



TEL EPISODE #016:

How To Succeed in 12 Months with Serena Star-Leonard

Show Notes: <http://www.theelpodcast.com/tel-016-succeed-12-months-serena-star-leonard/>

Welcome to The Entrepreneurs Library, the only book-centric podcast that reviews all the top-selling business books and shares author's perspective, firsthand. This is your resource to finding the next great book that will enable you to grow personally and professionally. Welcome your host, Wade Danielson.

WADE: Thank you for joining us on The EL. Today we have Serena Star-Leonard, author of *How to Succeed in 12 Months*. Welcome, Serena, and thank you for joining us on The Entrepreneurs Library.

SERENA: Thanks for having me.

WADE: Definitely. Will you take just a moment to introduce yourself and tell us just a little bit about you personally?

SERENA: Ooh, okay. I am a business coach by trade, and I'm also a blogger and a writer, and I've been traveling for 28 months so far with my husband. We just work on the road and work on our blogs and books as we go, and we film documentaries about people who make a difference in their communities all over the world.

WADE: Oh wow. Thank you for sharing that. Now let's jump right into your book, *How to Succeed in 12 Months*, which was made available on June 1st, and available, from what you and I were talking about, on Amazon July 8th, 2014.

SERENA: That's right.

WADE: Serena, we're going to move quickly, but here are some of the top questions our listeners would love to get answered. The first one is, what was the inspiration behind writing *How to Succeed in 12 Months*?

SERENA: Well, I actually wrote another book called *How to Retire in 12 Months*, which was all about how to make an income from blogging, which appealed to a certain kind of person. But a lot of people said to me, “What about everything else? What about the other big life goals that we have?” I work very closely with people on making their big dreams come true, and so I wanted to write a book that was a bit more accessible for everyone who was looking to make their dreams come true – not just I guess dreams about creating more wealth.

I created this book because – well, I was one year into a 4-year trip around the world, one year into my dream 6 months in South America or Latin America, and so really, I have I guess been living this life, and just in the last few years where I’ve been actually going for every one of my big goals rather than just putting them out in the future, “one day, someday.” So I guess the confidence that I have in that and what I’ve realized about how money works and how time works and things like that, I believe are things that I could share with other people and have them reach their own big goals too.

WADE: Excellent. You might’ve talked about this just a little bit, but what makes your book different from others regarding the same topic?

SERENA: I guess what makes this book different is with my business coach head, it’s very practical. I am interested in not just inspiring people to get started, but actually to show you how, step by step, you can do things that may seem impossible right now. So it’s very practical about how to find money. Say as an example you want to sail the world with your family for a year. Most people would say “Okay, that seems impossible right now, given either our responsibilities or our commitments or our financial situation.”

It looks very specifically at how can you make those things happen? How can you make it a reality? I think that practical nature, coupled with the motivational side, sets it apart from quite a few other books.

WADE: Okay, great. Now let’s move on to my favorite part of the actual interview, in which we’re going to allow you to really do a deep dive into your book. Again,



not that it has to be chapter by chapter, but this is a point to allow you to really connect with the listener on what your book is all about.

SERENA: Cool. Okay, what my book is really about. Well, the main theme that runs throughout the book is on taking action. It doesn't matter what your dream is or what it is that you really want to do with your life; you won't know if you're going to achieve that without taking action. And we usually surprise ourselves with the opportunities that open up as a result of taking action – even if they're really small things.

Usually the things that we dream of doing someday, one day, basically the gap between where we are right now and where we want to be with those dreams and goals is so big that we don't feel that we can get there, because there's not a clear path from where we are now to where we want to be. What we look at is just taking the first steps, because the first steps lead into the second steps, which lead into the third steps. What I find using this process, and with my clients using this process, is then it just rolls out in front of you. People are amazed at what they can achieve just by taking one step at a time.

So in the book, we really talk about that, as well as the concepts of success and failure. I really try and redefine the concept of success and encourage readers to really embrace failure, because it is part of the journey. There's no escaping it, especially if you have big goals and dreams.

We have in the book a Lifestyle Checklist. In this, we actually look at analyzing every part of your life, and then you get to see where you are right now so that you can create it as a benchmark and then review it after 6 months or 12 months and just see, "Okay, I might have been really great in relationships or really great with my financial situation or really great with my quality of life, but not in other areas." So it gives you a chance to lift the game in maybe places that you've either ignored or you've felt helpless or haven't had success with in the past.

Then we talk about making the impossible possible. For most of the goals and the dreams that I have, they do seem impossible to me at the time when I start to undertake them, and some of them succeed and some of them don't. But I do

really have a mindset that anything is possible, and as a result of that have found that things happen that completely blow me away. And if hadn't taken those actions in the beginning, thinking "I can't see how this is possible," they never would've eventuated.

Like, for example, traveling for 4 years. That's the plan right now, is to travel for 4 years, and that is not something I would've ever considered to be possible. I didn't consider traveling for 6 months to be possible, from all of my working career, and then when I left my workplace, all of my time as a small business owner. So now, to be able to be in the position that I'm in is just mind-blowing.

We look at the concept of lifestyle design and of getting started in making – could be your little dreams or your big dreams, and actually fulfilling all of those things on your bucket list and making your dreams a reality.

Then we talk about very specifics, so how to get more time. We live very, very busy lives. I'm sure you're all in the same position, and there's just never enough time. If you have a job and kids and responsibilities and hobbies, then it might seem a little bit crazy to take on something else that's really huge in your life. So we look at that, and we also look at finding money for projects, especially when, again, that seems impossible.

