**PEP 40 Edited\_Transcription**

[Speaker 3] (0:05 - 0:25)

Welcome to the official Properties Entrepreneur podcast with myself, Daniel Hill. On this Strip Back podcast, we're going to be going behind the scenes with special guests to provide insight and inspiration on all things business, life, and the actual realities of high performance in practice. Success and failure are both very predictable.

We hope you enjoy.

[Josh Keegan] (0:30 - 1:21)

So, Rupal, welcome, welcome to the Hall of Fame. Got a very, very special interview for everybody today in the Property Entrepreneurs community. So I'm joined by a good friend of mine, Rupal Patel.

We're going to talk through her journey from CIA to CIO. So Rupal worked at the CIA initially, and she left that corporate kind of career role. She became an entrepreneur, and she went from having like a pretty small, like minimal profile and mainly a profile around property and being kind of known as a property expert, to taking it, transitioning it, scaling it, and becoming a very well-known position expert in the world of entrepreneurship, and culminating that in actually achieving a book deal and being paid to speak on stage.

So welcome, Rupal, to the Hall of Fame. How are we doing?

[Rupal Patel] (1:21 - 1:25)

Yeah, great. Thank you, Josh. Thank you for that lovely intro, and I'm looking forward to our chat.

[Josh Keegan] (1:26 - 1:30)

Yeah, it's good. I mean, it's good to have you on. How long have we known each other now?

It's been about two, three years?

[Rupal Patel] (1:31 - 1:32)

I think three, yeah.

[Josh Keegan] (1:33 - 1:34)

Three years, and it's flown by, hasn't it?

[Rupal Patel] (1:35 - 1:35)

Yeah.

[Josh Keegan] (1:35 - 1:40)

So, I mean, that makes sense then. So how long have you actually been on the Property Entrepreneur board?

[Rupal Patel] (1:40 - 1:44)

So the board for two years, and then I was on PE the first year.

[Josh Keegan] (1:45 - 1:50)

Perfect. So three years in total, essentially.

[Rupal Patel] (1:50 - 1:52)

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But on the board for the past two. Yeah.

[Josh Keegan] (1:52 - 2:09)

And Josh, you remember, we did, back in the days when I was a community manager, I asked if we could go into one of the back rooms at the Belfry and do a video about your social media challenges. You hated it. You weren't interested in it.

[Rupal Patel] (2:09 - 2:10)

Nope. I still hate it.

[Josh Keegan] (2:11 - 2:34)

You still hate it. It's amazing. You really, like, it's something you've never enjoyed.

You've never been kind of into it. And we did a Hall of Fame, Bernadette and Ian Lloyd, we talked about this before, like how you get over that. But to have still gone from where you were to where you are, it's incredible.

Just for the audience, just give me a bit about, like, where were you before you started Property Entrepreneur? What was going on? What were you known for?

[Rupal Patel] (2:35 - 4:00)

So before Property Entrepreneur, I was sort of at a turning point. So at that stage, I had, we had had, my partner and I had had our, my now husband and I had our property business, which was at that stage, seven years old. And at that point, I, we had built it and scaled it to the point where I had just retired him from his day job.

So he was now working in our, in our property business full-time alongside myself. And I always knew from the beginning, when I got started in property, that it wasn't the end for me. It was going to be a means to an end, but what would come next, I just had no idea.

So when I, when I joined Property Entrepreneur, it was at this turning point where I was like, okay, well now my partner is working in the business full-time as well. What's next for me? And I knew over the course of, you know, that building our property business, one of the things that kept coming up again and again was people asking me for advice, for mentorship, for speaking at events and doing that kind of stuff.

And that's what I really loved. It was the speaking, it was the mentoring and coaching. And I, at that stage, sort of around 2018, 2019, when I first started on PE, that's when I was like, okay, well, this is going to be my next move.

Distill everything that I've learned about business, about life, about, you know, entrepreneurship, et cetera, and start helping other women, you know, sort of build their businesses, whether inside property or outside. So that was that turning point, yeah, just a few years ago.

