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**0:00:00 Nicole Antoinette:** I'm Nicole Antoinette, and this is Real Talk Radio, a podcast filled with honest conversations about everything. So somehow it's December. That happened. And honestly, all I can think as we get closer to the end of this year is, "Baby, we made it." [chuckle] Sometimes, I don't know, especially in a year with as much uncertainty and challenge as this one has definitely had, simply making it through is more than enough.

**0:00:29 NA:** I seem to always need reminders of this and forget that that's true, but it's true, making it through is more than enough. And we did that. We're here. We made it through. So to honor that, I'm gonna host an end of year reflection and celebration circle. It's happening on Sunday, December 20th. It's on Zoom. Our whole lives are on Zoom now, right? [chuckle]

**0:00:51 NA:** It's part thoughtfully guided journaling session, part fun conversation in the group chat, and part workshop-style breakdown of the personal and business strategies and coping mechanisms that I've been using to keep myself marginally sane and grounded. A lot of things aren't working, but there definitely are some things that have been working, and I'm excited to break that down and share it with you in the hopes that it'll give you some useful and doable ideas for yourself.

**0:01:18 NA:** So it's a three-and-a-half hour gathering with a break in the middle, and you can join live or watch the replay. The price is \$44 and there is sliding scale pricing as well of \$33 and \$22, along with a handful of completely free scholarship spots that you can apply for, and 5% of ticket sales goes directly to the Okra Project.

**0:01:39 NA:** You can check out more details at [nicoleantoinette.com/workshop](https://nicoleantoinette.com/workshop), and if there are still spots available, spots are limited, so depending upon when you're listening to this, if there's still spots available, you are totally invited to join us. It's gonna be a super casual and fun event. Come as you are, messy hair, there's a good chance I'll be wearing my fluffy robe. [chuckle] Pants? I don't know what pants are, it's 2020 and I'm not wearing pants anymore.

**0:02:02 NA:** So hopefully this afternoon together... Well, maybe morning, evening, depending upon what timezone you're in, will leave us all feeling supported and uplifted and really with a new understanding of what this year has meant, and where we might like to go next. So that's [nicoleantoinette.com/workshop](https://nicoleantoinette.com/workshop), and in the meantime, let's get right into today's episode.

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**0:02:29 NA:** Alright, friends, here we go. I am joined today by Laura Simms, who's here to talk about how to find the right fit career. I'm so glad you're here, Laura. Welcome.

**0:02:39 Laura Simms:** Yeah, thanks. Glad to be here.

**0:02:41 NA:** So to get us started, I would love for you to introduce yourself a little bit, who you are, what you do, what you love? Basically, what are a few things that we should know about, Laura?

**0:02:50 LS:** Sure. So I am talking to you from Lilburn, Georgia, we're right outside of Atlanta. It's me, my 6-year-old son, my husband. We've lived here for, I don't know, about four years now, so kinda like settling in and knowing where we are and feeling more at home here, which is nice.

**0:03:09 LS:** The work I do is all around helping people figure out what is the right meaningful career for them, and that is a business that I started after my own career crisis, and I'm gonna be heading into my 10th year in January. So that feels like on the one hand blows my mind if I think about how past Laura would try to frame that and come to grips with that, but also just feels really great being on this side of things.

**0:03:36 LS:** Things I love. I am kind of like a meaning and purpose junkie, I love reading about that stuff and trying to find the meaning and make things more purposeful just on a day-to-day basis. But I also love the outdoors, I love acoustic music, I love small gatherings of friends, and really just being able to have conversations like this.

**0:03:57 NA:** 10 years in business. Congrats.

**0:04:00 LS:** Yeah, thanks.

**0:04:00 NA:** Yeah, I am approaching 10 years of sobriety, which obviously is not the same thing, but I've been thinking about decade-long milestones and just how wild an amount of time 10 years can be, what can actually change in 10 years.

**0:04:13 LS:** I was listening to some podcast and the person was saying we're so bad at predicting what's gonna happen for us, and if you ask someone like, "Tell me about the past decade?" they're gonna say like, "Oh, all these crazy things happened, and I never would have expected." But if you say, "Tell me what you think the next 10 years are gonna be like?" they're like, "I'll basically be doing the same things that I'm doing now." We just don't really have an imagination for the twists and turns that are coming up. But yeah, looking back is definitely interesting to see how we got here.

