

Essentialism in Your Business: Why a Few Things Make the Biggest Difference

Hello, my TpT friends. This is Erin, and I am your host on today's School of Seller Podcast episode in which we are talking about one of the best business books that I have read recently. And I've never done one of these episodes before, but I thought it might be fun to kind of rehash this book and do a quick little, I guess it's not really a book club since I'm by myself, but like a little book talk and just tell you my main takeaways and what I've learned from it. Because it has been extremely transformational in the way that I think about my business.

The name of the book is *Essentialism*, and it is written by Greg McKeown. And *Essentialism* is one that has been so helpful that I've read it not only once but actually just finished rereading it because it was so impactful the first time I read it. The full title of the book is actually *Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*. And in this book, Greg McKeown discusses and explores all of the ways that deciding what's essential in our life or a business is one of the best things you can do in order to be successful. And there are three big ideas I think when it comes to essentialism as a book and also, an idea. And of course, there's more than just three big ideas, but these were the three things that I wanted touch on today and share with you.

The first thing that Greg points out in his book is that you have a choice in everything you do. You have a choice in how you spend your time, whether that's the big picture and like deciding what you want to do with your life or whether that's the small picture, like how you spend your time on day-to-day tasks. So he's big on having that choice and actually making decisions that are going to result in the best success for you, not what you think you should do. And I think at the end of the day too, a lot of people assume that they're stuck in certain situations when in reality you do have the ultimate say in how you spend your life and how you spend your days and your time.

The next thing that Greg McKeown dives into is the idea that very few things actually matter. When you think about it in almost every situation, there are usually only a couple of things that drive the biggest parts of our lives or our business. So even though our days are filled with tons and tons of little things, there are really only a couple big things in that picture that actually matter. And I'm going to dive into this in more detail here in a moment, but that one was a big one. And then the third idea is that in this game of choice and deciding what actually matters, trade-offs are just necessary. In order to say yes to one thing, you have to say no to something else. And when you say yes to one thing you need to make sure that you're saying yes to something that is essential. You are saying yes to one of the necessary things. Because if you're saying yes to something that's totally unnecessary and not part of your essential things, then you are basically wasting your time.

Greg McKeown talks a lot about the essential few versus the trivial many. So he says that, again, most of what we do is trivial and doesn't really matter, and there are only a few things that are truly essential to our business or to our lives. One of my favorite topics of this book is when Greg McKeown talks about how a lot of us spend our time majoring in minor activities. Basically, what are we spending a lot of our time on that matters very minimally? When you major in minor activities, you're spending most of your time on things that just don't matter. And when we talk about this through the lens of TpT, here are some of the common culprits I think that we face when we're talking about majoring in minor activities.

The first big one is the time that we spend on social media. We spend so much of our lives on social media, whether it's for creating or consuming. And most likely, more often than not, you get nothing out of this experience. And I don't mean to say nothing because obviously you could say, well, I form connections and I make friendships and all of that stuff. But from a business sense, I get almost nothing out of the time I spend on social media. And there are some people that might disagree, but in general, I think that when you spend all of your time on social and all of your business time especially focusing on social media, that is very much a situation where you are majoring in minor activities because the trade-off or the payoff rather is going to be very, very small or even non-existent compared to the time that you're putting in.

Another one that I am certainly guilty of is spending all of my time planning and not enough time actually doing it. And you know that I love a good plan, but anyone who loves a good plan, if you love planners, you love the pens and the sticky notes, that process sometimes takes more of our time than it should. And you might be the type of person that spends all of your time planning it out and thinking about it and debating and going back and forth, weighing your options, making your spreadsheets, but not actually doing a single thing. And like I said, I'm guilty of falling into this trap every once in a while. But when it comes a regular thing, you are very much, again, majoring in minor activities. You're spending all of this time planning, and it's actually not going to do you a single bit of good unless you actually follow through with that plan.