[Josh Keegan] (4:01 - 4:20)

So it's basically 2018, you're in a place where you always knew property was a means to an end. You maybe felt a light initially, kind of fell out of love a little bit and thought, I love speaking, I love training and people approach me anyway. I want to go on a mission now to help women.

Was it women to achieve successful entrepreneurship?

[Rupal Patel] (4:20 - 5:16)

Yeah, it was effectively to just help women, yeah, be sort of as successful in any capacity as they want to do within a business setting, right? So it was, it could be in property, it could be outside of property, but I knew from my own experience and just from looking around all of the rooms that I was always in, that there was still a huge underrepresentation of women and sometimes women of color in particular. And I just wanted to try to contribute to changing that because I knew again, anecdotally, that it wasn't that women weren't interested or obviously, you know, that we're not capable.

It was just, there were lots of internal and external things and challenges, hurdles, whatever you want to call them, that are unique to how women experience life in their careers. And I wanted to, again, use my own insights, my own tools and tips and ways of overcoming those things to do what I have done to that point, to help other people who are on a similar journey and maybe just to sort of a few steps back and wanted, you know, some advice and guidance as to how to make things happen for themselves.

[Josh Keegan] (5:17 - 5:21)

Was it always going to be women in property or was it just women in entrepreneurship?

[Rupal Patel] (5:22 - 6:15)

Yeah, it started out as women in property because that was where I had, you know, as you alluded to earlier, my strongest niche, my strongest presence, but the more I started sort of developing it out, it was, it just broadened out to just women business owners and oftentimes solo founders, because again, the fundamentals of business are going to be consistent regardless of industry or background or sector. And so I thought, well, actually, you know, why stay to just this micro niche when I can just broaden out a little bit more and also just kept things interesting for myself.

Because again, you know, property was great and I am still actively involved in our business, although, you know, and it's sort of a much smaller capacity, but I just didn't want to stay bored or I didn't want to get bored. I didn't want things to get stale. And so I figured, you know, different sectors, different industries, again, fundamentals are the same, but it will just shake things up a little bit and keep me interested and invested in it for the longer term.

[Josh Keegan] (6:16 - 6:45)

Perfect. And so that was 2018. You've gone on a journey.

We're going to talk about the challenges, the ups and downs, because we all know that it's not as simple as saying this is what I'm going to do and this is me doing it. But where actually are you now? Let's talk about some of the things that you're doing at the moment.

I've got a bit of an insight into this and it's kind of ridiculously impressive to have seen you go on this journey. So let's talk about where you are actually now. Yeah, what are the things that are happening right now?

[Rupal Patel] (6:46 - 7:56)

Okay, so I remember very vividly, I had a conversation with Dan a couple of summers ago and it was just in a sort of informal chat. And I remember saying to him, I was like, Dan, if I could make a living and a life out of speaking and writing, that will be sort of job done for me. And that will be sort of, for me, the ultimate, just the ultimate sort of sense of like, I'm doing what I'm meant to do.

And I remember not really knowing how that was going to happen, but just thinking like, that's what I want to do. I want to get paid to speak and paid to write because that's where I'm in my flow. That's where I'm really good at and that's what I enjoy doing.

And it's that perfect sort of Venn diagram of what I'm good at, what people value and what's the third bit of it, of what there is a need for, right? And so I figured, I don't know the how, but I do know the what. And fast forward to now, as you said earlier, I am getting paid to speak.

I am speaking to companies around the world. I'm doing lots of really great engagement in, again, non-property corporate settings. And I'm also, as you said, I've got a publishing deal.

And so it's all happening.

[Josh Keegan] (7:58 - 8:24)

So to sum up, you're being paid now to basically go and talk on stage about things that you love. You've got a publishing deal on the table, which you're negotiating at the moment for your new book. And also, obviously, before this interview, I was just doing a bit more research because I've not spoken to you about what you've been doing for a little bit of time.

And I saw you're a Virgin Business Mentor as well. Nice. So that sounds fun.

What's that like?

[Rupal Patel] (8:24 - 8:47)

Yeah, it's fine. I mean, it's pretty much just a different sort of place that I'm doing the same thing. So Virgin Startup, they support a lot of early stage businesses.

