

# Teacher Seller Moms, You Rock

Hello there and welcome to another episode of School of Sellers. I am Erin Waters and I am a teacher seller who takes great joy in helping other teacher sellers figure out the business side of this whole TPT thing. Now more often than not I'm here every week to give you ideas and tips about tools and resources and techniques that you can use in your own teacher business. Today we're doing things a little differently. I want to tell you a little bit about my background as a teacher seller. I have two young kids. I have a five-year-old boy and a two-and-a-half-year-old girl. But I started my TPT store when I was not even married. I was living in Virginia. My husband—well, my then fiancé and I were teaching in Virginia and I got bitten by the TPT bug by a colleague of mine who had just started her own store and it quickly grew into a passion and I spent a lot of my free time usually at night after a long day of teaching curled up on the couch with my laptop working on my resources.

And now it's funny to me because I look back at that time and think like what in the world did I spend my time on? Because now that I have kids, my life looks very different and I really sometimes want to kick myself for the way I used my time before kids in the way that I use my time now because I'm so much better at using my time which you would think would be the opposite. I have less time available now but I'm better at using it. So, I think that's pretty ironic. But my point in telling you this is that I have been through so many seasons of a teacher seller's life. I started without kids obviously when I was teaching full-time and then I gave birth to my son and making that transition from zero kids to one kid was one of the hardest things that I've ever had to do in my life. And throughout that time, I was working, I was continuing to build my TPT business although not as much in his newborn days because holy cow, those are so hard and then I grew my TPT business with my son as a toddler, still working full-time in the classroom where I would go to Starbucks every day after school for one to two hours to work on my store because the last thing I wanted to do at the end of the day was come home and do more work.

Then I became pregnant with my daughter and I was teaching full time the entire year I was pregnant with her. After that year, I made the difficult decision to leave the classroom for a little while and work on TPT full-time while I stayed home with both kids. Now I work full-time at home and my husband is the primary caretaker of both of our kids. So, we are both home but I am working on TPT most days while he wrangles my five year old and two and a half year old. Now maybe you can relate to one of those seasons of life if you are a TBT parent. Maybe your situation is different than that. Either way if you are a mom and a teacher seller, this episode's for you.

Now I just have to say right off the bat that if you have kids and you are a teacher seller, you effing rock. Because here's what I think about that. I think being a mom is the hardest thing that I've ever done in my entire life. There's never any stopping, right? Once you're a mom, you're a mom forever. We don't get many breaks.

Even when we aren't physically with our kids, our mind is usually occupied thinking about our kids and they really become the center of our universe and we are essentially split into multiple pieces: the person we were before kids and trying to hold on to that identity but also the part of us now that is permanently attached to those kids, right? They are very much a living piece of us walking around outside of our body every single day and some days are hard, some days are wonderful but the point is that it never stops and it is not easy.

Secondly, business is hard too, right? There are so many things we have to do in this teacher seller business and I've talked about them at length before but all of the blogging and the pinning and the social media and the product creation, the list is never-ending. So, if you are a person who is a mom and a business owner, you have the fullest plate I could possibly imagine and that is why I think TPT moms are a very special breed of human. I think you are one of the strongest, most awe-inspiring people in the whole entire universe. But the problem is I can sit here and tell you until I'm blue in the face how amazing I think you are and I know so many people would agree but the problem is you probably still have more days where you feel not good enough than the days you feel good about yourself, right? I know you're awesome. I could put it on paper and people could quite plainly see that what you are doing is absolutely incredible.

But you don't always feel that way and that's for a few reasons. One, the mom guilt that we hear about is real and it's relentless and it's just ruthless. No matter what we do, we always have that mom guilt hanging out for one reason or another. Also as moms, we're hard on ourselves, right? We take this job seriously. We take our business seriously and for that reason, we're very critical. We are our own worst critics in every sense of the word. Third, there is so much pressure coming from all different directions. We have our own expectations versus our own reality, what we thought being a mom was going to be and what it actually is and that constant feeling of well, maybe I'm not doing it the right way. We have that pressure from social media. I hate to say that but it's true, right? Everything for the most part looks pretty polished and great on the outside and when we see the highlight reel on our Instagram feed or our Facebook page, it's easy to believe that everyone else is doing it better than us. We know that's not true but that's what we're exposed to day after day after day and it really takes its toll on the way that we think about ourselves.

In addition, that traditional mom role that has been around for years and years and years, we can't help but think about that when we think about ourselves as a mom. And I know that the role of women in society is changing and I'm very grateful for that but I think it's especially hard being in the teacher seller role in being a parent because people don't quite understand what it means to be a teacher seller, right? And I can speak so much to this now that I'm staying home and doing this TPT thing full-time. If I had a dollar for every time someone just assumed that I had the kids at home with me and that I was watching them full-time and working full-time, I wouldn't even have to do this business because I would be a millionaire, right? People don't understand what TPT is and even the role of a person who works at home in general is kind of a foreign concept and just now starting to be more common. So, trying to combine that mom role with this new growing role of working at home is also really hard to explain to people. So, we have a lot of pressure, we have a lot going on and it's no wonder that we are so hard on ourselves.

Now as you know I really find value in sharing my mistakes with you guys in my own journey, in my own transformations and experiences throughout my own teacher seller journey and today I think it's really important to talk about the mindsets and the things that we tell ourselves as parents and as business owners. And I'm telling you these things so that you can be a happy and successful mom and TPTer because it is possible but it's not easy. One of the things I think is so incredibly crucial is to make sure that you are holding on to your own identification in addition to your new role or not even new role as a mom. Even if you've been a mom for years and years, I think it's really important to hold on to what makes you you. And for me, that was very much my teacher seller business. Now I'm not saying that I had kids and dove right back into working because that is definitely not the case. I had two very different experiences in the postpartum phase with both kids. One was extremely, extremely hard and a very, very dark place in my life and another was the typical struggles but still definitely not easy and for both situations it was a really long time before I was able to dive back into my teacher business.

