

Janine: Today's guest, Danielle Greason, is a mum and entrepreneur who has found herself seeking more freedom in life, and has been brave enough to take the leap into the unknown, and is living her life, I would say, quite unconventionally with her partner Dan and her beautiful three children. And we're gonna hear more about that in just a moment, and really excited to share Danielle's, uh, story with our listeners today. I think it's gonna resonate deeply with a lot of you mums out there. And thus, we're gonna get some juicy tips from Danielle about how to live a freedom-based lifestyle with our family.

So, welcome, Danielle. Great to have you here.

Danielle: Thank you so much, Janine.

Janine: In your words, what is it that you're actually ... Well, we'll dig about deeper into your story in a minute, but just to give our, our listeners an idea, what sort of a brief description of what you're doing at, uh, "VA Lifestyle Design," your business?

Danielle: Sure, so, basically, I have two online businesses. "VA Lifestyle Design" is one of that. And that's a train-based business. And my other business is "Greason Media." So, "VA Lifestyle Design," my husband and I, Dan and I run together. And "Greason Media," I run that business. And Dan also supports me with that, but that's basically my baby, the service-based business. So, that's what I do. I run both of those simultaneously. I have my time allocated between each, every day. And, uh, one is based on supporting clients, so servicing them with running their online businesses and providing online marketing support. And the other is training.

Janine: Fantastic. So, I'd love to hear a bit of the background story behind what you and, uh, Dan are creating for yourself and for your family, because you are from Australia Brisbane, I think, but you are now living in ...

Danielle: Exactly.

Janine: ... in Costa Rica. So, could you please share with us, how you got to be in Costa Rica, and, yeah, a bit more about your story?

Danielle: Sure. Sure. So, I guess, taking it back as far as we can possibly go, I, you know, I started studying online marketing in, on the ground conferences in Australia, in Sydney, in Brisbane, when it started taking off, people started to hear about online business and this, you know, possibility to generate income online. There are a lot of conferences happening. And I was like going to anyone I could whether it was free, or \$90, or a thousand dollars. I was trying to go to all these conferences. And this was before kids. So, this

is before I met my husband, before family. I think it was, you know, around 2006, 2007. Well, 2006, it would have been.

And so, I got this idea. Okay. There's this possibility to set something up with a web page on the internet where you can earn money anyway you have your computer and an internet connection. I have that seed planted. And I saw people doing it. You know, it took a while to grasp the foundation of it, but I knew it was possibly.

And I met my husband. And, you know, we started family. Soon, probably like a year after that we've met, we got married. You know, all kind of happened quickly. And, you know, things are really exciting. Anyone knows that amazing, amazing time of when your first child is born, and it just changes everything. And that keeps you ... That sustains you for a long period of time.

And then the hectic side of it comes into things, you know. I, actually, I fell pregnant again with our second child when, when, my first Ava was six months old. So, it was very much like, "Okay, so we've just got back to the financial side of things where it's okay. And now, we're gonna do this again. And, oh my gosh." so it was kind of like an amazing time that was like extremely hectic.

You know, Daniel, my husband, he was working in commercial construction. And he would, you know, be waking up at four o'clock in the morning to go off to work six days a week. I'd be at home with the babies. I mean, nothing out of the ordinary. Families do this everywhere all the time in Australia, in New Zealand, in the United States, everywhere., well, in western countries it's a normal thing.

But we just thought, you know, why ... It shouldn't be like this. It's just like we're never getting this time to just sit and be together. And we ... I ... My mind went back to, you know, finding out about online business and online marketing. Okay. What could I do here? What could I create that might, you know, get us some freedom?

And we started thinking about, okay. Well, I'd learnt this strategy of marketing e-books online. We started putting the pieces together. I was working in the evenings while Daniel would care for our baby, or put them, or check them if they wake-up.

And we made a rookie error. We didn't check one piece, one piece of data. Uh, you know, I'd been learning. I'd been training with people, but I forgot to exclude certain countries when I was testing with AdWords. And the, the product that we'd spent 12 months creating, it flopped. It didn't work. And

the dream kid of died for a while. And, you know, we just kind of let it go. Okay. Let's just live the normal life. Let's just, you know, do the rat race thing more ever.

But then one day, Daniel, you know, he, he'd been in the commercial construction industry around 2008 – 2009 when the economy changed and work was changing in Australia. And whereas once he would just have a job whenever he want to do it. Sometimes to a finishing, and there'd be a gap. And, you know, we have expenses going for three weeks, but no income for three weeks. And we just kept getting further and further behind.

And Da ... And Daniel came home one day. And I remember he was in the shower, and he just said, "Sorry. I'd been researching places online where you could live overseas." So, we've been researching like Thailand, Costa Rica, all these different places. And I'd found a video on YouTube, and I'd found this farm where, you know, that they let families volunteer in, in the greenhouses, and you know, pay for your accommodation, etcetera. And Daniel, he just had a, a really big day and he said, "Look. You know that place you heard about in Costa Rica? Let's just go there. Like, let's just do that." And we ...