And I'm just a business mentor, which is fantastic because it's, again, it's sharing lessons learned and insights and tips and external perspective with founders who are just getting started. And it's great.

[Josh Keegan] (8:48 - 9:35)

Cool. Perfect. So in terms of getting that journey, so getting from kind of scale of social media, like minimal profile, like being known for property and wanting to get, because I knew you before, I knew of you before I met you as somebody that was in property, was in kind of rent to rent and doing all that stuff.

To get from that to then speaking on stage, getting paid to do it, like negotiating book deals, what were the kind of biggest, if you said like four biggest challenges that you faced to get you from A to B? So for anyone else that's sitting here watching, thinking, I love speaking, I love standing on stage, I love writing. I love to publish the book, but it just feels so, you know, it's so, it feels so alien and it's not an easy journey to get to.

What are the four biggest challenges you actually faced to get from A to B?

[Rupal Patel] (9:36 - 10:53)

I guess the first one is having the patience. So, you know, I have always, well, as far as the writing is concerned, I've always known I wanted to be an author from, you know, I've been writing since I was very, very young. I love books.

I devour them as far as, you know, reading them. And I also have always written in some capacity. And so having the patience of feeling like there's a book in me and I need to get it out and I want to bring it into the world, but having the, staying with it and not giving up just because it didn't happen overnight, or I didn't think about, you know, the next greatest sort of book idea in a short span of time.

I think the patience was really, really, really hard for me, especially for me. I'm not a patient person. I think a lot of entrepreneurs are similar where you want everything done yesterday.

And, you know, it's not that I ever expected overnight success, but it was always this feeling like, God, I know I'm good at what I do. I know it's going to be valuable to other people. I just want this to happen already.

So that was one thing is just staying the course, keeping the faith throughout, you know, however long it took, because yes, you know, I've been on the PE journey for about three years, but sort of the book and the speaking stuff, that's been in the back of my mind for probably decades. So that's one thing. It's just staying patient and staying focused and not giving up too soon.

[Josh Keegan] (10:54 - 11:29)

Just interjecting that, it's basically just having the resilience and long-term view to stay the course, because it's a long-term game. It's a raising your profile, getting a book deal. You know, it doesn't just happen overnight.

It's like a very long-term, constantly putting stuff out there. Constantly, like, you look at people like podcasts, like Joe Rogan's podcast. He talks about the fact that those first 100, 200 podcasts, nobody ever listened, like no one cared.

And then it's like that long-term game. So just patience to stay in the course. Okay, that's a great first challenge to overcome.

Can you give us a second?

[Rupal Patel] (11:30 - 12:59)

Yeah. So the second one was around the sort of social media thing. It's not that it was a massive challenge, but I still, to this day, still struggle with it.

I'm not someone who enjoys social media or constantly sort of tweeting or being on Facebook or doing any of that kind of stuff. And, you know, Dan has probably wanted to shake me about six bazillion times just about, you know, this thing around raising profile and being consistent and, you know, things like the content calendar and other things that you guys have talked about in some of the program stuff. And so it's, I think for me, what I, it wasn't really a challenge, but it was just one of those things that was always just felt like there was a lot of friction.

And so I just decided for myself to let go of that pressure to, you know, always be posting or to do, it sounds horrible to say this, but to be, you know, consistent with it to some extent, because I knew for myself, it wasn't going to be sustainable if I tried to force it. And I needed to find my own way, my own sort of path to engaging in a way that I both enjoyed, but also could sustain. And so I think just finding my feet with social media and how I want to engage and how I can consistently engage in what I enjoy doing, that was a massive process.

And it's happened in fits and starts. You know, there have been times where I've been so much more consistently engaged and other times where I'm less so, but it was just really finding my way of doing it. That felt really hard a lot of the time.

[Josh Keegan] (13:00 - 13:00)

And what was your way?