**0:04:43 NA:** And I think that's really relevant for what we're gonna be talking about today, because if I think back at periods of time in my career, both being self-employed and before that, there were definitely moments of despair, of feeling like, "I really don't like what I'm doing," or, "This isn't the right fit for me, or it doesn't feel good," and not being able to see beyond that feeling and sort of that...

**0:05:04 NA:** And I'm sure everyone can relate to this, maybe it's not related to their career, but just that feeling of, "Oh my God, are things ever gonna get better? What happens if I feel like this forever?" And to be almost like short-sighted, sometimes I feel like the pain or the despair can make me short-sighted and feeling like I can't see past this current week or this current month.

**0:05:22 NA:** But then like you said, now, when I look back, whether it's in terms of friendships or

romantic relationships or a career, I can see so much growth that I never would have been able to imagine for myself during those periods of despair.

**0:05:32 LS:** Yeah. And I'll say, I think one perspective that my work has given me, I can look at my own experience, and again, like you're in the situation and you feel like, "Oh, is this ever gonna change? Am I ever gonna get out of this?" But having worked with so many people on the career change stuff at this point, I kinda have this meta-level view of here's the emotional trajectory, here's the landscape that people go through.

**0:06:00 LS:** It's been really reassuring just personally to say, "Oh." There's almost a predictable pattern to the emotional rollercoaster or journey someone goes on when they hit one of these big life bumps, and the fact that they are feeling despair or they're frustrated, that's actually not an indication that they're failing or things aren't gonna work out well, that's an indication that they're on step two.

**0:06:27 LS:** And then if they keep going, like it's also very predictable where this can end up. And so that has helped me not only help give a framework for people I'm working with and say, "If you're feeling this way, it's normal." But also for me, when I had those moments personally to be like, "Oh yeah, I'm in step two of the thing, and if I just keep going, I'm not gonna stay here forever."

**0:06:44 NA:** Yeah. I love that. So what got you interested in this question of how to find the right-fit work? 'Cause you mentioned that it started from your own personal experience.

**0:06:54 LS:** Yeah, personal crisis really. I didn't have an interest in this until it just blindsided me in my own life. I had been working as an actor, which is something that... I mean, I was not one of these kids who's like, "I'm gonna be an actor when I grow up." I kind of did a Hail Mary my senior year of college, and with a History degree, I decided I was gonna go have this acting career. And was kind of pulling it off.

**0:07:21 LS:** I had gone to graduate school, eventually I had moved out to Los Angeles, and I was like... Not like my face was on a billboard, I didn't have my own show, but I was a working actor, and that itself was such a dream come true. Again, like past Laura would never imagine that I'd be able to be on a show like this, or I'd be able to work with actors like this.

**0:07:43 LS:** And so just like the adrenaline of that and the achievement orientation of all of that, like, "When's the next thing gonna come, and how can I kinda move up the ranks?" and all of that, was exciting and fulfilling to some degree. But I just got to a point where even after I would book a show that felt like, "This is an accomplishment," or, "This would be impressive," I kinda get done at the end of the day and go, "Did this matter?"

**0:08:13 LS:** I just spent this amazing day on set, I worked with these great people, I felt proud of my work, did it matter? And I think that kind of lack of meaning and purpose that I was feeling coupled with all of the huge inconveniences and sacrifices that came from the lifestyle that that

work gave me, just weren't worth it anymore.

**0:08:41 LS:** This was, I was working back before a lot of stuff was getting put on tape. Now you can kind of like, a lot of times just audition from your home and you put it on tape. Well, this was like, you gotta drive to Burbank and it's gonna take you an hour to get there, and you gotta show up looking like you just stepped off a magazine cover, and then you gotta schlep it back home and go to the next audition.

**0:09:02 LS:** And it just, the day-to-day reality of having a day job, dropping everything for an audition, driving all over the place, coupled with I feel like even when I do the work, it doesn't really matter. Like that just, I just lost interest. I got to the point where, I knew I was in trouble where I could see that my agent was calling and I would be like, "Oh no." When there was a time when just the idea of having an agent would've... Like, remarkable unthinkable dream.

**0:09:37 LS:** And so I got to this point where I don't even wanna go on an audition. I kinda like to do theater with my friends, but I don't really, I'm not interested in the business of this. I'm not interested in this being the way that I make my living. And I had no plan B. I had no back-up plan. Did I tell you about my History degree?