Janine: Yeah.

Danielle: Like I said to you, our, our ... At first attempt to online business hadn't worked. And what we just decided was let's forget about trying to get the income. Let's just sell everything, go, and workout being calm when we get there. So, that's what we do.

Janine: Well, that's brave (laughs). I salute you. That's amazing. Yeah. Well, we just needed a, a motivational thing on the weekend, a personal transformation kind of a call was run Kate and Hanna Day O'Brien. The two key ways based in Bali.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: And, they talked about putting a stake in the ground when you have a vision or a goal.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: The first thing is to put that stake in the ground. And their example was that just put a \$20,000 deposit down on a speaker for one of your retreats in Bali. And they were like, "Now, we've got to get people there." And that sounds like a similar thing that you have done.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: It's just actually, we're just gonna do it. We just have to sell everything. And then we have to figure out, figure it out.

Danielle: Exactly. That's exactly right. And then, you know, sometimes when your back is against the wall like that where all, in your perception, you know, because everything is subjective. For one person, things is hectic, and other person may not. So, but for you personally, when you just think, "Okay. My back is against the wall. That's it. I'm doing it," sometimes, that's the easiest position to be in. You know, when ... When you're still sitting on the fence and you, you can kind of think, "Oh. That's okay. And that's okay," when you're just like, "No. I've had enough," sometimes, that's a really good place to be. And that's, that's exactly where we were.

So, you know, this is the mid set I had. When I started with that online business training and I've done all these things. I'd hired a ghostwriter. I'd hired a web developer. I'd, you know, gotten different pieces of copy written, all these things that I was learning, I thought, "Wow. I learned so much doing that. I'm sure there must be people that have online business that are already successful and earning income that need help. There must be."

You know, I didn't know about the term "virtual assistant." I didn't really think about freelance. So, I thought freelance is for just web developers. But I just thought to myself, surely, someone needs help, you know.

And so, this is the plan. This is the plan. When we moved to Costa Rica, we've got enough money for six months on a budget, you know, living on volunteer funds, etcetera. And we, you know ... No matter what it takes, I'll just email people every single day and say, "Can I help you with your blog? Can I help you with your email newsletters? Can I help?" And I'll email them. And I've got six months to just get enough to cover expenses in Costa Rica.

Now, what actually happened was we got here. We had, you know, a bit of a break just being together as a family, swimming in the waterfalls, you know, decompressing, being at the beach, picking fruit off the trees, etcetera. But then, of course, Daniel and I are thinking, "Okay. We wanna sustain. This is amazing. This is what we're looking for. We wanna sustain it."

And I started emailing people, like reaching out to people and also, applying for online jobs as a virtual assistant or a freelance has difference terminology on Elance. And within four weeks, I'd been accepted for four different jobs. We had a fulltime income coming in. And nearly, I was getting paid a very low rate. So, when I first started, I was getting paid \$10

an hour, but it was enough for us to live here in Costa Rica comfortably, and still have help with, you know, cleaning the house, still have help with, you know, having a good life. And it quickly progress for there.

So, the right when up and up in that first year, and then up into the stage we're at now. And we didn't have to go back. Now, if course, we'd like to travel now, but we've got our lifestyle set-up to, you know, be sustainable for the long-term just living wherever it is, which is so we've decided. some people call that "digital nomad," "location independent." That's how we got to be here.

Janine: Wow. Thanks for sharing that. It's really inspiring and, and interesting as well. I've got lots of other questions coming up. So, coz one of the things we talked about earlier was that for many months, I think they're seeking that freedom that you're describing, you know, whether or not they wanna go and live in Costa Rica or they just want more freedom and the lifestyle that they're living in their home country.

Danielle: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: And they ... They ... A lot of them experience that entrepreneurial push, which is that they can't find a job that works for them. Or, you know, they wanna be at a rebase, sit at home. They wanna have more choice in their everyday life. And so, the idea of starting your business pops-up in their head. and that's how many of our mums are starting up with hobby businesses ...

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: ... at home or an idea. but it can be quite a struggle in those early years. So, what I think is really interesting about what the option that you're presenting is, to go into a service-based type business to start with generate some income for yourself.

Danielle: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Janine: and then you could maybe turn that into a business down the track. Is that what you're ... What is your course all about? And what are you teaching around this now that you've had all these learnings yourself?

Danielle: Yeah. Absolutely. So, I definitely agree with what you're saying there 100%. And what the course is really about is it's about ... It's skill-based training. So, it's saying, "Okay. So, all of this blog posting, all of this, you know, online marketing strategy, and tactics, and, you know, post this many times to social media, and do this if you want to be able to do this, etcetera, etcetera," you need to learn that. But in my experience, the best way to learn that is inside a successful business.