But the point is that I held onto it, I kept sight of it and I knew it was something that I was not going to let go of in the long run because when you become a mom, you are already losing so much of who you are and your identity and life as you know it changes so drastically that I think it is so crucial to hold on to things that make you feel like you and that also give you purpose outside of the parenting realm. And that's why I feel so strongly about the whole self-care trend. Like I said in one of the previous episodes, I definitely advocate for taking care of yourself but I also think that working hard or working in general for something that you are passionate about is also a form of self-care. So, I strongly, strongly, strongly believe in continuing to work on your teacher seller business even through the tougher seasons of parenting because in the long run, I think it makes you a happier individual and in turn a better mom, right? When moms are happy, we're better parents. I know that's the case for myself.

Now the second thing is I talked about that mom guilt for a little bit but I'm going to go back to it. That mom guilt is one of the most lethal weapons of parenthood that I have come to experience so far and a lot of times there's no reason for why it comes on so strong. We don't know why we're feeling it but we feel that. We are always feeling guilty for something, maybe not spending enough time with our kids, maybe for losing our patience with our kids. Every single thing that goes wrong, we tend to have this major amount of guilt regarding it and I think that guilt is intensified when we are dealing with wanting to balance our business with also being a good parent. And for a very long time, I struggled with the whole idea of taking time away from my kids to work on my teacher seller business and I just have to say that I have who I believe is one of the most supportive partners in the entire world. My husband has been my cheerleader since day one of this teacher seller business even when it wasn't even making us a single penny and he has been willing to do pretty much anything he was able to in order to make this business something that I wanted it to, right? I wanted it to be a success. So did he. So, for the majority of our journey through parenthood, he has been the one to be with the kids a lot when I am taking time to work on my business and he's always made me feel great about that.

But that didn't stop me from feeling guilty when I would spend an hour in my office working on a product and he was playing outside with the kids, I couldn't help but think like gosh, I'm a really bad mom that I'm choosing to stay in here instead of be outside.

Now I don't always choose my job over my kids. That's not what I'm saying. I really try to find a balance but there have been so many times when I feel guilty about working on my business and here's what I'm going to say to you. Maybe your kids were meant to see you as a hard-working mom. Nobody is standing there saying that you have to be the traditional role of a mother, right? You don't have to feel bad about wanting to work, you don't have to feel bad about taking time away from your kids to work. In fact, how is that any different than a husband or spouse who goes out of town every week to work while the mom stays home? If you are doing something that is for the improvement of your family's financial situation and you are building a business that's going to support your family for years and years to come, that's not a bad thing. And in fact, you are setting an example for your children. You are showing them what hard work means. You are showing them what it looks like to go after a dream. You are showing them what it looks like to have a passion. You are showing them discipline. You are showing them a work ethic and that does not make you a bad mom.

Now that's not a mindset that's going to happen overnight. It took me a really long time to understand that and truly believe it and I still have days where I do feel guilty. But I think that's a really important thing to tell yourself when that guilt starts to creep in regarding the balance between parenting and your teacher seller business. I think it's also important to explain to your kids what you are doing and why you are doing it. I think that the more you and everyone around you takes your business seriously, the better you'll feel about it because if you feel like you are doing something beyond just a hobby, then I think it'll help alleviate that guilt that you are feeling. And since day one, I've been explicit with my son and now my daughter about what I'm doing, what my work is, what exactly I'm working towards. I explain different projects I'm working on, different ideas I have. The kids come into my office throughout the day and ask questions about what I'm doing and they're actually kind of interested in it now that they're a little older. But by being explicit with them about the things that I'm doing on a day-to-day basis and my business in general, they've kind of just grown up understanding like this is what Mommy does, this is her job. Whereas I feel like a lot of times we're tempted just to say like oh, you know what? It's nothing. I'm not really doing anything. You should give yourself credit. You should explain to your kids what it is you're doing and don't undervalue yourself or what you're working on.

I think that we're really good lately about discussing hard issues like, for example, the way we talk about our bodies in front of our kids, right? We are doing a lot of things to promote positive body image in front of our kids and I don't think that there's a huge difference in the way that we talk about the work that we do because our kids are going to absorb the way that we are talking about our work and the way that we spend our day-to-day lives and that's going to eventually impact the way that they think about their work and the things that they're passionate about. So, I don't think there's anything wrong with getting your kids a little involved at least to tell them hey, this is what I'm doing, this is why I'm doing it and you should be really proud of Mommy or you should be really proud of Daddy for the hard work that he or she is doing. The bottom line is this is not an easy gig but more importantly, you are not alone and you are doing a great job. I encourage you to look for TPT mom groups on Facebook. That has really helped me a lot to find small groups of people who are in similar situations as me so that I know I'm not alone.

I could tell you you're not alone but sometimes it just helps to have a group or even as a small handful of people who are going through the same things that you've been going through and can really build you up when you're feeling down and also people that you can help along the way who have been in your situation. I think that you are doing an amazing job and you are doing all the right things even if it doesn't feel like it on a day-to-day basis and I just wanted to say Happy Mother's Day to my teacher seller moms who are killing it. You're doing an amazing job. You're making a big difference for your family and you are a very, very, very special person. Happy Mother's Day.

# Welcome to the School of Sellers

## What is the School of Sellers?

We are a group that is committed to helping teacher sellers in all stages of their business. We like to provide tips, tools, and resources that aid in building your business while making it feel doable every step of the way.

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