

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PODCAST



Episode 29

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Annemarie Cross: You're listening to Women and Leadership Podcast, episode 29.

Hi, I'm your host Annemarie Cross, branding communication strategist, also known as the podcasting queen. Welcome to another episode of Women in Leadership podcast – the podcast that empowers you to reach your full potential.

We all know the importance of getting our message out there to become known. However, maybe you're like many of the business owners I speak to who feel like your message is going unheard. When it comes to public relations and the media despite all of your hard work, you'd go unnoticed and you're starting to wonder whether your story is worth sharing anyway.

Now if you can relate then stick around because when it becomes public relations, marketing, and the media, my guest Linda Reed-Enever is the quintessential go to girl. Linda not only understands publicities but lives and breathes it connecting people and idea through her PR company, Thoughtspot PR, her highly successful media agency, Media Connections, and her innovative online forum Business Business Business.

On today's show, Linda is going to share keep making decisions and moving forward. It is when we start making decisions that process stops. Your story is yours. No one else can tell it like you and business is an investment of passion and

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time. You know all those overnight successes. Well they did a lot of work to become an overnight success. So welcome to the show Linda.

Linda: Thank you, Annemarie, for having me.

Annemarie: You are so welcome. It's such an honor to be able to feature you cause I know you've got so many insights to share. I always like to start off this particular series with sharing some of your milestones which is so impressive. So on June 1st, you launched Business Business Business website after reaching 10,000 people. This was on your Facebook group, wasn't it?

Linda: This is on the Facebook group and I just got out of a meeting with our girls and we should hit the 11,500 mile.

Annemarie: Amazing.

Linda: Somewhere in the next couple of days.

Annemarie: Yay. Very exciting. Now on 2014, you launched your book of PR tips to help business owners reach the media with bite size media tips or bite size tips and you've got a company Media Connections as I mentioned earlier. You're now connecting businesses with just over 3,500 journalists. That's amazing.

Linda: It's pretty exciting, isn't it?

Annemarie: It is, and Family Capers that's entering its seventh years of supporting family. So you've got lots and lots of amazing milestones so a very busy lady.

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Linda: We are but we love what we do. So that's the easiest thing. I would say to anyone please understand I do it with an amazingly awesome team that support me.

Annemarie: Yes. I think it's important, isn't it? It's passion but then also team because let's face it. There's only so many hours in the day and if we are as business owners trying to do everything ourselves it's just impossible, isn't it?

Linda: It's ridiculous to even think we can possibly even do that. You know I'm all for business owners taking as much as they possibly can and making decisions and keeping on moving. Even as we said in the introduction about overnight successes, Annemarie, one of the biggest things I think is most topical right now is Pokemon. Twenty years to be an overnight success.

Annemarie: Yeah. Absolutely. I mean they've reinvigorated themselves cause I remember years ago, I mean my kids the youngest is 21. They all had these little Pokemon things I mean well over a decade ago if my memory serves me correctly.

Linda: Yes. I don't think my brother who is in his late 30s now would actually like to admit it. But yes, that's how long ago.

Annemarie: Yes. Talking about team because I know that there may be some businesses today particularly business owners who really had stretched themselves thin. They're burning the candle at both ends. What did you do as far as team? I mean obviously there was a time where you evolved your business and then you introduce team members to support you. What kind of decisions did you make and around what time? Just so we can see that natural progression and growth.

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Linda: For me, it was very interesting. Clive and I both founded Family Capers together. We started it. We knew at that stage that we're going to need support so Kelly who is my assistant who is being with me for six years now on and off in between kids and family and doing all of those sorts of things. So even at that point, we knew that we needed someone else other than me to support and just that person you can bounce off that gives you that bit of support.

But our teams came in varying stage and in different time. Some people work 20 hours a week with us, some work 5 or 10. Some only work when we got the work for them. But the reality of it is my thing about my team is allowing them to work around their families, their kids, still have that corporate contact that we would have had.

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Annemarie: Yes.

