

That's a Hard No

Transcript: S2 E3 "Life in the Slow Lane with Katie Leigh Jackson"

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Heather: Welcome to That's a Hard No, the podcast about saying no and setting boundaries.

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Sarah: So you can become the authentic and empowered you that this world needs.

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Heather: I'm Heather Drago.

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Sarah: And I'm Sarah Saunders.

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Heather: Before we start, a quick reminder.

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Sarah: While I am a licensed professional clinical counselor, this podcast is in no way a replacement for one-on-one therapy with the mental health professional. If you notice the content in this podcast, triggers some big feelings, visit our website hardnopodcast.com for mental health resources and other helpful links.

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Heather: Thanks, Sarah, ready to get started?

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Sarah: I am.

00:01:02

Sarah: Well, hello, hello, everybody, and welcome to Katie Leigh Jackson, a marketing strategist and artist from Denver, Colorado. Let's start off by telling us a little bit about yourself and your sort of business and life mantra.

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Katie Leigh: Thanks so much for having me, I'm excited to be here today.

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Sarah: Welcome Katie.

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Heather: Yeah, we're excited to have you.

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Katie Leigh: Thank you! It's really fun. Well, I am a marketing strategist and artist from Denver, Colorado.

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Heather: Stop right there. You can't talk to us. No, no, I'm kidding. I'm kidding, no, no, there's room for everybody. Just joking.

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Katie Leigh: Oh good, yeah and my, my way of business is a little bit different than other people, because I help people simplify their marketing so that they can create more work-life balance. I'm very passionate about...

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Sarah: Now you're speaking my language! Simplify.

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Heather: Right, Where can I sign up?

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, I am all about living life in the slow lane and finding time for rest and just all of the things that our society just doesn't seem to quite make a priority right now, and it is a huge passion of mine to help people find that time for it.

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Sarah: Absolutely.

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Heather: That's awesome!

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Sarah: Yeah.

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Heather: That's awesome, I recently read, I was doing my due diligence and basically stalking you and social media and stuff, and I read one of your Instagram post and I loved it so much. I've kind of pulled it off into my little collection of quotes and it says "you were not made to work but to find purpose. Our jobs allow us the chance to find purpose, to create and chase our dreams, but they were never meant to be our whole life." and I just think that is everything. In a nutshell, that's so great.

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Katie Leigh: I mean it's so. It's so interesting that we forget that so often, like we live in a society now that's just like Go-go-go. Work-work-work do all of the things, and it hasn't always been this way, like when we look back at how our grandparents did things and just how our ancestors even did things. There was so much more time for rest and slowing down and we've lost sight of that. And when we find sight of that it's amazing, what opens up for us.

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Sarah: I could not agree more, and one of the things recently I've been trying to tell myself, I remind myself, were human beings, not human doings and so really be where my feet are, is like a mantra. That again it takes a lot of intentional practice, but really trying to be cognizant and mindful of that. And so with this, Katie, I mean, we are loving this idea of slow living. You know this intentional approach to work-life balance and it is so extremely important. You know for us, for our listeners. So can you tell us what motivated you to get started with this mindset?

00:04:04

Katie Leigh: Yeah, I was in the same boat as everybody else, where I just was doing lots and lots of work, and I was a marketing director for a nine-studio yoga company in Denver, and you know that in itself is a lot. And then we hit and all of the studios closed down and we had to move everything online, and it was, in short terms, a nightmare.

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Heather: Yeah, I can imagine that's tough.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, it was just months of, like nonstop working, of figuring out how do you take nine studios, put them online, not lose all of your memberships. Just insane amount of hours of work that by the time we got to like, I think it was July of 2020, it wasn't working and the business wasn't profitable and they decided to close their doors. And at that point it was like we had this big, beautiful team meeting and we all came in and we were. I mean I was, I was at that point ready to quit soon, but like it's the middle of COVID so like. Can you even do that? Like? Where are you going to get a new job right?

00:05:11

Heather: Yeah.

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Katie Leigh: We come into the staff meeting and they announced that they were closing the doors and it was like half of you is like devastated and the other half of you is so relieved because you can't do this anymore, like you are not a functioning human being. And so once I was done there and we officially closed the doors and everything was settled, I then had all this space on my hands like well, I don't know what I'm going to do next, but I know I need a break and I just need some healing time because my body was all out of whack and my mental health was all over the place that I was like. I just need some rest to figure out what my next step is and whatever I do next it, it can't be like what I just came from.

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Sarah: And how did you honor that experience? Because I think, as you're sharing with me like again, we talk a lot about that. You know trauma response or that you know fight, flight, freeze or fawn, and I'm hearing you say like I needed to heal from this rather than just you know, possibly persevere or you know, fixate or really what's this next move? How did you get to a place that you were able to honor, the need to heal and release from the traumatic event that just occurred?

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Katie Leigh: I think a lot of ways for me there was no other option, like I was so exhausted that like staying awake during the day was hard and my whole body just was like exhausted. I had the worst adult acne and like never really had acne, and it was just like every part of my body. It was backfiring that I was like all right. Well, there is really no other option, like I don't even have the energy to start applying for jobs or doing anything and and luckily like at the time I could get on unemployment and I was like. This is a safe guard for our family. So I can do this for a little while and figure out what that next step was, and so it was the summer my sister was in town with her daughter for fourth of July, and so I spent a lot of time with family and spent time sleeping and not doing anything. For me. It's like a type-a personality and I'm always doing things and I always have ideas and plans.