And so, what the ... Combined with your theoretical side, you're like bringing the two together. So, what the course actually teaches is it teaches the specific skills inside the most popular, software tools that are used by online business owners to manage their businesses, too. So, to manage their blogs, to manage their email marketing, to manage their social media, to manage their free and paid offers in what is referred to as landing pages, to manage their customer support for the support that goes around pre-purchase or post-purchase of the products and services that they are offering out there to the world.

So, there's so much that is involved. Like when you're starting a small online business by yourself, you're usually doing everything yourself. And then as it grows, business owners need support. And if you're coming to the table with what I refer to as "care factor," you know, just that sense that I'm here to help you, you know, that service mentality, which, you know, I don't think it's in conflict to that one, in conflict to that entrepreneurial drive. With a lot of women that go hand-in-hand, they have that entrepreneurial drive, and they also have the, the service orientation to go with it. And I think they both blend beautifully.

And so, it's saying, "Okay. I've got care factor, plus I've got the skills," and not just theoretical in terms of, "Oh okay. We should be build a list. No. No. no. here's the software that a lot of people using MailChimp, Infusion Soft, A Webber, whatever it is." And he's had to go in and, and help a business owner manage that on their behalf.

And the way that's gonna benefit you is, first of all, you can get paid an hourly rate for that skill. And because you've learnt in a specific system and you can say to a business owner you can see someone's email marketing. You can go, "Oh. They're using MailChimp." Or I'll send them an email. "Hi. You know, can I help you prepare letters in MailChimp? Do you need support?" so first of all, an hourly rate.

And then what that does is it, it let ... It takes the pressure off. You, you know, you now only have to think, "Oh. Should I go? You know, the kids are getting a bit older. We need a better extra income, you know. If we have a few hundred dollars extra a week, that would just take the pressure off." Instead of trying to figure out all these logistics of like, "Okay. Well, I've got to get this type of childcare, and then not much is gonna be subtracted off of it. And I need to go and buy these new clothes, coz I haven't been in the workforce, you know." This was my head space when I was thinking about, you know, when my daughters were getting into that two, age two, and I'm thinking I've got to hurry back into the workforce now.

You take all that out of the equation and you, you ... I just, you know, starting that income in. It takes the pressure off building your product-based or service-based online business where you're, you know, selling something that you're passionate about, a product or a service.

In that way, you're combining them. You've got the skill. You can then use the skill to earn an early rate, and also use the skill to implement your own online business building vision.

and yeah. I just ... I'm a huge believer in just taking all of that riff raff. Not riff raff. What's the word? Just the unnecessary stuff out of the equation; the commute, hopping in a box for an hour to the city when you're dropping your kids off at daycare when you'd rather be at home with them, doing your hair and makeup every single day. Like, okay. I do it when we hop on camera together, but you know ...

Janine: (Laughs)

Danielle: ... you don't see me at nine o'clock everyday doing my hair just to get on to do work, you know. You know, it's just ... When you take all that early equations, it's amazing what creativity, what the pressure that comes off. And you can build an online business from there. Or, you know, for me, I have both, so "VA Lifestyle Design" is our product-based online businesses, our training business. "Greason Media" is our service-based business. I, at this stage, and I've said this a lot of time, I don't see myself stopping being a service provider, being a consultant, a virtual assistant, because I just love it so much. I'll refine it as we go along. But I love having both services and, uh, products.

Janine: So, can you share with us a little bit more about how you're running the revenue then? So, you've got the service-based business where you're charging an hourly rate still in it. This started off quite low, but you've made it should grow that now.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: and then you've got also another business that you're selling a program, a digital program on. So, it is also ...

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: ... leveraged income as well, isn't it? Because you've created that program and you can continue to launch and sell that program, in the future. So, those are your two main income streams at the moment?

Danielle: Yeah. Exactly. So, they are the two main income streams, and then the service income stream I would break that down a little bit further. So, the

service income stream would be myself earning, an hourly rate when I'm providing service personally, which at the moment is \$40 an hour. And, the other thing is I have a small team of sub-contracting team members that actually support me in servicing clients. So, they ... For the benefit of not doing any of the marketing or outreach to clients, etcetera, they just wanna go, "Danielle, can we help you? You just do all the invoicing, manage the clients, etcetera, etcetera, but we have the skill, and we'll do the work." So, for that benefit, they're happy to, receive a lower rate than I charge the client.

They know there's a margin there, but it's a win-win scenario, because they're not dealing with the client management side of things. So, in that case, there's revenue coming every time, every billable hour that a team member does, I make, 50% of that revenue. So, say if I'm earning, charging the client out \$40, the team member would be getting \$20. Or usually, it's in the vicinity of 18 to 25 or something like that. And it's, also on a project basis. I won't get too complex there. But, yeah. So, the margin on, on, team members that is supporting me in that win-win scenario.