The other thing I think that is probably pretty common in terms of how we are majoring in minor activities is getting mad about things and worrying about things that don't matter. So for example, in the TpT world specifically, worrying about people copying our work, hashing out what he said, she said in the Facebook group or getting mad that the review a buyer left earlier was four stars but said great resource. Right? All the little things that we get mad about. These are little things but often can monopolize a huge part of our brain and time, and sometimes we waste entire days worrying about these things and stressing about these things. So getting too worked up about things that don't matter is definitely majoring in minor activities.

And the common thread here is that all of these things are most likely huge time sucks, and the time that you put in is not equal to what you reap. The end result is usually nothing or even worse, sometimes you have less than what you started with and you actually start going backwards in your business. Because when you think about it all of that lost time that was spent on these empty things could have been spent on things that actually do matter, and you could have been making a huge difference in your business this whole time instead of wasting that time. So that begs the question, of course, how we figure out what is essential? How do we figure it out? How do we debate and find the things that we should be spending time on?

Okay, TpT sellers, quick note for all of my friends out there who love to geek out over their TpT business with other sellers. I would love to personally invite you to join School of Sellers Ignite, a work club that is open to any and all TpT sellers. Ignite is the first membership of its kind designed to not only deliver monthly challenges with prizes but also provides space and resources to work alongside other sellers. One of our main goals is to give you the community and accountability that's missing from your business life. We will have power hour work sessions, prizes for challenges, and so much more. Join today at SchoolOfSellers.com/ignite.

I'm going to take things back to an oldie but goodie. I've talked on this show several times about the priority plan, but this is one of my favorite exercises to do and it actually aligns really well with what Greg McKeown writes about in *Essentialism*. And it's a very simple exercise. You need a piece of paper, and you're going to either fold it in half or make a T-chart. And on one side, you are going to write all of your goals for your business. So sit down and write your goals. And I'm talking about like big picture goals, not like your goals for today, I'm talking about earnings goals or product lines goals or sales goals, whatever it might be. Write down those goals, and then when you're done writing those, I want you to use the second column or the second half of your paper to write down all of the tasks that are on your to-do list right now. You can do this over the course of a week if you want and write down like five days' worth of tasks before you get to the last step of this process. But at the very least, write down at least one day's worth of tasks.

And then what you're going to do is you're going to either unfold your paper or take a look at the T-chart as a whole. And I want you to connect each of your tasks to the goal that it ultimately serves. So connect, align. Some of these tasks are going to connect to more than one goal because it serves multiple goals on your list which is great, and some of these aren't going to be connected to any goals. And what we do at the end of this is we are left with a group of tasks that are connected to goals, and we are left with a group of tasks that are not connected to goals. And here you have a very clear-cut black and white picture of the things that matter in your business and the things that are essential and the things that don't.

So next we need to think about what we do with those things. What do we do with the things that aren't connected to any of our goals? You can forget them all together. If you're someone who has a hard time getting rid of things especially like if you hold on to like old clothes and everything, you're probably the same type person that's going to have a hard time taking tasks off your to-do list. So I recommend doing a trial separation if that makes you feel more comfortable. Take like a week of not doing whatever that action is and see how it feels and keep making small strides towards not doing it at all. You also might want to think about hiring out or delegating that task if it's something you can't totally part with but you still want to do in some capacity. And then take a look at the things that are connected to your goals. These are things that when you do them, you are working toward your goals. And it's so simple, and it seems so straightforward and obvious. But unless we actually take the time and are intentional about doing activities like this, then sometimes we miss the plain and simple truth right in front of our face. So it's really important to continuously refine your list of things that matter in your business and things that are essential. This is a good activity to do at least yearly, if not quarterly. It's a great one to do when you're planning out your business for the following year or maybe even like a few weeks before the new year so that you can really start thinking about all of the things that you're going to spend your time on in the new year.