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Sarah: Heather and I can relate to that!

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Heather: I'm waving my hand. Like, yes! Yes!

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, exactly. There was definitely difficulties of a like, Okay, now we need something to do. Like not having things to do is driving me nuts and you know my husband's still going to work everyday and he works in our house. So like feel guilty that I'm not working, but it was the support of him and it was having the space of just like let's, let's get back to a place where you can start dreaming again, because when I realized it was really at its worst was a few months later my husband was talking to some friends and I was eavesdropping because I heard my name and he was saying I knew it was really bad for her when she wasn't obsessing about anything, because I get into these modes of like, learn about a new topic and now I go get every book from the library and I'm on 20 different blogs and I'm like learning everything I can learn about this new topic that I'm obsessed with and he was like she didn't do that for months, like she like woke up and went to work, got off, watch some TV, went to bed. Yeah, like, that was her life.

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Heather: There was no more, no more room for any other input. You were just overloaded. Yeah.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, I was just running through getting getting through the days as much as I could and until I could go back to sleep, because realistically that was better.

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Heather: So let me ask: you talked a little bit about your sort of physical burnout symptoms and the fatigue and everything. I think a lot of people can relate to that and you talked about how you really had no choice and you, like you, had to take a break and risk. But knowing that intellectually and accepting that in your soul, it can be two different things. And you can, you know, Sarah talks about her shitty committee, of the voices in her head that beat her up and criticize her. like? Do you have a shitty committee and were they yelling at you when you're trying to rest and take care of yourself and say no, no, you really shouldn't be doing this and you're a loser. You know, like, were you hearing those kind of voices in your head?

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Katie Leigh: Oh constantly, always to this day, I still hear that shitty committee like I don't know that they ever go away. They might get a little quieter or you might get a different committee that's not shitty, that can be louder than them.

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Sarah: That's my positive posse.

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Katie Leigh: I love it, love the alliteration. Yeah, exactly, I think for me it was if I was just sitting at home doing nothing. That's when it was harder. But I had family in town so I could at least go and like I was like. Well, this is good because I'm doing something. I'm being with

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family who I don't usually get to see. So that was helpful. And then when she left town and like now, I'm kind of figuring out what I'm going to do next. Any time I did have in the day where I started, I, like you, have to go do something. I might spend a little bit of time like sitting down like all right. What are my next steps like? What are my next options? And for me it ended up that just through word-of-mouth and friends like had a couple of different brands reach out to me asking if they could hire me to do their marketing, and that just kind of continued to tumble and build up into the business that I started running after all of that. But as I was building that, there was always a conscious decision of I have to be really intentional with this business because I don't want to go back to where I was.

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Sarah: Yeah, and I mean, I think what you're sharing resonates with so many people and you know to Heather's point, it's like, cognitively, we're able to tell ourselves you know those those should's or you know this is what feels an alignment. But then to actually execute that and honor that, I think that's where a lot of that disconnect is. You know, in addition to your wonderful support system, that it sounds like you have what were other steps that you started to take, to really reevaluate those priorities and those values, to get you to a place where the true healing could happen. And, like you had said, I didn't want to repeat those patterns. I knew that I wanted something different. Can you share a little bit about that?

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, I think it came in a couple of different ways, so one way was I was really working on my mental health by getting back into a yoga practice after after that company, like dissolving, I had a really hard time going back to yoga. I just didn't feel like a good thing to me until I found an amazing studio that I fell in love with and I ended up doing there yoga teacher-training just for my own practice, not to actually become a teacher.

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Sarah: I call it my me-search. When you go to do research and go to try new things, it's it's me-search that you were doing.

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Katie Leigh: Exactly, and so so even just doing that, like getting back into my body, getting into a healthy routine, all of that was a really great stepping stone into, like what I'm going to build next, and and I look at that as my foundation, so I'm taking care of the foundational things I need as a human being in order to survive, which is good sleep, healthy foods and movement in your body. And once I had that foundation, then I could start getting into more of the intellectual things and dealing with some of my shitty committee and other things that we're just going on in my head. And you know, later on I ended up finding an amazing therapist, and so I'm always a big proponent of therapy. I also have a mother who's a therapist, so I'm just surrounded by it. But then I started figuring out the things within my life that caused me the most stress. Even now, as a business owner with my own business, I figured out that social media was a really hard thing for me that I talked to people about all the time. I see it as this really valuable marketing tool and I've also seen it used in really awful ways towards people. For me, it just ends up being this huge comparison thing, and so I decided I'm going to take a break from it and see what happens, like can still run a business

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without using it? What other ways of marketing can I come up with to help other brands? And then what does this do for my mental health in the long run by not being on it? And so I took from August of last year until just recently. I think February first was when I started posting again, so it was about five months off of all social media and it was so magical.

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Heather: It's amazing. Yeah, when you stop doom scrolling, it's really nice to have time to do other things.

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Katie Leigh: Oh exactly.