And then the third element of the service-based is when I offer consulting services to my existing clients. So, we do, uh, implementation at a standard rate of \$40 an hour, and then consulting at 145 an hour.

And so, the difference there, you know, a lot of people say, "What's the difference?" The difference is essentially – and this is how I explain it to the clients – if you're asking me what to do and telling me how to do it, that's implementation. If you're asking me how to do it or asking for my advice, opinion, thoughts, strategy, you know, that's consulting. And I have the, you know ... I have all that written up in a, in a service agreement, so it's very clear and, you know, it's not fuzzy on those boundaries.

so they are the, the, the revenue streams in the service business. And then, yeah, like you said, the, the training program is a digital-based program that can be sold over and over again. Now, I've committed to updating that to keep that as current as it possibly can for a lifetime, but a sense of joy the work is done on that one.

Janine: Yeah.

Danielle: Oh. For the creation. For the creation sort of things. Yeah.

Janine: Yeah. That's always an ongoing work, isn't there?

Danielle: Yeah. We totally love it. I absolutely love it, because I'm so ...

Janine: Okay.

- Danielle: The niche that that's in, which is my personal passion, which is this whole thing about location dependence, which for me doesn't necessarily mean traveling or living in a tropical country. It just means having that confidence that, you know, knowledge within yourself that no matter what happens if I got my laptop and internet connection I, you know, I own my life. I'm in control of my life, so.
- Janine: That's a really a incredibly empowering thing, isn't it? So, so wonderful ...
- Danielle: [Crosstalk 00:18:25]
- Janine: ... that you're just sort of having that for people. And, and so, that leads nicely into what a day in the life of Danielle and Dan and children ...
- Danielle: Yeah.
- Janine: ... might look like. so can you run us through what your, your average day might look like?
- Danielle: Yeah. Sure. So, on a weekday, that usually looks like having a long breakfast together. Whenever I say long breakfast, it's like, you know, hanging out together, you know, making breakfast at home, the three kids, Daniel, and I. You know, the kids wakeup quite earlier. Our kids are six, five, and two. So, you know, that usually starts somewhere around 5:50 in the morning. And then our... We have the support of a nanny. And she actually mostly helps with our younger son, Shawn. He's two. And she's been with us since a couple of weeks before he was born, actually. So, he just really thinks of her like a, a second mum, which is awesome. And it makes a lot easier for me to work as well. So, uh, our nanny arrives for the day. And Daniel and the girls will go upstairs and start doing their home schooling, work for the day. They try and get out of the way in the morning. And they usually like to try and get out of the house in the afternoon. So, they usually like to try and go to the beach surfing, or to a friend's house, or down to the river, etcetera. But they do all their kind of school work in the morning. Daniel helps them with that for the most part, but a lot of times, I'll come in and do something specifically like reading. Or, you know, one of my daughters will come up and say, "Can you help me with this?" etcetera. But I'll usually start working at about 8:30 or 9:00 o'clock. And, yeah. Then the day from there goes either I will work ... It's hard to tell. We all have lunch together in the middle of the day. I will usually work until about 4:30 when our nanny goes home. if I'm not busy, usually, you know, Daniel will know that I'm not busy and he will say, "Hey. We're going down to the café. We're gonna have cake and kombucha. You wanna come?" You know, so

when I'm not busy, the family goes out of the house and does an af, you know, an afternoon thing. Or otherwise, if I am busy, then I'll work the whole day until 4:30. and then yeah ... So, that's it.

And then on the weekends, I don't work. And, we don't do home schooling right now on the weekends. So, the weekends is just out and about with friends around here in Costa Rica. So, one of the amazing things of living in an expat community is just those really strong connections, because everyone's in that same boat of being away from their home country, being away from their family. And so, you know, from our experience, we just developed a really strong friendships with people. So, yeah. That's what we do on weekends, going out and socialize.

Janine: Awesome.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: And so, does that ... For you, is that look like ... You've obviously got ... It sounds like a better flexibility there. So, you can take off some time during the week if you wanna go and do something really cool with the kids or Daniel's got a great activity planned.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: So, would you say are you working 40-hour a week, or less, or more, or ...

Danielle: No. I would tell that ... I mean, when I look at my time tracking on like I used time tracking for the, for the service side of business, so I usually do about three billable hours a day. So, that I would say usually takes me four hours if you'd consider tasks switching time. then I'd probably spend half an hour a day delegating and reviewing team member's work.

and then the "VA Lifestyle Design," it very much is a matter of, you know, I write a blog post once a week for that. Daniel does videos. So, that's so ... That, that varies. I couldn't actually tell you, coz sometimes he might shoot a video on the weekend, and sometimes I might write a blog post at night or whatever. But I would say on actually the service business that I do about five hours a day and on "VA Lifestyle Design" it just varies whenever we want to write a blog post content or if we're launching the program and I'm corresponding with someone about that, that's very ... That one is very kind of ad hoc flexible.