And then support. How to set up your life so that you have the right kinds of people around you to help you when you may be feeling down or not feeling confident in yourself. From there, the book pretty much goes into some really specific practical things, like what if things are not working for you right now, or what if you've got your dream halfway and then you get stopped all of a sudden? All of the little things that do come up along the way. So we look at troubleshooting all of those little things.

From there, some additional resources to help you on your way, and I share our first 12 month journey, because the whole premise of the book is that you can completely change your life in 12 months. So I share how we did that and how we went from being normal people and having a little apartment in Bondi in Australia to becoming traveling documentary filmmakers and living on the road and having

all these amazing adventures. The first 2 years are in Latin America. Yeah, just having this complete lifestyle of freedom that we didn't have before. So that's pretty much the book.

WADE: Excellent. This question's kind of off the cuff, but I think anyone who knows travelers, their first question is always what's your favorite place that you've been?

SERENA: Ooh. Cuba.

WADE: Really?

SERENA: Yeah. Cuba is the most amazing place I've ever been. But I couldn't live there, because there's no interest. (laughs) So the places that we would like to live in are Ecuador, Colombia, and Mexico.

WADE: Excellent. Okay, very good. What did you love about Cuba? Obviously not the internet, but what'd you love about Cuba?

SERENA: The people are amazing, the beaches are amazing, the culture is amazing. There is obviously a bit of sadness because of the political systems; it's very hard for people to get ahead. But things are changing. But the culture – it's probably the safest country I've ever been in, and I've never felt so in awe of how beautiful the culture is. Because it's completely noncommercial, it's – yeah, people live life for art and music and relationships, and there's passion. People are living on top of each other, so you don't have the separation and maybe isolation that you kind of do in really big houses with a lot of television and stuff.

WADE: Okay, great. Your book has a ton of information, and obviously you just went through it, and that's what makes 4 maybe a little bit difficult. If the reader could only take away one concept, principle, or action item out of your entire book, what would you personally want that to be?

SERENA: It would definitely be to get started on making your dreams a reality, because we have so many reasons why we shouldn't start today. We have so

many time reasons, money reasons. There's always a "shoulda coulda woulda" for when you'll do things. Like my dream to go to Latin America, I put off for 7 years, and I had put off many other dreams and goals as well. I just thought they were impossible and wrote them off as impossible right now.

But the reality was, I hadn't actually taken any actions to see if it was possible. With most things, it is more possible than you think. Things tend to fall into place once you start to create momentum around a dream or a goal. So yeah, really you have to get started. Don't wait till you retire or wait for anything – if there's something you really want to do in life, then start looking at how you can make it a reality.

WADE: Okay, great. I want to give you a chance to brag on yourself a little bit, but is there a favorite quote that you have from your book?

SERENA: Yes, but I can't say that it's my quote. (laughs) I saw it on one of those little memes on social media, and I just fell in love with it. It is in my book, but I can't say it's mine, and that is "If you're looking for a sign, this is it." Everyone's looking for the planets to align and the ducks to line up, or the right time before they get started, but that time is now.

WADE: To me, it seems like your book is a paradigm-shifting book, and that's why I like the last question that we have here today, and that's what other book would you recommend to the listeners based on the way that it's either created a paradigm shift or a change in your life?

SERENA: Ooh. Can I have two books?

WADE: Yeah, absolutely.

SERENA: Woohoo! Okay, the two books – the first one is 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Loads of people have read it. To be honest, it's so long ago that I read it, I couldn't even tell you the main principles of the book, but it had a profound impact on how I live my life.

The second one is *The Power of Now*, Eckhart Tolle, if that's how you say his name. Basically, I'm someone who has constantly got loads of things on the boil and really excited about life and far too overcommitted to really focus on anything very well, and then his philosophy and how he talks about – and with being focused in the moment and being present is something that when I bring that to my life, it gives me power.

So the combination of being willing to put yourself out there and chase dreams and be willing to fail sometimes in the hope that you'll succeed sometimes, combined with being present and making the most of every moment, I think is a powerful way to live life.

WADE: Okay, excellent. Serena, before we depart today, can you recommend the best way for our listeners to get more information on you and on *How to Succeed in 12 Months*?

SERENA: Yes. My personal blog and my website is in12months.com, and our travel blog that features throughout the book is fivepointfive.org. Those are the two places that you can find me, and I have lots of little goodies and giveaways and things as well, so hopefully you'll subscribe and join my community. But yeah, I really enjoy participating with readers, and we have some really cool conversations and Facebook groups and so on. So if anyone is interested in that kind of conversation, definitely get in touch.

WADE: Perfect. Serena, thank you so much for coming on. We really appreciate your time.

SERENA: Woohoo! Thank you very much.

WADE: Thanks again for listening in today. If you would like to get your hands on *How to Succeed in 12 Months* or any of the other resources mentioned by Serena, just look at the show notes at TheELPodcast.com.

Looking for your next book idea? Head over to TheELPodcast.com, where Wade shares his amazing resource, "The Top 10 Business Books Recommended by Over 500 Entrepreneurs," with you for free. That's TheELPodcast.com. Till the next time, keep it on the EL.



LINKS AND RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS EPISODE:

Buy [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) by Stephen Covey on Amazon

Buy [The Power of Now](#) by Eckhart Tolle on Amazon

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