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Heather: and mental space, yeah.

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Sarah: I also wanted to quickly just Katie, highlight the fact that you were sharing. You went back to the basics, and so again. It's common-sense but not common practice. This idea of like getting the sleep that we need, moving our body, eating those foods that you know make us feel our best, so again, those basic needs. You were already on that journey. Then you were able to have some clarity, to then recognize, okay another trigger for me is social media. So do you feel, had you not been meeting those basic needs, you would be able to kind of execute this social media detox the way that you did?

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Katie Leigh: I mean, I guess there's a chance, but I always think that your base health is everything. like if, if you don't get it, if I don't get my eight hours of sleep, I know I'm not going to be thinking correctly tomorrow, like I'm right, I'm going to be moody. I'm probably going to, you know, break down easy like there's just all these things. If I don't eat a good meal, like if I eat all sugar like, I'm not going to be thinking in the right space later in the afternoon. So all of those things have such a huge effect on our mental health that we can't be making these big decisions or thinking about how to do things differently if we were not even at a good baseline.

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Heather: And even beyond mental health, our cognitive health. Just being able to focus and be sharp and think clearly? And you and I are kind of in the same marketing strategy space where every day you're learning, learning, learning and putting puzzle pieces together. And if you can't think clearly, you can't do your job. I mean it's just you can't it's just functional. So yeah, so what are some of the steps you took to do this social media detox, besides getting just turning it off for a while?

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Katie Leigh: So for me in, with a really clear intention on my social media had announced, like a week or two before I was getting off, that this was going to happen. I set up some posts and stuff so that people could come to my social media page still, and it was more like a landing page that explained who I was and what I did and then, when I decided to come back to it. It was really big decision for me because there was a lot of beauty in not having it

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at all. But I also found that there were some people I couldn't connect with because they would say, oh, I only connect via direct message on Instagram. You're like, oh, okay, I don't do that. Just other artists that I like to follow, or other brands that I discover you. Just it's such a great, it can be such a great inspiration pool, so it like, all right, well, I'm going to come back to Instagram, but it has to look different than before so that I'm not losing all my time to it and I'm not comparing myself and feeling really icky when I get off of it. So for me that looks like I currently only post one time a week. I post on Monday, which is the theme of my newsletters. The Monday post-it always comes out on Monday. And pretty much only check sages on Mondays as well. So I don't have any apps on my phone, so I've I've taken all of them off my phone. I don't have any notifications on my phone except for text messages and phone calls. So email all that stuff. It's off my phone so that I can not get disturbed when I'm working. I'm not always checking notifications more and more, I'm trying to get rid of my phone and go back to the old days.

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Heather: Pony Express.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah exactly, If you could still sell telegrams, I would. So yeah for me, it's been coming up with different ideas and trying it out and seeing if it works and and it looks different for everyone. I mean I work with some clients that they get all of their clients through Instagram. They're obviously not going to take a break from Instagram. That doesn't make sense, but maybe it's scheduling posts through an app like later, so that they don't have to be on the app all the time, and then it's scheduling in time that you're going to be on the app that day. And it's really intentional time. It's not just scrolling, it's responding to comments and messages, it's looking for specific people to engage with who could become future clients. All of that kind of stuff. It just becomes as active, everything being really intentional and not just wasting time on it anymore.

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Heather: Absolutely, I totally wholeheartedly agree with that. I had to set up similar boundaries. I put it in our terms and conditions and people have to read-through them before they sign a contract with us about when you can contact us, how you can contact us and what kind of turnaround time to you expect. You know, if I didn't have my office here in my house, you know I would leave the workplace and come back and have a set, you know, block of time and I lost sight of that for a while and I was working around the clock, and so since then I've really lost any guilt about that. The other thing I've done is: I love your idea of taking it off your phone. I'm going to have to do that. That's really good.

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Katie Leigh: Great!

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Heather: And the other thing I do is I don't check my email first thing in the morning. I sit-down I have pen and paper, a little bullet journal, I have all my systems and project management tools and I look at every the giant morass of stuff I have to do and I whittle it

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down to a few things each day that I need to focus on that day and I set my agenda for the day before I check-in to see what someone else wants from me.

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Katie Leigh: That's a great one.

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Heather: So sometimes I don't check my email till you know lunchtime or something like I, just I have my own stuff I need to do. I will get to you. So great discussions so far, we're going to take a break and we'll be right back!