Linda: With people and with clients and being able to use the skill set they've already got but being able to do it with their family. So progression wise is very interesting cause I've never really technically being an employee. I've worked for organizations. I've subcontracted. I've done all those things and I've worked with teams that. So I was lucky from the aged 19 I understood the importance of having a really good team around me and that being a business owner meant that I needed to do that.

Annemarie: Where there specific tasks and areas of your business that you got...?

Linda: From day one I said I don't handle accounts.

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Annemarie: Yeah.

Linda: From day one I said I don't handle accounts. I give that to someone else. We leave design to the graphic designers. I leave the words and even now I leave the words quite often to the girls who write and then I come in and have a look at it. My strength is project management. It's about knowing what we want the message to do and then saying to you guys okay this is what we're going to do, this is where we want the message to be and getting that information out there.

I say Clive's strength that he brings to our businesses in amongst everything that he does as well is the opportunity to be able to allow you to look at the process, look at the system and the procedure and see if there's something that we're missing. To me, it was the point of burnout too allow me to expand my team this time last year and I said that's it, I'm just going to take the risk.

And this time last year I just said right, that's right, I'm putting on the writer here. I'm putting on social writers. We're doing this. We're doing that and we're doing it. You know what. We're 12 months down the track. Yeah. We're bigger and we've opened another two businesses.

Annemarie: Fantastic.

Linda: But same team they're working with it. Business is now way bigger than I ever intended it to be when we first started it. But it was obviously needed. The team has that same passion. So for me, it's about finding the right people at the right time.

Annemarie: Yeah and really enabling them to step into key areas which you didn't necessarily want to do yourself. You recognized it wasn't strength for you, which allowed you

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then to really play and maximize and leverage your strengths. I think that's such a great insight for all of us.

Linda: You could outsource. Look at it. How much time is it going to take you? We were talking to a client about this the other day. He's got some technical skills with him. We're talking about his website maintenance and backup package. He goes but I can do that. I said yes but the amount you're going to spend, which is a small amount of money each quarter, is it worth you even trying to do it?

Annemarie: That's right. And as business owners if we were really honest and we track to the time and not just time but energy and thought process all around that, it actually ends up costing us a lot more. I think team and external providers it's an investment into your business because they can do what they do well and it obviously doesn't take them as long as it might take you.

I know I've spoken to many colleagues who have struggled with their bookkeeping. You know something that you said you outsourced straight away. It took them four hours and many many sleepless nights. And when she hired someone it' an hour, an hour a month. It was ridiculous. She said here I am struggling for months.

Linda: Even writing for yourself. We talked about business owners and they come to me and say it's really hard to write. I said I get it. I don't do mine. People write my profiles for me. They're like what do you mean? I said: I'm not going to write my profile." They've seen different things in me that I see.

It's about putting those words out there and allowing someone else to be able to do that. Now I know it sounds scary when you're first starting out business to say

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I'm going to outsource this. But the biggest thing about being a PR consultant and being a marketer and all of those things is we track time anyway. So we track the time we were doing on general tasks and when it gets too much we turned around and we go no that gets outsourced.

Annemarie: Brilliant. I mean this is obviously a very key decision that we need to make in our business. One of the things that you did want to talk about today is to make decisions to move forward. When we stop making decisions the process stops. Where else do you see in businesses typically that they're not making the right decisions or they're just kind of avoiding it all together that we really need to be mindful of?

Linda: One of my bosses gave me the best piece of advice ever when I was really really young. You won't make a mistake and I won't be unhappy with you as long as you keep making decisions. The moment you stop making decisions is the moment you made a mistake.

Annemarie: That just turns everything around, doesn't it?

Linda: Just keep going. Just keep going. He says we are going to get things wrong. But if we keep making decisions and acting, we get right. He said the moment you sit still and freeze is the moment that you stop being a business owner. I think for business owner not making a decision, making a wrong decision they should ever be afraid of. Business grows. We've all done stupid stuff. We've all made stupid decisions. There is no business owner out there that hasn't. And if they are, if they say they haven't, they're not telling you the truth.