Janine: And do you see that someone can translate the same kind of model that you're using back in the home country as well? Because obviously with, currency conversations and things

Danielle: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Janine: ... you know it makes a difference as to where you're living. But do you see it translating okay back to people's home countries if they're not in that travel space if they just wanted to create some freedom for themselves at home?

Danielle: Yeah. So, absolutely, but not at the like \$10 an hour mark, though I started off that. So, I, you know, basic ... You know, there's a, there's a kind of like a time and money continuum. So, the faster you need an income the, the more readily you'll say yes to less than ideal opportunities in a service-based business, which might mean lower rate, not quite the terms or timeframe that you want.

But if you've got time, if you're not in a desperate situation where you're like, "Oh. I just need money now," but like you're just trying to work your way towards putting your family in a better situation, then absolutely, this can translate to your home country where the cost of living is higher. Because what you're doing then is you're focusing on getting yourself skilled up. You're focusing on getting a good presence in terms of, you know, either your LinkedIn profile or a one-page summary profile.

And, there I would have changed, you know, 20, 25, 30, you know, 40 whatever it is when you're starting out. so and I don't like to give people limiting beliefs there, because you can start wherever that you want. People will start it on higher rates. but, ah ... So, that's where the service business side of things.

For the products side of things, we're selling a training program. Absolutely, that can translate. There's so much leverage there. It's absolutely mind-blowing. And, uh, this is huge at the moment is that if you do, if you're already coming into this with some expertise that you can translate to marketing online, then that's a huge, huge way to, to get your cost of living in your own country covered as soon as possible.

Janine: Yeah. And, and what I like about the, the idea that you're putting across is that, if you wanna start a business, you know, coz it is ... It is, a challenge starting those business in the early years, especially if what you're trying to do isn't well-established or you've had a new idea or ... Coz you need to grow that. You know, you need to grow that community. You need to learn about marketing. And it's almost like you're saying, make some money from delivering ...

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: ... a service. Which also empowers you to live and have to build an online business ...

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: ... at the same time. So, you're making a bit of money learning the skills to get yourself see that really well to actually launch an idea. And no doubt is you're doing that work, you're gonna be learning a lot more about a particular niche, all those things that you have to sort of figure out in those early years of business that tend to get, that can hold you back a little bit while you figure them out, but you've got that ...

Danielle: Absolutely.

Janine: ...security a little bit of income coming in, while you do it. So, I love the way that this is just giving mums another option, another choice, alongside, you know, wholeheartedly diving into a business from the offset, which is, you know, that there's still an option, or maybe this is an option for you, you know?

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: somewhere in the middle.

Danielle: Yup. Exactly.

Janine: Yeah.

Danielle: Exactly. And a big thing is, you know, this is what I found to be the tricky part at the outset was before you get your income to this stage where you could say to your partner, "Okay. Now I'm the income earner," and, you know, "Can you help me with the kids and that," you know, a lot of the times it might be that your partner is still working fulltime. So, to get sometimes that time freed up to take things to the next level, it does mean that you may need some support with child care, and it might not be ... You might want that in your home. You might not feel good about ... I don't know. Everyone's different.

But what I found really empowering was that by providing services and getting that income, you can kind of justify having the support that's ideal for you with childcare support, etcetera, so that you can have the availability or the reliability you need to get things to the next level. And it doesn't have to stay that way, but at least you know, you're not, you're not drawing on the limited resources to trying and take something. You, you got those resources coming in. Then you're using them to help you get better, you know, to build your online business. And that's why I love that, too.

Janine: Absolutely.

Danielle: Is that makes sense?

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. No. Totally it does.

Danielle: Yep.

Janine: And I just wanted to go back a bit because you're mentioning, Daniel and the homeschooling, schooling that he's doing with the kids. I think there are probably be a few other mums who are interested in hearing a bit more about how you juggle the homeschooling. Yes, we've got ... We've had a few people who had homeschooling, and world schooling, and things like that, unschooling come up a bit in our community recently. And I think there is an interest in how mums, and dad, and parents are doing this around the world....

Danielle: Yes.

Janine: ... the co ... You know the work that goes into it and how you balance it, and all that kind of jazz.

Danielle: Sure. Sure. So, the primary ways we do, we do it with, uh, paper workbooks. So, paper workbooks that we've, you know, families sent over from Australia, or we buy on Amazon from United States. So, our, our daughter is five and six. So, they're very much at that new to reading, new to phonics, new to Math, etcetera. And so, we'll do ... We'll have paper workbooks. We'll have the iPad apps. And they know that everyday, it's a combination of both. So we, we don't just let them do iPad work, but we found some amazing apps, on the iPad that have just seem to take their reading a lot further. learn to read, [00:27:37], hooked on phonics, splash Math, you know.