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Sarah: So the intentionality piece, Heather, that you were touching on, is so important. So, as I am about to bring my fourth boy into this world, which I still like every time, I say that, yeah, and with that being said, like over stimulation is a word that is like constantly being said and being felt in my current life, and so with the overstimulation that happens externally in our environment. Internally, when we do go to take time to get on to social media, I have noticed for myself setting those boundaries of being intentional about what it is that I'm going to search for. That wasn't always the case, because I do believe that we need a little bit of of an escape. Sometimes we need some of that mindlessness, but also there are great accounts that really do you know, provide you with, you know that support or it feels like a warm hug, and so you know Heather you've taught me a lot in regards to, I am a huge advocate of a morning routine, and you know Heather you've mentioned before, you know, doing your crossword puzzles or reading your New York times or whatever it is before you hop on to the actual social media, and I've recognized, habitually, there's times where it's like I just pick my phone up and before I know it I'm mindlessly scrolling. So really to be able to take that time, to be intentional about, if I do pick my phone up, is there someone that I want to touch base with? There's this really great account that I follow, that really strays away from the toxic positivity but really leans into that like self compassion and provides like a daily quote that I just again, it feels like a warm hug, and so I think, having that intentionality of when I am going on to these sites. What what am I searching for? And I also noticed that checking in with myself when I'm scrolling newsfeed. Maybe there was an account that did serve me during a certain time, but then I'm noticing it is starting to trigger some big feelings. You do you like, Keep, that person, you know no negativity towards them, but that may be a time for me to just say you know what. Thank you for serving during that time during that season, but I am going to take time-out and I will unfollow, and so just kind of regularly. It doesn't even have to be like you know, everyday, unfollow five people. It's more of like when you're scrolling, being able to just you know, honor how your body feels and be able to not follow people that you know aren't aren't serving you.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, I mean, one of the things I do is I only follow 50 people. Like I have a rule about that, so if I'm going to follow somebody new and I'm at 50, I have to go unfollow somebody else.

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Sarah: Ok.

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Heather: That's my same philosophy about shoes: if I buy a pair of shoes I have to throw one away.

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Katie Leigh: Exactly!

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Heather: There's only so much room, there's only so much room in my brain, right? I love that, I love it, that's great and that way you're really curating the stuff you really intentionally want to see. That's great.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah and you can scroll as long as you want, but the scroll is very short, like you get through all of the content within ten minutes right. There is just not enough new content. So you're like, ok, I'm at the bottom of my scroll. Cool. I don't need to do this any more.

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Heather: Done!

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Katie Leigh: and you move on. And I've found that sometimes not following people in my same industry ends up being better for me, like when it comes to work-related stuff. Right, because that's where the comparison game can be really bad and you can just get stuck and be like, oh, I'm not good enough and not want to do whatever you do, and so that sometimes is also helpful.

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Heather: There's a lot of toxicity in our field too. There's a lot of, you know, marketing bros with a whole lot of garbage that gets put out there. So I think in any industry there is that and you need to filter that out.

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Sarah: Decision fatigue is a real thing and I've noticed that there are different accounts, that the foundation of it is pretty similar, but it can be very contradicting based on what that person shares and so kind of limiting how many people you're following based on that one niche, if that makes sense, because, yeah, it can be that internal dialogue. We're already there's enough decisions out there. So trying to differentiate what's true factual information from, you know, kind of that fluff. So.

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Heather: So I love it. So so far here are some of the techniques you've taught us. You've taught us take the social media apps off your phone. So I'm guessing you're only posting social media on your desktop computer right? So you have to be very, very intentional about when you're going to sit-down and do that..

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Sarah: and the time blocking.

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Heather: Your email is off your phone, which I love that idea. You're limiting the number of people you follow.

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Katie Leigh: I think those are the big ones.

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Heather: Those are the big ones, so that's about you and your personal social media use. How do you advise, like people like Sarah and I, who are like busy entrepreneurs and, you know, feel like they have to kind of be aware of everything that's going on and their industry and...

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Katie Leigh: The things I do is we start off by figuring out what's working for you, so like, what are all the marketing channels that you're using and what are you on and what's actually working, because most people feel like they need to be on every single channel. So you need to be on Tiktok and Instagram and Pinterest and all these things, and it takes so much time and odds are at least half of them are doing absolutely nothing for you. So now you're putting all of this energy and creative power and time and all this stuff into something that has no return on investment right.

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Heather: And that goes into understanding your customer base.

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Katie Leigh: Exactly.

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Heather: And who's using what platforms? And, yeah, we're speaking the same language.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, you get it! So for me it's anything that's not working, anything that's not getting an. I would at least put it on hold for now, just like put a pause on it and put all of your intention and your focus on the things that are working and are bringing in new customers or revenue. And then from there we can kind of start figuring out like what are the things you like doing on social media so like. I don't mind just posting. I like having pictures up there. I'm an artist, so I like to share some of my work up there. I like having conversations, I like to write. All of that's fun. I hate doing reels. I hate doing all of the like extra stuff that you do on Instagram. That was always my nightmare, it was always on my to do list and I just dreaded it. So I'm like great. I'm not going to do it and you know there's something about people talking about. Well, that's what the algorithm wants and I'm like okay, great. I know a ton of accounts that don't do those things and their accounts are still doing great. So I'm just not going to do those things and let's see what happens.

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Heather: Yeah!

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, so it's it's one of those things like what's working? What do you enjoy

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doing? What do you not like doing? And then, if there's something that's working really well that you hate to do, then we start talking about: is there the ability to outsource or can we like limit the amount of those types of posts that you're doing so that there's a little bit more balance for you?

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Sarah: Well, and I love the way that you spoke that because it's preserving your energy for you to really be able to provide the content in the way that feels best for you instead of it being forced, because I think that when you are focusing on those algorithms or when you are focusing on, you know, content heavy type things, it doesn't feel as heartfelt because it feels like, okay, this is one more thing that have to do, but by you saying no, I'm not going to be a prisoner of those you know expectations. It leaves room for you to be able to enjoy the things that you're sharing and then, just like other, pointed out that beautiful post that you had. So many more people can resonated because it's not this generic thing that you're just, you know, putting out to have content.

