

Ep #49: My Lessons From 2021



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sarah Michelle

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Welcome to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*, a show for new NPs and students that want to pass their board exam the first time and make that transition from RN to NP as seamless as possible. I'm your host Sarah Michelle. Now, let's dive into today's episode.

Hello again, my friends. In typical end of 2021 fashion, today I wanted to bring you an episode all about my 2021 and my own journey on this side of things to becoming a stress-free nurse practitioner this year.

This has not been a perfect journey, nor has it been a journey that's been completed quite yet and likely will never be, it's an ever evolving process. But it's something I'm actively striving towards each day to help set even a small example for each of you of what is truly possible if we allow ourselves to simply just believe.

I really hope for the episode to be both transparent and heartfelt, much like the episode I did with my husband a few weeks ago. As I believe that level of vulnerability into my world is important to your own journeys and growth too. As always, we're all in this together. And so with that, I want to show you some of the behind the scenes of my life this year, the mistakes I've made, the ways I've grown, and how I plan to start off 2022 alongside you guys.

I think the biggest thing that keeps coming up for me when I think about this year as a whole, it's going to sound a little cliché or corny, but I don't intend it in that way. But that thought for me is to have faith in yourself. Running a business is scary and uncertain. And ultimately, there's a lot of risk involved in the end.

The risk is really the part that people don't always see, they just see the results on the other side. And this year I had to make a critical decision for myself in the first quarter of the year, which was whether I was going to continue working my full time job, or drop to part time, or even not work at all.

I was absolutely agonized over this decision, literally for weeks. Dropping to even part time was going to have repercussions. Like for example, me and

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my husband were going to lose our health insurance and I was going to lose my retirement plan. I was going to lose the security that I had fought so hard for.

And on top of that, it wasn't like I didn't like my job. I loved my job. I had worked so hard to get there. It was everything I wanted, everything I had envisioned. But I saw even after just those first few live study groups of the year, the impact I could make in the educational space could be so much larger than even what it was then.

A huge opportunity was in front of me and screaming at me. But only if I was brave enough to have the faith it could work, and truly, the ability to be okay, if it didn't. Ben, of course, had the utmost faith in me that this company could grow if I could give it more of my attention, instead of just my attention after work each day. And he was absolutely right.

Because he had so much faith in me and so much faith in my abilities I eventually had that same faith in myself, and I dove headfirst into this business. At my core, being an educator has always been my end goal. And why not do it on the largest scale possible and help as many of you out there as I possibly can become real deal nurse practitioners?

And so I think when you have a little bit of faith in yourself, then my next big thing from this year comes easy, following your gut and your intuition. Y'all. I am absolutely inundated in emails and messages with requests for everything under the sun. Whether that be a site course, more practice questions, acute care courses, nursing courses, collaboration with other influencers in the space, merchandise request, DOT courses, et cetera.

The list goes on and on and I really do stop and reflect on each and every suggestion every time. I even keep a running list on my phone to come back to when the time is right and we're ready to make another move. But while I was hit hard this year, my gut told me stay the path.

My gut said it's too early to lean into anything else quite yet. And while that may change in the future, I really do think it was my best move for 2021 in particular. The live study groups are a really great example of how following

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my gut was the right move, even though it was something I had never done before, and I had not seen anyone else do before.

There are plenty of opportunities almost constantly to offer you guys more things, but I'm one human and it all has to come back to one main goal for me, does what I'm offering really support my students? Like really and truly support them? That's the most important thing to me every single time we make a decision as a company.

The newest thing that I'm going to be offering you guys really falls in line with just that. And that's going to be to offer you guys a practice question bank online. But I will be absolutely transparent that this is absolutely a pivot, at least for the time being. Our original intent was to provide a true question mobile app. And it is something that has been in the works since May.

Sometimes, though, plans don't always work out, especially in the realm of software development, heads up if you ever want to have anything developed. And so this is our interim solution to get you what you need as quickly as possible. Then ideally, we can work out the kinks with our app development and provide you with something that's really ready to meet your needs.

My solid promise is you will never get anything half done from me. These questions have been ready and prepared for you since July. And now it's time for you to finally get access to them. And for that I'm truly just so excited.

While it's not exactly what I had envisioned in having this mobile app and everything else, that does not change the quality that you guys are going to get from us. And we actually think the website version is going to be so mobile friendly we might not even need the app. But you know, 2022 is open, we'll see how it goes, right? This interim solution, or at least right now interim solution really allows us to get you these questions just a little bit faster.