My husband did ... You know, I'm so surprise, because normally I'm the researcher. And I would have found all these, but my husband did a lot of the research to this, because we were building "VA Lifestyle Design" at the same time where he grab and got that system together. And then I have kind offallen into it, you know into learning all about what's going on. But so we did, uh the paper, the iPad app. And then they do different things where they've got like books where it's like full of science experiments. And they go, "Okay. Well, we wanna go buy these."

So, like, for example, at the moment, my daughter there's a local market stalls, and a lot of the expats, you know, create either food products, or jewelry, or something and they sell it. And everyone knows each other, so it's very easy to just, you know, run a stall for a few weeks all the time. And my daughter at the moment is just ... My six-year-old was just, you know, fascinated with preparing to make this food and sell it at the, our market stall. So, Danielle and the girls are doing that.

So far, they went to write out what are the offerings are. Like they're gonna make curry, and they gonna make, uh, this like lemonade with the lemons from the house, etcetera. And my daughter the other day, we're at breakfast and she's like, "Okay. I know we're selling but, I need my prices. I don't have my prices." (Laughs)

Janine: She's not alone in that one, is she?

Danielle: (Laughter) Exactly. Exactly I'm like, "Oh. Yeah." That actually reminds me another quick story. I was sending off an email and newsletter the other day, through InfusionSoft, actually. That's the tool that we use. And, you know, I mentioned that, because that's one of the skills we teach in the online biz skills training, because it's just in huge demand at the moment, and that's highly valued.

So, like my daughter's watching me send off this newsletter and she's like, "Oh. What are you doing?" And I said, "I'm just gonna send this newsletter then I, you know, come down for lunch." And she's like, "Oh." And I said, "It's going out to all these people." And she goes, "Why? So then you find out some of them like it and some of them don't like it." And I went, "Yeah. That's exactly right." And she goes, "And maybe if some of them don't like it then you might have some less people." (Laughs) And I'm like, "Oh, my little online marketing protégé. I love you."

Janine: That's beautiful (laughs).

Danielle: I'm not sure that I told her that but, you know, obviously, she was absorbing it. There's a bit of online marketing talking in the house with you.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. That's brilliant. And just role-modeling for her, seeing her mum doing that stuff is really cool.

Danielle: Yeah. It's great. So, that's the homeschooling is kind of a, the iPad, the books, the, you know, out and about activities, the surfing, etcetera, nature. But, yeah.

Janine: Yeah. That's cool.

Danielle: And it's mum coming in for the talk, and reading, and writing that, you know, dad's doing the hard yelling.

Janine: (Laughs) mum gets to do the best parts, and does hard work in the background.

Danielle: Yes.

Janine: I love the sound of that, actually. (Laughter)

Danielle: We have some [00:30:26].

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. Does ... Do you think that, that is ... How about ongoing to manage the homeschooling, preparation, and things? Or once you've got to sort of system in place that you, that actually is okay in terms of the work that you guys have to put in to facilitate that learning for the kids?

Danielle: Sure. once you got a system in place, like it took us, uh, a bit to get there where we knew what resources we wanted to use. And now we're kind of on that. I'm sure that will change the game when they get to the next level. And they've learnt to read it. [00:30:57] you're gonna learn the next series of resources or what, you know.

But right now, that part of it is not difficult. We're in a flow there. The difficult part is more of the, the personality cautious. Mm ... I wouldn't say its personality cautious, but just my daughter, she's you know ... I learnt a lot of parents will relate to this. She's like a six going on 16. You know, you know, whatever and all these kinds of things, and you know. So, that part of it is difficult. In my mind, I know that she's got that very detail-oriented personality. And I think [00:31:25] when she's at school, she probably be more like, you know ... Not obedient. But what's the word? Like she would probably be listening better and, you know, wanting to play as the teacher. I think, "Do I really want that?"

You know, like so, sometimes I think, "Oh. Maybe we should send her to school." So, there is that challenging part, which is the, you know, when

they don't feel like it, but we still want them to progress. And there's a balance there. We're probably not ... You know, everyone is on the continuum at different places where they are between like unschooling and homeschool, like with the curriculum. We're probably like somewhere in the middle, I'd say. So, it's not like we're really strict on a curriculum, but at same time we're not just sitting back going, "Oh. Do whatever you want today." We kind of want them to progress. And everyone's different on that. Everyone's different. Everyone's kids have different personalities. So, I'd say for us, at the moment that's the challenging part. The organization and the work we have to do is probably the easy, easiest part.

Janine: Well, thanks. That's really interesting, and so for some of the mums out there that might be listening into this and thinking, "Hmm ... I wouldn't mind a piece of this." What are your tips, a couple of tips maybe for – I don't know – how to take the leap into a freedom-based lifestyle business? How to build up their ...

Danielle: Sure. Sure.

Janine: ... confidence and the courage to that?

Danielle: Sure. Okay. So, you know, things that are actionable, right? Things that could be done ...

Janine: Yes.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: Whatever comes up is great.