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Heather: So the thing we keep telling people over and over is, if you say no to the things that aren't serving you, you make room for the things that better align with your hopes, your dreams, your goals, your values and help you live your best life. So that's what you've done. I mean you

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Katie Leigh: Yeah.

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Heather: You are the walking talking, embodiment of okay. We're done now, we've accomplished it. No, I'm kidding.

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Katie Leigh: I wish it was that easy.

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Heather: I know right? It never ends, it never ends, but I mean that's just that's amazing. I don't know if you know this, but I had cancer during the pandemic. I was diagnosed at the very beginning of the pandemic and went through treatment and everything had to shut down. My business kind of slowed way down. Right at the same time, my body had to slow down, so it actually kind of worked for me. And then, as I got better and the economy ramped back up, I thought I was like I've licked this. I've got it, I know how, the balance now and I know how to take care of myself. And then, as more opportunities came my way, I found it was really really hard to enforce those boundaries and stick with those boundaries and that mindfulness. So have you had challenges? Kind of you know, since that really slow period, that intentional, slow living period like? How do you, how do you stay on track, how do you maintain those boundaries and not give in to kind of that instinct to just go, go go.

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Katie Leigh: Yeah, I would love to say that I just do it perfectly and I don't ever have those issues. But that is not true. It's always just always UPS and downs, like there's just times

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where you know you're like. Handle this. I can do all of the things and then you had a week when one, like god, I'm exhausted this week. Why am I so tired? And you know, whatever cycle you're in, that just happens. And so for me it's a lot of tuning in, it's noticing. I'm like, oh, I'm really tired today. I've been tired the last few days. I need to pull back. I need to slow down a little bit. It's being really conscious of how many new clients am I taking on. And you know, scheduling out time of this is when I'm going to have time to work on creating stuff or time to work on my business. And then this is time dedicated to client work. And for me that that looked like, you know, figuring out all my finances and how much money do I need to be bringing in and what is my, my minimal viable product? What is the least I can bring in? And as long as I'm staying above that, we're good to go and I think that can sometimes be really helpful of like it's not about making a million dollars. It's what do you need to survive? What is it that your family needs and make that the goal and anything on top of that's great. But as long as you're hitting that bottom goal, then you can start to say no to more things and make time for yourself and prioritize the things that are really important. Because when it comes down to the end, when you're at the end of your life looking back, no one says I wish I worked more. It's just not that's right, anything anyone ever says.

00:31:00

Sarah: That example that you brought up is oftentimes what I share. This check engine light goes off. So when we're starting to find ourselves questioning, maybe that why does come up leaning in with curiosity, recognizing check engine light has gone off? What's underneath the hood? What do I need more of? What do I need less of? And really, you know, honoring that. But I think it takes that self-awareness to be able to recognize, because for so often there have been patterns in our life that have served us. But to just keep going, you know, just keep, you know, pull up your bootstraps, just keep trucking when really we have to recognize the slowing down, and I think that that can be extremely hard for us to to honor.

00:31:52

Heather: Yeah, and I think, the slowing down and lowering the volume on all the noise from social media. That's that's when you have the space to take that self-assessment if we're always taking and taking in, there's no room for our own thoughts and feelings.

00:32:06

Sarah: And I often encouraged to use, like the three R's, but it's a way to reflect. Just bring your curiosity to it, reflect, release, honor it, heal from it and then the repair or the refocus. What do I need? Moving forward? So that's a good way. You know, listeners, if you are noticing that you're resonating with what we're saying, that check engine lights going off really reflect on what's been going on. Allow yourself to release it without blame. Shame, you know, criticism. And then you know what do we need to repair or to reconnect or to refocus?

00:32:50

Katie Leigh: I have a sacred ritual every week of taking a bath. It's like I have to get at least one bath in and I have all my absences and essential oils and all the fun things to make it, whatever I want it to be that day. But it's like an hour of dedicated time, that, like I don't have my cellphone on in the tub, like either have a book or I'm just sitting there staring off

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into space and it's a really great time to just kind of be able to check-in and say: all right, how are you feeling like? How are you emotionally? Oh, you snapped at your husband today? What was that all about? It's because you've got too much on your plate. Okay, how can we take a couple of things off of your plate this week? And just noticing that, like I noticed when I start to snap more at my husband, I'm like ok, something's happening here because he didn't deserve that. So what's going on that? I can take care of that when my stomach's always in knots or when I'm feeling really tired? Any of those things are signs to me that something's wrong. We need to go figure out what this is and sometimes just doesn't feel like you have time to go by yourself and reflect. And that's why I have this dedicated self-care night, which is at least an hour to myself in the bathtub, and so for somebody else it might be going for a walk or part of your morning routine, getting up before everybody else and just sitting and having coffee or tea, whatever it might be of just having some at least an hour to yourself once a week that you can really spend the time to reflect.

00:34:20

Heather: I love that, it's like a date with yourself.

00:34:22

Katie Leigh: Exactly.