[Rupal Patel] (13:01 - 14:22)

It was effectively only first and foremost was to only post anything that I thought was going to add value. So I'm not the type of person who likes to share like, oh, hey, I'm on this great holiday or, you know, and there's nothing wrong with that. But for me personally, it just felt like I didn't necessarily want to share that with the world.

And I didn't think that it added value to anybody's life if I was like, oh, hey, well, you know, I have this, you know, great time away with the kids. Now, caveat to that, there are times where I am reflecting on, you know, holidays or vacations or things that happen in my personal life. And there are sort of applicable lessons to the, you know, to other people.

And that's sort of my sweet spot is like finding ways to just add value to people's lives, whether it's, you know, something funny that, you know, I think other people might be able to relate to, or a lesson that I learned from raising our two young daughters or, you know, something that happened in our business and that other people, again, might be able to benefit from the lessons that I learned. And so it was that, it's finding a way to add value, even if it was sort of a more lighthearted post.

And that's sort of my way of doing things even now is, you know, I don't want to share unless I feel like people will get something out of it, whether it's entertainment or an insight or just something that's, yeah, that's not just, you know, a picture of a great meal kind of thing.

[Josh Keegan] (14:22 - 14:30)

Perfect. And then, yeah, so other challenges along the way, so we've had patients who had kind of actually using social media to raise their profile, anything else that's really kind of stopped them?

[Rupal Patel] (14:30 - 14:47)

A huge one, and I think maybe, you know, this happens to a lot of people, is that niggle or that horrible voice in the back of your head that's always saying, or sometimes saying, depending on who you are, who do you think you are? And, you know, it was...

[Josh Keegan] (14:47 - 14:49)

The voice is saying what? Who do you think you are?

[Rupal Patel] (14:49 - 16:00)

Yeah. Who do you think you are to be famous or to write a book or to get paid to speak or whatever else it is? And there is sometimes a disconnect between knowing intellectually that, yes, of course, I have value to add.

I've got great life experience that, you know, I know will benefit other people. Again, all of the wonderful feedback I'd gotten from, you know, previous mentees or coaching clients or other people that I've done speaking engagements for, like that isn't, you know, that's... They're not lying.

They're not making it up. So it's knowing intellectually, of course, that those things are all true. And I have so much to share.

And, you know, of course, I should do so or if I want to. But then it's that, again, some of us are trained from a very young age to, like, you know, not shine too bright or not put yourself out there or all of these other sort of negative messages and baggage that we pick up. And it was that constant conversation between knowing that I am someone.

Yeah, I can be someone. And I, you know, if I choose to be, I will be. But then that feeling of like, oh, but, you know, you're not good enough or you're not important enough or you're not, you know, you don't have a big enough following or whatever it is.

And so it's managing that voice and basically telling it where to go, you know, and instead of letting it stop me.

[Josh Keegan] (16:01 - 16:29)

Perfect. Any other challenges? So the voice in the back of your head, we all get that.

Who are we? Why should I post about this? And who am I to talk about this when you always perceive yourself as being the person that's the last to know about it?

But yeah, it's amazing the things you are actually an expert on for your experiences, but you don't, you can't always, you can't always see that. And there is always that downing voice. What about any final challenge in terms of getting from where you were to where you are?

[Rupal Patel] (16:29 - 18:04)

Yeah, I think, well, you know, everything that happened in the past 18 months and then also, you know, with COVID and all that nonsense, I won't belabor that point because everyone's gone through it. But sort of more broadly from that is just constantly getting sucked back into the property side of things, which it's been hard because of course, it's never something that I was going to totally disengage from because, you know, I am still, we still do have our property business. But, you know, last year was a serious slap in the face.

And I had set out in January to do so many other things that were non-property related. But then of course, you know, sort of March came and just constantly getting sucked back into the day-to-day operations, into the tedium, into the fighting fires, into the renegotiating and all the stuff that we had to do to save our property business. That felt really hard because it was doubly hard, not just because of COVID and all of the other stuff going on, but because emotionally, I was starting to really resentful.

I was like, I don't want to be doing this anymore. And I've moved on, you know, and I'm ready to fly in another part of my life. And I, you know, and that was, that was really hard.

