If you've been around a while, you probably know that I believe the habits are what makes us who we are. Our habits either help us or they hinder us, and today's habit is one of my newer habits that has really helped me improve my life and my business. So I'm sharing it with you today.

Welcome to the short of it with Amanda Long. So I began my reading and journaling habit because I wanted to read more and become a person who blows through books. Each year. I see so many successful business owners who are reading book after book, and they have great book recommendations, and I wanted to be like that because each time that I read a book, I feel like I grow a little bit more.

And I think the more that we read, the more that we open our minds to new ideas and the more ideas that come to our. I also intended on taking my group members over in the biz and Life productivity circle through a book club, and I wanted to get into the habit of reading, and I really wanted to nail down what I wanted that book club to look like, which we have started, and you can join by becoming a member in our free group, the Biz and Life Productivity Circle over on.

Since beginning my reading journey, I started to journal right after I was done reading. Most of my reads have triggered lots of ideas and thoughts around topics, either wanna learn more about or ideas that now I wanna go talk about because I didn't really think about them until I read about them. . I've also found that I started chipping away at some of the most important business tasks, like clarifying my brand and my message have been two of the big key things that I feel I've done and accomplished because of my reading habit.

I've also had a ton of podcast ideas and tons of ideas of things I wanna dig deeper into for my personal and business growth. And it's just been a wealth of content ideas and business momentum for me, and I think it's super important for us to have an outlet that helps us be creative and feel inspired.

I get it started by grabbing my coffee. I pop in my AirPods, I set the lights. Sometimes I light a candle and I hit play on my audible book. This ended up taking the place of my not so great habit of morning email scrolling and social check-ins. So that was definitely not serving me. So now I have a habit that has become an anchor in my day and a growth hack in my life and my business.

So what's my process? I just gave you a peek into that by telling you that I grab my coffee and pop in my AirPods before I do anything in the morning. I get outta bed, I go get my coffee, and I go sit down at the spot at my dining table.

And I read, I do my reading and journal habit. That's the first thing I do in the day.

I don't get up and shower first. Coffee is number one, and then reading is the next thing. And this gets my day started and it kicks it off in a way that helps get me inspired. And in the mindset of thinking about ideas and utilizing the creativity part of my brain as. I grab my phone and I listen to the audible book on my phone, and then I get my iPad with my Good Notes app on it.

And if you don't have good notes, I love it. I should probably do a podcast about it, but Good Notes is an app where you can keep your notes, but with your iPad, you can write with your Apple pencil and you can write your notes handwritten, and then you can search them, you can organize them. It's really just a great note taking.

And, um, I can get it on my laptop or my iPad or my phone. So I love it. I keep my meal plans there as well. But we're not talking about that today. We are talking about why I write. So we are not talking about that today. But I wanna explain why I take notes so I'm not reading the actual. I'm engaging two of my senses, and I feel like when I engage more than one of my senses, I retain information a little bit better, and writing is definitely one of those things that reinforces what I'm hearing and what I'm listening to.

It also helps me be able to go back, so when I have an aha moment or something, I really like the way somebody said a word, they used a quote. Something that really just clicked with me. I like to write it and in the Good Notes app you can highlight things and circle them and I can bookmark stuff. I like to have the notes that I take while I'm listening and I don't take copious notes writing everything down.

I take notes of the things that are really interesting to me or something I wanna. And then I'm able to go back and refresh my memory along with reminding myself of the things that peaked my attention the most. And if I have notes on something that I want to do, or if I have a thought while I'm reading, I write that down as well.

So it really helps me engage with the reading, and that helps me retain more of the information. And then right after I'm done listening to my 15 or 30 minutes, it just depends on how much time I have, if I wake up late or if I have to be there somewhere early, I give myself a minimum of 15 minutes of reading though in the morning.

I think that's my minimum so far. Then I journal right after, and because I've just done some reading on mostly self-improvement or business growth, it triggers a lot of ideas and thoughts or things that I just wanna look deeper into or something to create a podcast about. So a lot of times my journaling might actually just be about a question that came up.

In the reading that I had today, maybe it's something I need to really think about on my own, on a personal level and may need to write a little bit out or I need to journal the thoughts and my processes and, and distill that information into something. So I think the journal habit right after reading has helped to serve me better and it has helped me to retain more of the information and trigger more of those things.

Like I said, clarifying my message on my. It came out of a journaling session right after reading a book, and that is just an example of how the reading and journaling process together can work in good notes. I organize my notes by the book I've read, so I keep all of those notes in one folder. The folder's called Daily Reading Habit, and then each note, and it's actually like a notebook.

They have notebooks and then folders, so each notebook. Is the name of the book that I just read, and all the notes for that book are in that one notebook. And then all those notebooks are under my daily reading habit folder. After I read and I journal any notes, quotes, aha moments, anything for my brand messaging, I try to take those and put them in.

I have a quotes library that I use for my social media, and so I like to go put quotes in there. Anything that I pulled for my brand messaging, I go and I put that in my brand messaging swipe file library. So I have a whole spreadsheet on, or I have actually some documents, that. I have a whole spreadsheet on my brand messaging and copy that I use.

So anything that I get from that day's journaling or reading, I go and I pop it in there and I do this right after I'm done because if I don't keep on top of it, I'm not gonna come back and do it. I know I won't, and I'll probably get lost. Eventually, I'll probably find it again when I'm going through and skimming the notes from past read.

But I like to get all of those taken care of right after it. That way I capture those ideas and they don't get lost. It is a very simple process. It doesn't take me really more than half hour, maybe 40 minutes, depending on how long I journal afterwards, but it's a very simple process. And once I get into the habit of it, I can't start my day without doing this anymore.

My day just feels weird without it, and I don't feel as productive or creative. I really think it's a great habit that kicks off my day, giving me some motivation and inspiration that I need to get started. So once I'm done with my reading and journaling, I do stretch for 15 minutes or move my body in some way, whether it's yoga, Pilates, a stretch session, something to get my body awakened, and then I hop in the shower, get ready, and then I start my day by checking my Asana, my daily top three in my full focus planner.

And then I hit the ground running for the rest of the. Share with me what your daily startup routine is, what it looks like, what your habits are in the morning. If you have a reading habit, I'd love to hear about it, and I would love to have you over in our Biz in Life Productivity Circle group so you can join with us in the conversation on our monthly book Club chats.

Join me each week for new episode of the Short of IT with Amanda Long Business and Productivity Podcast. Please sign up to get our emails. Not only will you get an email when new episodes drop, but you'll also get heaps of marketing business and productivity tips. So click the link in the show notes.

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