00:34:24

Heather: So tell us, you know you've talked about. How you've gotten back into your art and tell us about how this slowing down has improved your quality of life over all, or how you've seen it improve the lives of some of your clients, or give us some hope for the people who are struggling with this.

00:34:41

Katie Leigh: Great I love giving hope.

00:34:43

Heather: Yes.

00:34:46

Katie Leigh: Alright, You know it's it's still one of those things that it's a constant thing that I'm always doing, trying to be better at slowing down and remembering to slow down. So it's a lifelong practice. But for me I've gotten back to my art, which is something that I hadn't been to in a very long time, and that's been probably the best gift. That slowing down has given me is just to feel more like who really have always been meant to be that I'm supposed to be, and it's given me this space to really come back and analyze it like. All right, what masks have I put on for the world and what things have been doing? Because I've been told that I should be doing these things. And and who am I really and what do I really want to be able to do? And so by slowing down, I've really taken the time mean, along with therapy and support from friends and family, and what not have been able to have that space to figure out like okay, well, who do I want to be? What do I want to do? How do I want to help the world. And so slowing down has allowed me to find clients that I love working with, that I get to choose the clients that are the right fit for me and not just choosing any client that

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will take me. It's allowed me the space to create and to create another stream of revenue, which has been really fun, and then it's also given me the space to take care of myself, to then be better of taking care of my family and my community and for the clients that I've worked with I've seen that, by really getting intentional and simplifying marketing, it's allowed them to open up space in their own lives so that they aren't constantly working or they don't feel the stress and the pressure to have to be doing all of it that there is this space to be able to say no and to still have a profitable business and to still be serving your customers and doing amazing things, but without sacrificing your own health and sanity.

00:36:38

Sarah: And I think that was, you know, a great point to leave on this idea of when we have a tendency to fall into some of those meeting others expectations. What pieces of us are we losing and so really being able to identify what is it that I need? That feels in alignment, what boundaries need to be set so that I am able to distribute my energy in the best way possible to feel fulfilled. Like others, I feel like we could just talk to you for hours and hours, but I also want to share you with. You know our listeners. Where can people find you?

00:37:20

Katie Leigh: Yeah, so the best place to find me is on my website. It's TheKatieLeigh.com, and there I have a free guide to work-life balance. If you want to grab that wonderful that I'll sign you up for my newsletter and respond to all emails from my newsletter. So you can always hit reply to those and feel get a response from me. I am on Instagram now, very small, only post once a week, but you can follow me on there at [SincerelyKatieLeigh](https://www.instagram.com/SincerelyKatieLeigh).

00:37:54

Heather: Wonderful, we'll put those links on our show notes on our website as well. Thank you. This has been a great conversation. It's been really great kind of getting some new ideas, some new, tangible ideas that our listeners can benefit from. I know I'm going to try, so really, thank you for sharing your story in your knowledge.

00:38:12

Katie Leigh: Thank you so much. I was so excited to be here. I hope it helps the listeners.

00:38:18

Sarah: Well, it was a pleasure talking with you.

00:38:21

Katie Leigh: Thank you so much.

00:38:36

Sarah: OK Heather, you know that I've been asking followers on social media to share some of their questions for the podcast. We've gotten some really great questions and I wanted to take a few minutes today to answer one of those.

00:38:50

Heather: Great! So here is our question from one of our listeners: how do you navigate anxiety or overwhelm while feeling isolated parenting in a pandemic? Now I kind of know that, like some of us might consider, like we're near the tail end of this, but there are still a

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lot of parents with young children under five who can't get a vaccine, who are really still kind of stuck in this situation. So what would you say to this listener?

00:39:21

Sarah: The first thing that I would want to say is that you are not alone, although it can feel very isolating and how you feel as valid. Collectively, this is a theme that I've gotten a lot in my office, as well as in the space that I met on social media, people sharing this, and it can be so conflicting because as parents, we are touched out, we are over stimulated, we are constantly with people, our kids.

00:39:59

Heather: These little people with sticky fingers and need her constant attention. Oh, I remember it was hard and I wasn't in a pandemic and it was still hard.

00:40:08

Sarah: Right, yeah, and so some of these outlets that we used to have served not only our children, by being a great release for them, for, you know, to get their energy out. A lot of those places are closed or there's a lot of restrictions, but also that change of scenery was something, as parents that we really needed, and so I would really encourage, and I know, especially with the winter months, it can be really tough, but really being able to get outside in some capacity. So whether it is just taking a little bit of time, opening up your window, opening up your front door, sitting outside, breathing in that fresh air, looking around, really allowing yourself to, you know, change that scenery, strap the kids in the car if you need to go for a car ride, but making sure that we are taking time to physically get out of the house, I think it's really important.