Annemarie: Yeah. That's right. It's like no. That's BS.

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Linda: I'm sorry. No business is perfect. We've all done it. We've all picked up a fine and really spoken to someone we shouldn't have. We've all said something on Facebook that we shouldn't. We all reacted emotionally. The biggest thing I can say to you is make decision but don't make them with emotion. Walk away.

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I say this to clients who were responding on Facebook groups or even members who are responding in BBB, two groups. If you find yourself shaking or really typing in a really fast speed, that's not the time to respond. That's the time to walk away. That's a time to go grab a coffee, grab a glass of water, grab a wine, grab whatever you need to do and calm down and think about do I actually want to reply to this or is it even worth my time.

Annemarie: Very very good.

Linda: But the thing for business is keep moving forward.

Annemarie: Yeah. I mean just the other I noticed a quote. I love those quotes, such great great insights and reminders. But one of them was the very old one that we know and love very well is Thomas Edison's "Ten thousand times I didn't fail, I just found 9,999 ways of not to do that." I actually sat back and I thought gosh even I have even to a hundred different ways would I have continued. He's Thomas. Ten thousand times. I meant that is just incredible.

Linda: That's phenomenal to think that's what it was. By the way, it was a hell of a lot harder for him to do anything than it was for us.

Annemarie: That's right. He didn't have googling, did he?

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Linda: No. Exactly and YouTube video.

Annemarie: Amazing. Let's talk about your story and what you say is your story is you. It's yours. No one else can tell it like you. So if someone is frustrated because they have tried to tell their story, maybe for them they need to get someone to write it. Maybe they have been trying to reach out to the media. What words of encouragement do you have for them?

Linda: Okay. I just started today a series of PR Tips that common pop up on my Facebook page, the Linda Reed-Enever page, covering this because some of the things that we take for granted in the PR marketing space is thinking ahead of time and even the Business group would come to meet in the most little while in just common topic about I want to appear in this magazine this week. As you know as a producer that doesn't work.

Annemarie: No.

Linda: We're thinking ahead of time. We're thinking ahead of the opportunities. We're going to think about where we're going to slot this content in. In the print media and those sorts of things then quite often it's three to possibly even six months ahead of time. So it's about planning ahead. That's my tip of today and getting things together.

The other thing is when you're telling your story or you're trying to build your profile with articles and those sorts of things, give the editors what they need. So if they asked for it in a particular format or they asked for further submission four more, if they asked for three articles so that they can run three articles on you in a series to build your profile with their audience give them what they need. They

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have the audience. They know how it works. Your chances of being picked up increase but don't stop.

The editors in Family Capers has been running for seven years now. They see close to 300-400 emails a day in their inbox. Some days it can get to that 700 or 500 mark when they may call out. So don't give up. Your story may not be right right now but it doesn't mean they have flagged you for something in the future.

Annemarie: Yes and they're very busy, aren't they?

Linda: They are very busy. The thing is the story it might happen today, it might happen tomorrow, it might happen the next week. It might even take six months for that story to work.

Annemarie: Would you pitch the same story or share the same story or angle or would you try different angles?

Linda: Keep adding to your credibility. I normally say as a business owner trying to break into PR, you need to educate your market. So educate the market so educate them how to use your product or services, industry tips, myths that might be happening around your area. You know things that are obviously happening.

If you got a product, open the door to the media by offering it for review. They get to put it in their own hands and try and test and use the product, and that makes a big difference for them to be able to get something physical, to be able to use it.

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But if you're a coach or a mentor, educate your market. Your top 5 tips, the questions your clients are asking you are the pain points for your audience. So your audience who is reading those, your clients are reading publications out there. The ones that are sitting in there that don't know about you or don't know they need you yet.

Annemarie: Yes.

Linda: They're the ones who need the same questions asked that you're answering to your clients now or that you're blogging about. So it's about building your profile. It's about looking at the way your audience seeks to find...

Annemarie: And being very mindful I'd imagine of that publication is to their readers of you is because if what you're sharing has no relevance to their audience or interest to whatever it is then why are they going to then want to invite you to share your story. They just won't.