And managing the, you know, the aspirations with the reality and making sure that, you know, I can hold both of those things together and not let one infect the other kind of thing. So still keeping my eyes on the bigger picture, thinking bigger, thinking globally about what I wanted to do and build with my writing, with my speaking, with, you know, everything I was doing with Entrepreneura, while also acknowledging that, hey, look, actually, this is a once in a lifetime disaster that you sort of need to just suck it up and deal with. But it still sucked.

[Josh Keegan] (18:05 - 19:02)

There's always that, like, whenever you have those moments, it's how you deal with them. Like, number one, as I imagine, by having gone through that, the experience you now have, which you pass on to the other women and everybody you work with, once again, it's like, it's invaluable. And the second is, it's always that thing, isn't it?

Where it's always urgent versus important. It's important to you that if you become a paid speaker, it's important to you to write a book and get a book deal. But no one's holding your gun to your head saying, Rupal, your book should have been done yesterday.

The only person's you. So when things kick off in your business, which are urgent, which are like COVID, happens, it's always difficult, isn't it? And like COVID is an extreme example we've all got this day to day where we could be doing the busy, difficult tasks and everything's urgent.

But like, hats off to you for, like, kind of recognising the fact and still push on in the background of everything you've been doing. I'm sure it slowed it down, it didn't quite go as fast as you wanted. But actually continuing with that whilst the chaos is kicking off is, it takes a lot of discipline.

It's very hard.

[Rupal Patel] (19:03 - 20:30)

Yeah. And I will say, on top of that, I was also pregnant and then had a baby in October. So there was all kinds of things going on.

And, you know, it's that thing that you said right there is navigating the important and the urgent and still making time for the important. And that was the one thing that I made sure that I did, even in the thick of COVID, even in the early days of, you know, having a newborn and everything sort of being topsy turvy, even in all of these sort of crazy scenarios, I made sure that I always, always, always did something, even if it was just one thing, even if it was just one hour or 30 minutes, just something that was for myself and for my bigger picture goals, pitching to a magazine or pitching to a potential client for a speaking engagement, working on my book or doing some research, any little thing. It was just making sure that I did carve out that time because otherwise I would be a resentful nightmare.

And nobody wants that. I don't want that. My kids don't want that.

My husband doesn't want that. So, and this is true for everyone. I think we need to protect the things that are really important to us, even amidst the chaos and the disasters and the upheaval, because if we don't, it's, it will infect everything else.

And I will say those times when I didn't do something for my bigger picture goals, I was, I was a banshee. I was really horrible and I felt horrible. And then I passed it on to everyone else and I'm just not thinking properly anyway.

So protect that time. It's, it's not, it's not a nice to have. It is a must to have, must have.

[Josh Keegan] (20:30 - 20:44)

Perfect. So for anybody that's looking to achieve something similar to yourself, which is basically create a world-class profile being featured in magazines, book deals, speaking on stage, what top three top tips would you give them?

[Rupal Patel] (20:45 - 22:52)

So one is plant lots of seeds. And this is something that I did even way back when. So even when I was just starting out on property, you know, I, like I said, I had had inklings that I love to speak and I love to share and I love to help people and all that kind of stuff.

So even a couple of years into my property journey, I was just doing workshops for free. And I, you know, I leveraged a lot of the networks I was already part of. So inside of property, of course, but also outside.

So I, you know, did a lot of events for some of my alma mater. So my business school, my grad school and all of this kind of stuff. And initially it was just about putting myself out there because I loved doing it.

And yes, always in the back of my mind, there was like, oh, well, this potentially could turn into something, but I never really had an idea of what it could turn into. So plant lots of seeds. You don't know what's going to come to fruition.

And a perfect example I can give you is, so, you know, I was doing, like I said, for about the better part of seven or eight years, I've been very actively engaged in my business school. I went to London business school and doing lots of free workshops and events, both for the clubs or student clubs, or just things that I organized myself. And in February of last year, so 2020, again, I had done another event for the women in business club there.

And it was a free event. I didn't get paid to do it, but again, you know, it was part of my way of contributing to my school. And from that, I met someone who, you know, really resonated with my message, with what I share.

