoyable aspect of my business. I love everything about it. I love creating the designs for the packaging. I love the shipments coming in. I love spending the day with my daughter, shipping out the packages. I love seeing the combinations that the customers create.

[00:41:49] I love the fact that the members in my subscription get a VIP pass to shop early, they get a discount code. It's almost like I compare it to when you think you're done having children and then you have another one and your

family would not have ever been the same. I am so glad I added that component and I never in a million years thought that I would enjoy it at the level that I do.

[00:42:12] **David Crabill:** Well, when did you start the packaging business and how quickly did it ramp up and where is it today?

[00:42:19] **Tiffany Hill:** I started the planning for the packaging business spring of last year. So, I did not receive My first delivery of packages that I could launch until October. So there was some, you know, months of finding a manufacturer, designing, figuring out what size I wanted the boxes to be. Again, just like my membership, I launched it with just four courses.

[00:42:49] Same concept here. I launched with two designs. One size box. That's not a great business model. You know, I didn't launch with a wide array of sizes, offerings, designs add ons. I just can only take so much at a time. I think, I think my brain can only work in small incremental steps. Now that first launch was very successful.

[00:43:17] I sold all of the boxes. It was a smaller launch. Now it's March. So what is that like seven, eight months later? And it's, it's a full fledged little packaging business that is going to continue to grow. We're, building a 2,200 square foot warehouse on our Apple Valley property. I anticipate that we will outgrow that at some point.

[00:43:40] We'll cross that bridge when it comes, but I have become an expert at, I will cross that bridge when it comes, which is not my typical go to style.

[00:43:49] **David Crabill:** Well, obviously undeniably successful. Packaging business, and it's growing at a record rate just like seemingly everything else you've done in the last couple years. But I have to say from the outside looking in, and I am, I do not sell custom cakes, right? So I don't know the pain points there. But from the outside looking in, I don't get it.

[00:44:11] Like, I don't understand why there is a need for Bakery boxes. Like, and I, I really just want to know, like, what was the pain point you were addressing, because from the outside looking in, it looks to me like you're just selling regular cake boxes.

[00:44:27] **Tiffany Hill:** Yeah, I totally get that perspective. I think that when it comes to selling like a full sized cake, you have your cake drum that you're gonna put your cake on, and then you're gonna decorate it. You're gonna take

that cake on the cake drum, you're gonna put it in a standard white box, and you're pretty much done.

[00:44:49] But when it comes to selling individual baked goods that are single serve. Or serve two or three people. Packaging is actually a lot harder to find. It's a lot harder to find something that will work well with what you're wanting to offer. Because just like my mind tended to go forwards, the only way to open a home bakery is to sell custom cakes.

[00:45:13] The same thing kind of happens when it comes to packaging. There aren't a whole lot of choices in regards to tins for mini cakes, boxes for mini cakes, those types of things. They exist, but you would be surprised at how hard it is to find them. And then when you do find them, do they work? I've invested a lot of money into packaging, only to find that the lids don't stay on.

[00:45:39] Or, they aren't the right size. They're a little bit smaller than what was on the website. And now my little mini cake will not fit in it. You spend a lot of time sourcing packaging that you end up not being completely happy with. And that's why I was getting so many questions. Wait, wait, wait. Where did you get those tins?

[00:45:57] Where did you get those boxes? Where did you get those liners? Where did you get that paper? And when you do start to find the products that work well at a farmer's market or on a porch bakery or in a cart like what I use, you're going to be stuck with white or pink. It's going to be really difficult to find anything that has Spring prints, bumblebees on it, different papers that you can use.

[00:46:20] You're just not going to have that opportunity. And so I think that that is what led to the success of that side of the business. And I think, again, there was trust there that if I was going to use these in my own cart then there was a level of confidence that I liked them enough to recommend them.

[00:46:40] But I will say that operating a product based business, such as the night and day from operating a home bakery or a digital product such as a course or ebook or something, lots of other things to consider that could hinder one that I wouldn't have been aware of before that, you know, I'm at the point now that I can, I can manage those pieces, but very, very different.

[00:47:03] **David Crabill:** Well, it seems like, you know, you just created these boxes, you sold out of all of them, you know, you're building a warehouse, it's

just onward and upward. What have been the challenges? As you've built this, you know, business that you had, no experience in before this, right?

[00:47:20] **Tiffany Hill:** No experience outside of, you know, selling my sprinkles as a product, I guess, originally, but still night and day apples and oranges. I think the biggest difference is, cause I do have a lot of people reaching out saying, can you, you know, This is a course on this or help me with a product based business.

[00:47:39] When it comes to relationships and trust building, everything's going to be the same across the board. You really have to have a lot of trust and, connection with an audience to be successful first of all. One thing that I wasn't aware of is how far in advance you have to plan.

[00:47:56] So right now, my daughter and I are sitting down to plan the fall collection. That's how far in advance you have to plan. For somebody like me who gets an idea and runs with it. That is a learning curve to know that, you know, you got to be thinking very, very in advance. The other challenge is that, you know, you're not going to get your product quickly.

[00:48:20] That's why you have to work so far in advance, but you're also going to be taking most of the profits you make to reinvest back in stock. particularly if your idea is going well, but even if you're just, Breaking even or, you know, selling a smaller quantity. You have to take those profits to reinvest.