Linda: We had a really really good article picked up in the Herald Sun for two of the Media Connections members this weekend and the call out was on the generals come to us looking for meal preppers. One lady does meal preparation, got a beautiful piece of write up. The other lady who got in another good piece, she preps her pantries. So she preps her pantry for every situation. She didn't fit the call out or the general spec just quite as they had it but with the right twist of their story these gals between the two of them go a page and a half of the Harold Sun on Saturday.

Annemarie: Wow.

Linda: Yes. Exactly.

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Annemarie: I would imagine their readers or their ideal clients are definitely reading.

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Linda: Reading the weekend Harold. It's not about food and how do they prepare their things. One of our ladies is a natural therapist and she's looking at how to prepare your food for when you got psoriasis and all of those sorts of things. So it's a really good opportunity for her to share how food interacts with her life.

So it's about looking at the call outs that are out there. There are places like Media Connections. There are places like ThoughtSpot that will allow you to be able to connect with journalist. Use it but don't pitch for everything. Pitch for what's right for you. Have a look; if you're saying you know I send 20 pitches to call out etc. I said but where they all right for you or you just scatter gunning.

Have a look at the call out. Because reality of it is free PR out doesn't really exist. Cause it takes your time or PR time or someone's time to put that call out, response to that call out, run that interview, have a chat. It's not free. It's publicity. It's coverage which would have maybe been taken up by an advertiser and yes it has value. But the reality of it is there was some cost to your business to send a reply.

So if you're scatter gunning your approach to responding to pitches and not looking at is my audience there, is there something I would have responded to normally, do I actually want to be in that publication, all those sort of things, you're actually wasting time you could be spending on attracting income generating tasks for the business.

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Annemarie: Just like we said earlier about overnight successes, the people who are getting into these publications they are putting in the time, the commitment, the energy. That's why we see them show up because they are putting in work and to be very intentional. So certainly wise words and we'll share with everyone how they can get in contact with you because we've only just scratched the surface in this particular podcast.

So, Linda we are going to talk about business being an investment of passion and time and those overnight successes that we often don't hear about their lows and the challenges that they've overcome. So speak a little bit more for us about that.

Linda: Okay. The biggest thing that I would say to anyone is overnight success sounds great but it takes a lot of time. There are a lot of organizations that you see that pop up that's been lots of work. We're working with one client at the moment now who everything that we started to work for in the last four months is really starting to come into interaction.

All this stuff is really now playing into play and clients are said to be responding. But under her old brand we never got any of that and it was just the positioning. It was the positioning of the company, the positioning of the brand, and the positioning of the information that allowed them to be able and even just working that plan.

So working their marketing plan and reacting to their market because the biggest thing is I love business plans. I think they're amazing and great. But business changes and grows. Two and a half years ago if you've said to me was I going to launch a website for business owners? I would have gone run in the opposite direction please,

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Annemarie: That's right.

Linda: I got enough of my plate. I don't need to do that. And then what happens was overnight I watched a couple of particular groups that I was a member of and I watched a few people get for want of a better word be leaving these groups. So I said that's it. I'm out. I can't do this anymore. I'm going to create a Facebook group over here.

I'm going to refer business. I'm going to talk to the people I worked with. I want to refer business to and that's it. That grew and that took off. But it's not an overnight success and I get people now sending me Facebook messages going can you tell me how to build a group like yours. And the first thing I say is run in the opposite direction. Head start.

Annemarie: How long have you got?

Linda: Go. Go. Go now while you still have time in your life and your weekend. But the reality of it is we created something the business wanted. So we needed to move our market which meant I needed to move the businesses that we had in different directions and put team members into place and all of those sorts of things for us to launch to June 1st. So June 1st launch was great but there was six months' worth of preparation that gets us there.

Annemarie: Absolutely.

Linda: So it's that preparation. It's the expectation of whether you get PR or you do an advertising campaign its understanding that it all takes time and it takes time. The hardest thing as a business owner is there's no one giving you a team meet and go you're awesome cause that's your job unfortunately from here on in. There's

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not boss saying you guys are awesome. Go back to work. You need to do that yourself. Okay. That's the reality of it all.