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And outside of that question bank, we do have big plans for 2022. But less so in the nurse practitioner space. I really genuinely feel that you guys have everything you need to be successful from us with the addition of this question bank. And so we're going to start shifting our focus just a little bit. But y'all won't feel any of the effects of that.

I just say this to say while 2021 was all about fine tuning these live study groups, and ultimately getting this practice question bank completed for you, 2022 is going to look a little bit different. And as it unfolds a bit more, I'll be excited to share that expansion with you guys as well.

Now, I've talked about this before, but I want to stress the importance of this statement again because it's such a huge component of my personal 2021. What this company looks like now almost feels like a full 360 than what it did even just one short year ago.

This time last year I had just hired those first two part time contractors and I was heavy in the creation mode of the live study groups. I think the two big successes of this year by far are both the growth of my team, and also the growth of our live study group program as a whole.

For those of you who have participated in the live study group program, you know what a unique hybrid of a program that we have created, and it is so much unlike anything else out there. From our very first initial group with 30 students, these groups have exploded this year in all the best ways. And every month we are able to help so many of you out there become the real deal as a result of that program.

So one of the things I have ingrained the very most this year is leaning into accepting help. I have always been the type of person to think I can do it all on my own. But to reach and to help as many of you as possible, I had to be able to reach out for help from others and grow this amazing team of nurse practitioners.

I have team members everywhere now. And because of that, you guys get way beyond the level of support that I could possibly give you all by myself. And with every single hire this year I am so grateful for how the live study

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groups, our online community, our student support, literally everything is able to grow alongside it. Running a company is not something you can possibly do alone. And that was a huge pivot for me this year as well.

And finally, I think transparency and openness have been huge things for me this year and for my company. I started 2021 a little bit anxious and uncertain. Guys, I was even unsure about having an Instagram and putting my face on video. That was a real fear of mine if you can believe that.

It's hard to put yourself out there and say publicly, "I'm an anxious person. I have OCD." But when I did, this business opened up in an entirely new way. I was able to meet so many more people who needed help along this journey. It feels so barbaric to me, but I've encountered so much stigma around my anxiety, both in the nursing world and the nurse practitioner world.

So allowing myself to be free and open was super scary. It was intimidating. It was one thing to do it in my courses, it was a whole other thing to put my face to a video. But it has been worth it every single time.

So many of you out there have reached out that you feel less alone, that you finally feel seen, especially when we are still in a space where so many out there don't even believe test anxiety exists. And because of this transparency I've had so many honest and open conversations with so many of you, especially those of you who have failed before due to your own anxieties.

Also along the same thing, when you try to enter into a space like this as a newcomer, you're going to upset people, no matter how hard you try not to. It's just part of the process. That was a growth pivot for me this year as well, to not be lost in others and their perceptions and beliefs of me and my company.

I can only focus inward on being the kind of person I want to be. And running my company every day with a high level of integrity. I can only control what I can control, which is a huge move from where I started this time last year.

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Hopefully, as you guys reflect on this last year, you can see your own growth too. Every year we all grow a little in some way or another. That was actually my theme word between 2021 at the very beginning, growth. Growth as a person, growth as a company, growth in my mental health capabilities, growth in my transparency and openness. I was running full steam ahead when this last year started.

And while growth is still important, and something I want to hold close as I move forward into 2022, I think my new word is going to be joy. For any of you out there who have ever listened to a little Brené Brown, which I highly suggest, you know that joy is one of those vulnerable emotions.

It can be clouded in so much doom and gloom, even if that sounds counterintuitive, because my brain flips and thinks what if this happens? Or what if goes wrong? And you can what if yourself until you're downright miserable and you don't even know what joy feels like anymore.

And so in 2022 I really want to lean into joy with all of you. There's so much of it to be had in our community, so many success stories. So many new real deal nurse practitioners being made every single day. That's the kind of energy I want to devote myself to right alongside you guys.

And that right there is how I want to tie up this episode, with thoughts and dreams of so much joy in 2022, leaning right into it. And that's it for this week. I'll talk to you guys next week.

As an extra bonus, friends, if you're looking for support no matter what phase of your nurse practitioner journey that you're currently in, I have communities available for both students and new nurse practitioners. In these communities we work to uplift one another and grow this profession together every single day. Links to join will be included for you in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to *Becoming a Stress-Free Nurse Practitioner*. If you want more information about the different types of support we offer to students and new NPs, visit stressfreenp.com. See you next week.