Danielle: Sure. So, I mean, a big one that comes to mind straightaway from me would be getting some type of online presence setup. And when I say online presence, I don't mean you have to go and learn Wordpress and, you know, customize a theme and start blogging, etcetera. Great, if you're already at that stage. By all means, then that's the online presence. But if you're not at that stage yet, then I'd suggest starting off with your LinkedIn profile and getting that polished, getting it started. Getting some type of online presence where when you start networking, you start connecting with people, they've got some way to check you out. And I think LinkedIn is a perfect place to start with that, if you're getting started from scratch now.

A big part of that as well ... And, and with your LinkedIn profile, I see a lot of people get too hang up on, “Oh. I don’t remember all my work history. And I don’t remember which job I had this year and that year.” You don’t need to worry about that too much, because the, the part that people are really concentrating on in your LinkedIn portfolio is your personal introduction and your title, and so getting comfortable with that and also getting a really good photo of yourself. Okay.

So the very first online profile photo I got myself, you know, it was a big deal. You know, I found the best photographer I could in our town in Brisbane. You know, spend \$200 that we probably didn’t have to spend just on getting one single photo. You know, stopped breastfeeding for the day just long enough, so I could go and get my hair blow dry, get the photo, and get back in time for the next breastfeed, you know.

It’s an ordeal to get a good photo, especially when you got young kids. But I can tell you, it seems like such a superficial thing, but in the online world and what I’ve seen with clients, what I’ve seen with service providers, you know, it’s human nature that we, we’re not going to these underground breakfast networking conference in getting to build rapport with people face-to-face in a with your words. And the way you interact through email is a really important part of either becoming a service provider or building your online business.

So, that would be my first recommendation is to get your online presence set-up, the second thing I’d suggest is to, you know, pick one skill and master it. And you can master it either with paid coaching, paid programs, free resources, YouTube training, discounted courses on YouToMe.com, anyway you can find the resource, tutorials on a software, systems website. There’s so many resources online, paid and free, and there’s plenty of free, but pick one skill. So, you know, Wordpress is a huge one. Not necessarily learning all the technical elements of, you know, a web developer would learn, but just learning how to manage a blog, learning how to add images, add text, add links, etcetera.

Something else you might choose is you might choose one particular email marketing software. MailChimp is very user-friendly and easier to use. It will make you feel good about getting a good-looking, email together. You could, you could practice by sending one just to your family and friends. In fact, someone that is trying with me in the course, that’s what they did. They, they started a newsletter just going to their family and friends. And I

thought that was fantastic, because then you got some motivation to actually implement, implement it.

Another skill might be, you know, going to Canva.com and learning how to become an amateur designer to put your own graphics together. You don't have to try and figure out everything, but just learn one skill. So, you probably, like if you're watching this interview, it's probably likely to be, or you're reading online business blogs, you're already studying from, from you guys. You know, you've got some concept of what goes on in online marketing. And, and in terms of the strategies and the tactics. And then just narrow it down to a specific software platform skill that you can then use to either in that hourly rate, like I mentioned, or implement your own online business plans for what for what product or service you sell. And master that, and then see where you wanna take it from there, see, you know, where that leads you, and build on from me.

You know, the third thing I'd suggest, and, you know, my bias is ... No. My bias isn't services. I love both. I love online businesses and services. And, you know, we already talked about how I ... How I like to blend them together.

But, you know, looking at it from the service focus, getting yourself together a list of 10 or 20 contacts that you have some affinity with online. So, whether that be people you've known in the past, past, your past work life colleagues that you find on LinkedIn. And [00:37:06] all my boss, they've got an online business. And wow. Maybe I should tell them that I know MailChimp now, etcetera. Whether that be people that you are following because they're in a niche that you're passionate about.

So, where I got started in services is always massively into natural health, [00:37:19], all these types of things. And I started following all of these blogs. And, you know, I would see. And that's how I got one of the first jobs as a virtual assistant was they may email out and saying, "Hey. We need help. Our business is growing." And, you know, if you're out there doing that anyway, which I'm guessing you are, you're gonna see when those opportunities come up.

Now, with building an online business where you're selling, you know, you're putting an offering out there that you're selling, uh, you build a list. So, you build a list that you can share email marketing, share valuable content with. When you're building a list for starting a service business,

your list can be much more. It can be five people, 10 people, 20 people that you initially have this connection with. So, in your mind, just mentally set yourself a goal. Okay. Say, 10 people. Or if you're being ambitious, 20 people, and just start to network with people online.

You know, the way that I perceive the internet is like this giant networking conference that we can show up to everyday, 24 hours a day, whatever time zone we're in. We don't have to buy expensive airplane tickets to go to, you know, to another part of the country. You don't have to buy fancy clothes or new shoes, you know, etcetera. We can just show up and network. We can have curiosity. We can be, you know, contribute to conversations, you know, blog comments, social media, LinkedIn, all those things. This is the real deal. Like people really do build connections.