But I think as business owner what we forget is we had bad days at work and this is no different. You're going to have a bad day in business. You're going to have a day that it just does not suit you to get up and they were the days that you used to call in sick most probably and go I'm not going to work today. These are the opportunities you got to recognize that the bad days come with the good.

If you're having a bad day and things aren't working then maybe it is worthwhile walking away for the day and then coming back positive the next day. There's no point in continuing to slug in the business if it's hurting. We did this for Life and Balance and I said that to my team early on and I've fallen to the same trap of it. I was going through circle of we launched BBB. Everything was going really well. We got heaps on.

I got sideswipe by a girlfriends, some friend of mine had lost a child before the school holidays and I just looked at my team and I said right that's it. I am doing two hours over the school holidays each day and I'm out. And they said okay, can we do that? I'm like we're just doing. That's what we're doing.

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I said what we're going to do is see our children, see our families and we're going to enjoy the school holidays. I came back so refreshed next week. I gave so much more to the business, so much more of what we were doing and it's very easy when you're working in the business to forget that.

Annemarie: That's right.

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Linda: To forget that you need that time out to be able to get back to the business. There is no overnight success story. There are lots and lots of hard work. Sometimes people touch PR straight away and they get picked up straight away and that's absolutely awesome. But it's not normally the way.

Annemarie: Not the norm.

Linda: You need three to six months process before something happens. You know you're going to gain the publication trust, the general trust. They got to see that you're out there.

Annemarie: Yeah. So it's very very important by the sounds of it to build your own platform, continue to share awesome content which is great anyway because that's going to continue to provide value and attract potential clients to your business and that's also going to be able to be leverage as you continue to network and build relationships.

Linda: Exactly. And that's what we say about making connections to members about making sure that they are trying to get something into the newsroom once a month. So that at least the journalists are seeing something from them. They're getting reminded that they are there.

Because the biggest thing is lots of emails coming each day, all the situation news, there's lot of pictures happening, there's lots of information coming into your desk, there's lots of story angles. Editor says I want this. If there's able to come and that works really with us is they are able to come to us and say hey we need three sources for this particular interview on this topic and the girls are going

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okay, cool, give us a five minutes and we'll all run the search. Or, they can run the search themselves. They can search the people.

You know I'll be honest Clive's PR is most probably being a little bit down the bottom but in the last three days he's had four interview request from the Media Connections guys, two of them to publication over the next sort of while. The only thing we did was refresh his profile. That was the only point of difference. So we just reminded the media he was there.

Annemarie: Fantastic. Great, great, great words of advice. Don't give up. It can take time to build and those overnight successes in the PR and getting publicity that's not the norm.

Linda: I had clients that had their first press release and they get a piece of coverage and I go oh damn.

Annemarie: So this was so easy. It looks exciting.

Linda: Awesome. But they can't expect this from here on end.

Annemarie: Linda, one of the things that we're sharing on the show before we finished for today's podcast is around technology. Do you have a piece of software or tool that you used that you just can't live without in the business?

Linda: I'm a Buffer girl. I love Buffer for managing our social media. When I come down to everything that we do I sit here and say to guys that Buffer is an amazing tool. It's fantastic. It allows us to be able to program, manage.

And you know what. From the business standpoint of view when we talked about not being able to see reports and those sorts of things, what I love about Buffer is

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I'm going to get all my social media stat in one spot and they even send me a weekly report which makes it even easier cause I can be really lazy and just read the weekly report email that comes in if I don't want to look at everything.

So that for us has been an amazing time. Yes. We invest in it and yes there are people out there who say the third party content providers don't work. But as long as you mix it in with everything else you're doing you're better to be sharing than not sharing at all. And I think as business owners we got to understand that we don't have the time of the social media manager to sit there and program all of our content to post on Facebook four times a day.

Annemarie: Yeah.