[00:48:40] And with a digital product, you definitely don't have that. There's very little overhead. So you don't have to be thinking about how much is it going to cost me to invest in this product at the same level at all. With a home bakery It's a much smaller scale. You're paying for ingredients. And while we all are concerned about the cost of ingredients, you're able to purchase ingredients for a more, an amount that most people are going to be able to invest in their business because they're going to take it to the market on Saturday and get it back and make some profit, and then they have to purchase more ingredients to bake again.

[00:49:17] This is very different. I haven't been able to keep my products in stock, which means I need to keep increasing my stock, which means I need to increase the amount of money I'm willing to invest in that. And it will pay off eventually, but initially it's really just taking the money you earn and purchasing more so that you can grow, if that makes any sense.

[00:49:38] And that was a big aha for me that this will be a profitable business, but it, it's going to take, this is not going to be something where I can show up at a market on Saturday. And immediately I'm profitable. This is a slower build.

[00:49:51] **David Crabill:** Well, so it sounds like, you know, you're ramping up the packaging business. You're maybe, you know, slowing down the cottage food business. What are your goals as you look into the future maybe for the packaging business, but also for the course?

[00:50:08] **Tiffany Hill:** Yeah. I do have some plans and who knows if they may take me in a totally different direction, but yes, definitely continuing to build that packaging business and feel that I'm on top of that hole. That's a goal for 2024. And then my other goal would be for the community, continuing to determine what are the needs there, what could be provided.

[00:50:36] And I am actually creating a resource that can be purchased Outside of the community for anybody who needs a solid resource, that's going to help them get going with their, their home bakery, but they don't want to necessarily join a subscription. So that'll be available to them. Members will get it automatically, and that'll kind of meet the needs of Different individuals.

[00:50:57] So that's, that's all that's really on my agenda for 2024. I'm hoping to kind of actually start to slow down a bit.

[00:51:04] **David Crabill:** Well, talking about slowing down, you said you're a grandmother of nine grandchildren. Most people wouldn't be like constantly reinventing themselves at this stage of their life, right? Like what do you think is driving you to keep on experimenting, to keep reinventing yourself? And I guess now you're thinking about slowing down to some degree, but what's caused you to keep on pushing?

[00:51:31] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, I think that initially, I've always been somebody who loves to learn, to learn how does the world work? How do people work? How do we find joy? How do we find happiness? I've, I've just always been that type of person who's always looking for the next topic that I know nothing about. And that's probably what led me to where I'm at today.

[00:51:56] But this particular venture, at this point in my life really was due to my family and recognizing that, I want to get back to having time with them because I had kind of climbed that even though it was an education, it was still kind of similar to the corporate ladder of, Let me just keep moving up that ladder.

[00:52:14] And of course, I think all of us have something in our past that maybe led us to need to prove our own worth, or maybe led us to feel that we really needed stability in different ways, whether that's financial, whether that's time with loved ones. So of course I have all of those things in my past that, I can recognize and see them for what they are.

[00:52:35] all of us have them in some shape or form. But I think that right now I can say that I did accomplish if one of my grandkids is sick and I need to go over there, I can do that. If. There's a last minute trip. We're all going to go to Disneyland together. I can do that. And before that would have been a lot of stress. How do I get this time off? I took it off for one grandchild, but now there's another grandchild who needs me. That was creating a lot of stress. And so on the outside, it kind of appears that yes, I'm reinventing myself. and I think I am in many ways, but I also think.

[00:53:11] I was very focused on getting myself to a place where I could be available for the people who I really love and who are really important to me.

[00:53:18] **David Crabill:** Well, Tiffany, thank you so much for sharing your fascinating journey. there are so many great tidbits of advice throughout this conversation. Now, if somebody wants to learn more about you and your membership, where can they find you?

[00:53:34] How can they reach out?

[00:53:35] **Tiffany Hill:** Well, they can always just go to the pinkcrumbb.com and that is with two B's on the end of crumb. That is the best place to start that funnels you out to wherever you're trying to get. If you want to purchase bakery packaging, if you're wanting to look at the membership, if you're wanting to just read my blog.

[00:53:54] That is the great starting point. And then, you know, emails, there's quite a few that come in. And so believe it or not, I actually just love for people to reach out to me on Instagram. I do check my DMs. I try to respond to all of them. I'm dedicated there, sometimes they get past me, but I really do, it's very likely that you will get a response from me.

[00:54:15] So I love it when people reach out on Instagram to me as well.

[00:54:18] **David Crabill:** I will put links to those in the show notes, and thank you so much for coming on the show and sharing with us today.

[00:54:26] **Tiffany Hill:** Thank you so much for having me. I, I've enjoyed having this conversation and I hope if anybody out there is thinking about starting a home bakery, just go for it. Just totally do it.

[00:54:37] **David Crabill:** That wraps up another episode of the Forrager podcast. For more information about this episode, go to forrager.com/podcast/114. If you're enjoying this podcast, please take a quick moment right now and leave me a review on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a long review, but it's truly the best way to support this show, and we'll help others like you find this podcast.

[00:55:02] And finally, if you're thinking about selling your own homemade food, check out my free mini course where I walk you through the steps so you need to take to get a cottage food business off the ground. To get the course, go to cottagefoodcourse.com. Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.