00:41:17

Heather: I know when we were talking with Katie we talked about connection and social media and I know there's a lot of research and New data about internet usage through the pandemic, and one of the things I've learned is that there's a huge adoption rate of people joining Facebook and other platforms for the first time because they were seeking connection or they couldn't go physically be with family members, and so they connected virtually over social media platforms. So I don't know if there are mom groups where you can connect with people, if you can be deliberate and intentional with your social media usage so that you can connect with other parents for support, I feel like any time you have someone you can just talk to who's in the same boat. I mean, I remember when my kids were little and I was with them all day and my husband would come home and I would just be like: nobody touch me. Nobody talked to me. I need ten minutes alone. You know Oprah would come on at four o'clock and I would just start crying because I hadn't had a shower yet and I just wanted a shower. It's hard to be a parent of small children, especially and as you know who I'm talking to. But yeah, I would just say you know if there's some way to find some connection with another adult, even if it's you know someone you don't know that well or or maybe it's someone who isn't a parent right then, but just someone you can have. I remember the thing I missed the most when my kids were little was being able to use the intellectual part of my brain instead of just being physical labor, and that's why I ended up going to the studio and painting at night, because I just needed that creative, intellectual

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outlet. So it can be a small thing, it can be just finding someone, to just message with. I'm going to share a couple of links that I've been articles I've read lately, but one of them was just how to reach out and send a support message to someone who might need it different ways. You can text, you know, even if it's just an SOS. I need someone to talk to you know.

00:43:59

Sarah: Yeah, well, you highlighted a few things that I wanted to just kind of expand on. You know, when it comes to social media, absolutely, I think it's important. There's there are a lot of groups out there. There are, you know, people that you can connect with again, ensuring that we are. We're being mindful of whether we're feeling supported verses comparing our life to other people. So I think you know the social media. There's groups that you can join. The other thing is really identifying, and I use the language of villagers, who are your villagers, who are your support people and actually writing that out, almost creating. You know a visual of that, because I think our brain can play tricks on us and we have to remind ourselves that thoughts are not facts. And although, yes, this feeling of feeling very alone, feeling isolated, being able to say: I'm going to go to my, my village paper and I'm going to look to see who who I do have in my life and then really use those as lifelines to reach out, maybe even some of that snail mail you know intentionally, you know writing a card, having your kids do a little activity. I also think identifying, and I've said this a lot in previous episodes, but identifying your love language. I think it's really important to know how you feel loved. Are you feeling recharged in that way? Because if you are someone that does really rive on quality time and you're not getting that, it makes sense why this feeling can be also recognizing. If you are someone that is more susceptible to anxiety or depression, it's important to reach out to someone for support, because these feelings, especially during this very traumatic time that we've had during the pandemic, it's going to intensify those things. And so, being very aware of you, know how you're feeling what you need and making sure that you are reaching out, and I know the things I'm sharing. You know maybe common-sense it's just not common practice and when we're in those moments I mean I don't know about you, Heather, but especially for me being in this season with little ones, it can really feel like that's all I see and so to be able to open up that perspective and just get back to the basics.

00:46:48

Heather: Yeah, I think it's easy, it's I've talked about this before, where it's like the frogs in the boiling water right. The temperature rises on that water and you don't even realize depression is sinking in or whatever's happening to you is happening to you. It can be easy to lose sight of the village you do have. So I love the idea of you writing out the names of people you can reach out to, and I was almost thinking, as you said, that like, like the old phone tree lists, you know like who do I call in certain situations? I have a couple of friends who are women business owners and we kind of have a pax with each other. Like if I need someone to talk me off a ledge, I can call you right, yes, and I can call you right, yes. So there are times we'll just send a little text and be like. I need to talk to somebody and you know maybe there's just even if it's just one person to know, you have a connection somewhere, someone you can vent to. I think that's important. I think everybody needs that.

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00:47:42

Sarah: Absolutely absolutely, and you know listeners, these, these are great questions. There's always a lot of layers. There's no specific. You know one size fits all, but these are just some simple suggestions you know to be mindful of, and and again, part of this is instinctual. You are the expert of you, you know you better than anyone and so really identifying that check engine lights going off, I'm feeling isolated, I'm feeling alone and unpacking that without blame, shame, judgment or criticism, really acknowledging what buckets need filled in order for me to start to feel to feel better.

00:48:30

Heather: Right, we love these questions, we want more of them. So please, messages on social or visit our website and fill out the little email form, and we would love to feature your question on a future episode. So please get in touch with us. So Sarah I had something happened this week. I wanted to share with everybody my little aha moment about no.

00:48:59

Sarah: Yes, share away!

00:49:00

Heather: We share the gos. What's the gos? So, we were talking earlier about kind of like self-assessment and asking yourself questions, and I think I mentioned that conversation, or at least I thought it in my head that you know when we meet with clients and we take on, you know, a new project or we're trying to help figure out a strategy. We, we have these discovery questions, sort of a standard set of questions we ask and they're kind of guideline and varies a little. But generally there's a set of questions, and so this challenge I've set for myself of learning to say no more strategically, more consistently in order to make room for things. I've sort of developed my little list of questions for that and I actually have it printed out. It's on my bulletin board and it's just sort of there to remind me to ask myself things when I hit a moment where I'm just not sure if I should say yes or no.

00:49:51

Sarah: So just to clarify, so what I'm hearing you say is that you've developed a list of questions to ensure that a client that you're taking on is an alignment with the work that you're able to provide to them.