Linda: We don't have that. We don't have that time. So how can we do it? One of our clients had sat there with an account on Facebook. I'm going to get into it. I'm going to get into. Then she sat down one Sunday night. She programmed about week's worth of content. She had a best week on social media ever cause she actually had a week's worth of content. Go out for a whole week.

Annemarie: You know some of this stuff is content sharing. So valuable content for your ideal clients which then means that you can spend time engaging, answering questions for all of the people who are now going to be reading and listening to your content. So you can really leverage that opportunity rather than sitting there posting which as you say through Buffer can be shared automatically for you. I think that's great. I will certainly put a link to buffer on our show notes as well. Linda, how can people get in contact with you?

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Linda: The most probably the easiest way to get in contact with me is either through the Business Facebook group which if you just type in three words will pop out or via my website which is lindareedenever.com.au. The Media Connections teams also there if you want to ask questions about how to reach to our journalist via mediaconnections.com.au too.

Annemarie: Terrific and of course we'll put all of those links on our show notes to get all those links annemariexcross.com/podcast29. Linda, thank you so much for coming on the show. It really has been a pleasure speaking with you.

Linda: No problem. Thank you very much for having me, Annemarie.

Annemarie: As I've done over the last few shows, I'm inviting one of my fellow Microsoft brand ambassadors to share at tech tip in how we can use technology whether it'd be the Microsoft service, an app or process in order to help us streamline our business.

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Now if you are using a Microsoft Service Pro and you've got a favorite app all the way that you're using it to streamline your business, let me know. Send an email out to podcast@annemariexcross.com and we'll do our shout out for you. So let's dive in to today's tech tip.

Annemarie: Hey, Megan. You're with us again today. What's today's tech tip?

Megan: Well today's tech tip is how to pin items for easy access. You know when you try to find an app or a file or a photo and you just need it there ready to go. So in

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Windows 10 if you go to a start menu and right click on an app it says pin to access bar.

So what happens it tend becomes a little icon that sits down the bottom of your device. So for me, I have Word and Excel and things that I regularly use including some of the documents. So it's there. I don't have to search for it. It's just sitting there already to go.

Annemarie: Now if you've got some apps that you've pinned and then you think you know what I'm not using them as much, is it easy to unpin them as well?

Megan: You just right click on the app and say unpin.

Annemarie: Fantastic. I love it. Cause how many time do you go through the search and where is it, and click, click, click and this is certainly going to streamline that process. Fantastic. Megan, how can people find out more about you because you are the tech queen?

Megan: I am. You go to www.techcoachhq.com.au and find me at megsamanda or meganiemma on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Don't forget to check out our Tech Made Simple Facebook group for small medium business owners, startups and entrepreneurs.

Annemarie: Fantastic. Of course, as always I think you're going to create another video for us just to be able to walk that through. Yes. Megan, you're doing that again for us this week?

Megan: I am. There will be a video for each week.

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Annemarie: Fantastic and of course go to the show notes and you'll be able to see Megan's step us through that tech tip.

Now before we go, if you are a service based business owner and you'd like to go from working with clients on an hourly basis to creating home study program, maybe VIP days or even longer term private coaching program yet you're struggling to put together your signature program, why not sign up for one of our upcoming signature program Breakthrough Round Tables.

These are run face to face or if you're on overseas or even located outside of Melbourne we also run these virtually. To find out more about our signature program Breakthrough Round Tables go to annemariex.com/yoursignatureprogram.

Now that brings us to the end of another show. Thank you for joining us. I'm sure you have got lots of tips written down that Linda shared with us today. Make sure you do reach out and connect with her. Also if you haven't already, why not subscribed to our iTunes channel annemariex.com/podcastitunes.

Why subscribed? Well because every time we have another inspiring guest just like today's guest you listen to just before, you get to know firsthand when we published a new show. While you're over there, can you leave a comment and also writing because that helps us get our message out in front of all other women who are looking to reach their full potential.

Anyway, I hope you've enjoyed today's show. I know I did, took lots of note. See you again next week. Make it a great one. See you later, Linda.

Linda: Bye.

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