So, I've got connections that I may doing this what I'm describing here, four years ago, that I've never met in person, but we've continue to, you know, share each other's content on social media, ask other families, you know. We know that if we're in each other's countries, because these people all over the world that we would connect, but we've already got a relationship. And yeah. Just start to do that. Pick your number, and just feel that drive to, you know, start building connections, uh, whether or not you're ready to actually put something out there to the world. This is gonna put you in a good position when you are.

Janine: That's fantastic. So, hearing, explore, you know, explore, find out what's happening, experience it yourself a bit, build connections, build relationships. And then when you feel ready to start, start I guess niching down a bit deciding what it is you're actually gonna focus on and putting it out there ...

Danielle: Yes.

Janine: ... with a list service space to start [00:39:30] whether it's, launching into a business off the bat.

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: Those are fantastic, tips. Thanks, Danielle. Really enjoying this conversation. we'd love to get your perspective on our quickly closing questions, which is, the people of the world have decided it's complete

nonsense to work more than 20 hours a week. so if you had to recheck what you were doing now ...

Danielle: Yeah.

Janine: ... so that you could earn the same amount and come in 20 hours a week or less, what would you change in your business?

Danielle: Okay. Well, this is what I would do considering that I wanna keep both businesses. Okay. So, we're getting to the stage where if I wanted to, I could make the decision to get rid of the service business (laughs), and just have "VA Lifestyle Design," but it doesn't make much sense, because I wanna keep my finger on the pulse. I wanna know that I'm always training the most current things. So, and also I love the services. So, the plan is to keep both businesses.

So, I've got extra parameters to work with this. So, this is what I'd do. I would first off ... I would get rid of any, project work or ad hoc client work. Okay. So, what I mean by that is there's two types of ways we support clients. We support clients with their ongoing daily things; the social media every day, the newsletters every week, the landing pages every month. And then you offer their blog post twice a week, whatever it is. So we, we have packages that are on a set number ... retainer, but we also do ad hoc projects. And they take the most time, because it's hard to get them delegated out to team. It's hard to get them systemized.

I love doing them. And, of course, we lack the extra income from it. But if I was dubious getting it down to 20 hours a week, then I would get rid of all project work or ad hoc work, and have only ongoing retainer work.

I would also increase the, the client rates slightly, meaning that I could pay team members more, meaning that I could expect more of them in terms of me not being such a buffer between the client and them. So, if I was paying people \$10 an hour or more, in my perception and what I've seen in the market would be reasonable for me to expect, you know, if the client's, you know, asking for this or that, that that would go in, and, you know, back and forth with the client, which I normally do.

And, and the other thing would be is, uh ... So, those two things. And then I would target more directly consulting services at the higher rate. So at the moment, the consulting rate is, is there just to separate out that for existing

clients, but I don't offer it outside of like, uh, an implementation package. But, you know, moving down the track as I'm building more experience, it's become, uh, clear that you could offer consulting without the implementation, because people would just want advice and they've got their own team. And so, I would more actively target that higher rate work, outside of our client-base, and, just, you know, then you know [00:42:19] implementation work. So, is that too technical (laughs)?

Janine: No. That's great. I was just thinking of a few people I know in our community who will be listening to this going, "Who!" They now have their pens and they'll be writing it down.

Danielle: Oh. Good. Good.

Janine: They are really great tangible, practical tips. It's awesome. Thank you so much for joining us, today, Danielle.

Danielle: Thank you.

Janine: It's been a pleasure to meet you. and I'm sure we'll keep in-touch. And that our community ... I wanna know more about what you're up to. and you did have a free gift that you're gonna give away to our listeners today. we'll show the link with it in the show notes, but also, shortly. But do you wanna just tell us what, what is in that blog post you mentioned.

Danielle: Yeah. Sure. Sure. So, I put a, I put a guide together that list out all of the best places online where you can find these type of service provider, virtual assistant freelance work that I've been talking about. So, it's 35 websites where you can find work online where you're being paid an hourly for writing, for online marketing support, for tech support, for administration and customer support. So, all these types of things that you can do using skills you probably got from your work history, but just applying it with these new online systems. And it's a list of all of those names of the websites, the links in my notes on where to focus you search once you arrive on that platform. And when you get to those platforms, they're saying, "Okay. It's all of these online business owner saying, "Can you please help me with these? I need help with this." And so, that's what I put together to share with you.

Janine: Okay. Well, that will help those mums jump, leapfrog through the explore stage. They can just go to your blog post and get started.

Danielle: Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Janine: It's brilliant. I kind of hear a small two-year-old, getting a little bit frantic in the background.

Danielle: I'm sorry.

Janine: It's a sign for me to sign off. But it's been absolutely a pleasure. Thank you so much. And, we'll keep in touch.

Danielle: Thank you so much, too.