And then when we have our list in front of us of the things that matter, the things that are essential, we can even take a step further and make sure that these are definitely things that we want to be spending our time on. We know now that they are serving a goal in our business, but it's also important to examine, just like Greg McKeown recommends in his book, to think about it in terms of what do you enjoy doing, what are you good at, and what problems can you solve. It's one thing if it serves a goal, but you also have to create a sustainable working situation for yourself. So if you have a ton of tasks on your list that are just absolutely torture for you to complete, then it reaches a point where it doesn't really matter anymore if it's serving a goal if you hate every second of it. So also make sure to weigh in with yourself about what you enjoy doing, what you're good at, and what problems you want to solve in your business.

Then find a way to make sure that you are doing those essential tasks every single day in your business. Ask yourself often if what you are working on is essential or if it's going to be a waste of your time. If you're looking for a super shortcut, here in my humble opinion is a list of things that I think most sellers would find essential in their business. So if you're looking for, if you're like I don't want to do this T-chart exercise, just tell me what's important in my business, this is my personal opinion. I think your blog and your website are absolutely essential. It's the one thing other than your email list that you own. It's a place to send traffic. It's a place to host your own products in your own storefront. There are so many options for your blog and website that it's definitely something that I think should be at the top of every seller's list. Next I would say that SEO is extremely essential in our business because it's how we get found. There's no point in creating content if it's not ever going to be found by anyone. Next I would say that email marketing is essential in our business, and I want to point out that this list is not in any particular order. I would say that the blog is probably at the top, but all of these other ones are not in any specific order. Your email list definitely is essential because, like I said earlier, it's another thing that you own in your business. You'll always have it. There's endless potential with your email list in terms of funnels and getting people to buy.

Next we have advertising. I think that paid advertising whether it's on Pinterest or Facebook or Google Ads is absolutely essential in any successful business. Next, I know I'm in the minority here, but I would definitely say that Pinterest is on my list of essential items. And finally, product creation is on my list of essential items. But I'm going to leave that one with a caveat because I don't think, like I'm not the kind of person that believes that product creation should be like the only thing that you ever do. I think when you're just starting out, product creation is absolutely essential, and then as you grow your store, what becomes essential is those best-selling product lines and bundles. Because more often than not, I think that if you talk to most successful sellers that they will say that there are just a handful of products or product lines that really are like their bread and butter for their store. That is my case for sure. So I am not so much in the phase of creating new products anymore but optimizing my best sellers and making sure that I'm marketing them and expanding on them. And so that would be my essential product creation thing in my business. So blog, website, SEO, email, advertising, Pinterest, product creation, or your best sellers I think are all essential in our business. And I'm sure I'm missing some so I would love for you to tag me on Instagram or DM me and let me know what else is essential in your business because I love hearing from other sellers and what they're up to and what is moving the needle on their business.

At the bare minimum, I highly recommend checking out *Essentialism* by Greg McKeown. You can also go to SchoolOfSellers.com books to see what else I'm reading these days. I will occasionally link to business books that either myself or a member of team SoS is reading, and you can check them out there as well. One of our members in School of Sellers, Deedee Horton has actually started a Facebook group for business books. So if you want to check out her group at The Teacherpreneur Book Club on Facebook, she is actually hosting conversations about essentialism inside her group for January. So always a good group to check out if you are interested in talking more about books to build your business. Thank you so much for listening, and I will see you again here same time, same place next week.

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.

Connect with the School of Sellers!



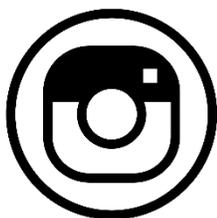
Join our community of new TpT sellers to learn more about creating a successful teacher business from day one.



Join our community of teacher sellers who are looking to grow their business. This is the perfect place for collaboration, marketing advice, inspiration, and support.



Listen to the podcast. Each episode is full of actionable tips that make your teacher seller business feel doable.



Follow us on Instagram. Learn more about us and find quick tips to help with your business!



Follow us on TikTok. A great place for mini tutorials and some fun sprinkled in.



Join us on YouTube. Watch podcast episodes, tutorials, and more!