She came back to me at the end of last year and effectively was like, hey, I just started a new job at this company and I'd love for you to speak at our, you know, for one of our events. Let's have a chat. And that was one of, that to date has, and then I did end up doing that speaking event for her company.

And that was the highest paid event that I've done to date. So again, you never know where these things are going to go. And it's that, you know, you sort of have to be a little bit Zen, Buddhist, whatever you want to call it, detached from the immediate outcome.

But in, you know, seven years is a long time to wait, but I kept doing it because I loved it. And then eventually it did come good. So definitely start planting seeds and just see where they, see where, see which ones sprout.

The next one I would say, oh, sorry, we're going to ask something, Josh?

[Josh Keegan] (22:52 - 22:54)

I was just getting out of spot. I'm going tip top to number two.

[Rupal Patel] (22:55 - 25:20)

Yeah. Number two is, is to just put yourself out there. Like just pitch yourself, whether it is, you know, you want to do something like be a business mentor for Virgin startup, or if you want to do a speaking event, or again, even if it's free, just put yourself out there.

You never know who is going to say yes. Again, another perfect example, early last year when I was like, okay, well, my target is to be featured in up to, into at least three sort of international slash global magazines, not related to property. I pitched myself to Harper's Bazaar.

Zero background in, you know, doing pitches like that, but I worked at it. I, you know, sort of iterated, I experimented, et cetera, et cetera. And then I was featured in Harper's Bazaar in March.

So again, you never know who's going to say yes. And as with most things in life, it is a numbers game. You have to put out a lot of pitches.

You have to do a lot of outreach. You have to do a lot of things potentially for free sometimes or whatever it is, but then something, someone will say yes, right? So it's, again, you have to go through a lot of no's to get the yes, but just put yourself out there because otherwise the yeses will never come.

And then the third thing I would say is just think bigger. Most of us in our day-to-day are so focused on, again, the firefighting, the operational stuff, the tedium, the urgent stuff, et cetera, et cetera. But if you have a bigger aspiration of potentially writing a book or of, I don't know, being a global sort of globally ranked athlete or whatever else it is, like it is all infinitely possible.

If I can do it, if any one other human being on this planet can do it, then you can too. And sometimes we don't let ourselves think that or we don't let ourselves, you know, sort of engage with people who are what we think is a higher level than us. And I think, you know, at the end of the day, everybody is equal.

And the fact that we are all humans living on this planet and living, you know, sort of this experience that we've got. And so just, you know, think bigger and put yourself out there in environments where you can think bigger, or even if it's just mental environments. You know, if you come from an area or you're in a household where people are really sort of negative and small minded or whatever else, like find new friends to hang out with that will raise you higher or listen to podcasts or, you know, try to build a bubble around yourself to protect you from that, whatever you need to do.

But I think there's nothing stopping you from massive goals or from, you know, global impact. So if that's what you want, go for it.

[Josh Keegan] (25:21 - 25:44)

RuPaul, thank you very much for that. That's absolutely spot on. Really appreciate it.

It's great top tips. And honestly, like the people could take a lot from your journey. And I guess they are through all of your entrepreneurship, mentorship and everything that you've been doing.

If anyone wants to reach out or get in touch for you to hear about any of your programs or just speak to you in general, what's the best way? Well, the other thing to do is they need to, of course, keep an eye out for your upcoming book. But how would they do that?

[Rupal Patel] (25:45 - 25:56)

So the best place is just to go to my website. It's really easy. It's rupalypatel.com.

And then there should be a pop up that says subscribe for updates. So just subscribe to that. But yeah, rupalypatel.com.

[Josh Keegan] (25:57 - 25:58)

Perfect. Thank you so much, RuPaul.

[Rupal Patel] (25:59 - 26:00)

My pleasure, Josh. Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (26:07 - 26:31)

Thank you for listening to the official Property Entrepreneur podcast. Trust you found value and insight in the topics discussed. And as always, very much welcome your comments, feedback and any suggested guests or topics you would like us to consider.

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