00:50:06

Heather: Well, it's actually more general than that. I mean it's for it's work-related but it's also personal life related to it. They're just general questions, so so like. I'll share some of them with you. So the first there's like two blocks, so the first one says: am I saying yes, and then I stuck to five things. You inspired me. I did five things. So before I've thought it through? Am I saying yes even though I resent it? Am I saying yes despite my own needs and wants? Am I saying yes, even though it doesn't feel right? Am I saying yes because I think I have to? And then the next block starts with. Should I say no? Should I say no to take care of myself? Should I say no to keep my other commitments? Should I say no to focus on my goals and aspirations? Should I say no to make room for joy? So I feel like you know, okay. This is my little guiding star and this is kind of helping me make some of those more awkward, difficult decisions. And something happened this last couple of weeks that was

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kind of traumatic and kind of shocking. I had such a work situation where a client was very unhappy with me, and this doesn't happen much.

00:51:27

Sarah: That had to be so hard.

00:51:29

Heather: In fact, it's probably the first time it's ever happened, so it was tough. Well, maybe the second time, but you know it's pretty good track record over the number of years I've been doing this.

00:51:39

Sarah: Absolutely, but that doesn't minimize your experience of how intense that probably feels.

00:51:43

Sarah: Right and being the people pleaser, you know I don't want to get negative feedback or people yelling at me, and this, you know, we had a really tough conversation, went on a prolonged amount of time. I felt really really bad, I started to freeze, started to fawn and then I kind of stepped back for a second in the midst of it and realized I need to add another question to this list. And the question is: should I say no, if someone else can do it better, and part of that is: am I saying yes because of my ego? Am I saying yes because I think I'm so great. Of course I can do it. Maybe I've never done this specific thing before, but you know, and I didn't do anything, in my opinion, I did quality work and I'm actually proud of what I did. But for this particular person it really wasn't the right fit, it wasn't really. You know, there was some communication issue, and so it really made me evaluate every time I say yes to something. I need to make sure I'm not doing it out of ego and I need to make sure I'm the right person to do it. And if I'm not, if it's not squarely in my wheelhouse or it's something I'm confident I can follow through on, then I need to say no or maybe help direct them in another direction. So I guess I just wanted to share that because you know people may have their own lists and we'll share this list on social media so people can see what I've come up with. But you everyone may have their own list, but I guess I just wanted to share it because the struggle continues. You know here I've launched this broadcast and we talk about this like we're experts or something and it is an ongoing skillset. I'm trying to build. It's the reps. You talk about, the, you know, building the muscles. It's hard and so I don't know. I just wanted to share the the inventory, the assessment, whatever, the list of questions.

00:53:35

Sarah: Thank you for sharing that, and I'm sorry that you went through that, although it also it was such a teachable moment for you that you were able to then reevaluate. You know this, this extra question, and I think it's important for all of us. It's a good reminder, one we don't want to make permanent decisions based on temporary emotions, so really taking some time to be intentional about. You know what questions should I kind of be asking myself in order to make the best decision, but then also reflecting on this need to help everyone.

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00:54:15

Heather: Yes. Of course I'll help you, or of course I'll do this!

00:54:18

Sarah: Right, I'm in the helping profession! I can relate to this on so many levels and there's a lot of fear filled thinking that can also be associated with it being business, and so, of course you know we get paid for the people that are in front of us, and so there's there's also that there's a lot of layers to it. But I think you know to your point, ensuring that we are, you know, serving people that are in alignment with, personally and professionally what we can offer, and the whole idea of this podcast is also exercising that 'no' what can we say no to? To leave room, You know, for more yes'.

00:55:02

Heather: And giving us grace to learn from our mistakes and, you know, understand it's not always going to be pretty, but the fact that we're trying to improve our lives by setting boundaries and living in alignment with our values, then we're on the right track at least.

00:55:20

Sarah: And so here's us being human and letting all of you know that we are still learning as we go and we're going to continue to be vulnerable and share our experiences. So remember that you're not alone.

00:55:34

Heather: Yep! And so, like we're sharing our stories, we would love to hear yours and how you are learning to navigate this and what skills you're building and when you trip and fall and you need a little pep talk. You know, send us a note. We would love to support you and welcome you into this community.

00:56:07

Heather: That's it for today. Thank you so much for listening. Visit our website hardnopodcast.com for this episodes show notes, past episodes, downloadable and links to resources. Also, you'll find links to each of our websites Clevergirlmarketing.com and purposefulgrowthandwellness.com.

00:56:28

Sarah: Make sure to follow and get in touch with us on social we're @Hardnopodcast on Facebook, Instagram, and twitter.

00:56:38

Heather: And please do us a huge favor, if you liked what you heard here, please subscribe, rate and review our podcast wherever you listen, so others can find us too.

00:56:48

Sarah: Thanks to our friends and family, our villagers, for listening and for all your continued support.

00:56:55

Heather: That's a hard knot is a joint production of Clever Girl Marketing and Purposeful Growth and Wellness.

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00:57:01

Sarah: Marketing and production coordinator, Maura Del Rosario.

00:57:06

Heather: Production support: Evergreen podcasts Noah Foutz: producer.

00:57:11

Sarah: Music by GG Riggs.

00:57:14

Heather: Until next time. Thanks for listening.

00:57:17

Sarah: And remember saying no isn't just ok.

00:57:20

Heather: Saying no is the key to living an authentic, fulfilling life.

00:57:26

Sarah: So do it, find your no, then say it unapologetically. That's a hard no.