[chuckle]

**0:10:00 LS:** I really, I didn't have... And because I had been doing temp work, I might work somewhere for six months and move on to another temp job. I didn't have a fall back. And that was intentional, by the way, actor Laura was like, "It's this or nothing." You know? And so I really, I had really gone all in. And so I didn't feel like when I was doubting and questioning, "Should I do this? What comes next?" I didn't have a clear back-up plan.

**0:10:26 NA:** Yeah, and that, the fear, periods of time where I have been there, it was definitely a really terrified feeling of this thing that I used to want so much, that was, as you said about having an agent, the biggest wildest dream come true. Then when you don't want that thing anymore.

**0:10:44 NA:** For me, it's been not only fear, but also some shame around that as well, of, "What's wrong with me that I can't be happy with this thing that is so many other people's dream, and that used to be my dream?" And that... It can be a really complicated emotional space to no longer be satisfied by something that you used to really want.

**0:11:05 LS:** Absolutely, and because I had built so much of my life and even my identity around being an actor, I was afraid to talk to my friends about how I was feeling, because I didn't want them to think, "Laura's a quitter, Laura's gonna be leaving the industry. Shouldn't recommend Laura for things, can't talk to Laura about this anymore." So I even felt like my closest friends even, I felt ashamed and fearful about talking about, "I think I might be done," because it seemed unthinkable to say out loud.

**0:11:39 NA:** Yeah, I also... We're talking about this through a context of something that you did use

to really love, but I'm even thinking back to jobs and stuff that I've had that I never really loved it, I did it because that's what I had to do. That was to make money at the time, and I think that a lot of folks can relate to that as well, you do what you have to do.

**0:11:58 NA:** And sometimes too I had the guilt of, "Well, at least I'm making money. Again, what's wrong with me that I wanna walk away from this opportunity when other people are unemployed, or I've previously been unemployed?" There's just so much emotional stuff that goes along with your own judgments of yourself, like you said, potentially not being able to talk to like friends or people that are close to you. There's a lot of stories and narratives around sort of what work should be, what it can be, what it owes us, what we owe it. There's a lot there.

**0:12:26 LS:** Yeah, and I think too, being a creative in a creative field, there's also all this mythology and baloney around like, "Don't... Only be an actor if you can't do anything else. And it's gonna be hard. Are you ready for it to be hard? Are you ready to live in a box? I hope you're prepared to be... Good luck waiting tables." There's all that stuff, so there's also, it's like almost "Oh, I wanna prove these people wrong," a little bit. [chuckle]

**0:12:58 LS:** And then I remember one of my best friends when I was kind of like opening up that, "Hey, I'm gonna leave Los Angeles, I don't wanna do this anymore." And she was like, "Are you sad to leave your dreams of the red carpet in Los Angeles?" And I was like, you... I have never felt so much understood.

**0:13:18 LS:** I didn't do this to be on a red carpet. I didn't do this because Los Angeles, glitzy ritzy stuff. I did it for the work. I love the craft, I love the communion, I love the community of people, I like who I am when I do this. And just the misconception of even why I was in it to begin with, was weird to hear on the back side when I was leaving it.

**0:13:50 LS:** And so I think definitely hearing those messages from just society or from the people who care about you, can be challenging, but then there's this whole other layer of just your relationship to yourself, you know? I know for me, I really struggled with the identity aspect of, "If I'm not an actor. Who am I?"

**0:14:11 NA:** Yeah, giving yourself permission to change in that way.

**0:14:13 LS:** Right, right.

**0:14:16 NA:** Yeah, yeah, definitely, especially like you said, when it has become not just a way to earn money or to spend time, but a deeply ingrained part of your identity, then walking away from that. Something that I think about a lot and that comes up on this podcast, a lot is the idea of, how do we walk away from something that's good but not great?

**0:14:36 LS:** Ugh. Yes.

**0:14:37 NA:** And that oftentimes, it can be easier to walk away from something that's really awful

because, at least it has been for me, in periods of time where I felt like, "This couldn't get any worse." Obviously, of course, it always can get worse. But there's some kind of like, "fuck it" freedom in that, of like, "Well, I'm just gonna leave 'cause whatever else I do is not gonna be as bad as this." Whereas something that's good or that's working well enough, you're still making money, you're not actively miserable, it's not oppressive, it's really easy to talk yourself into staying.

**0:15:11 LS:** Absolutely, and I think that may be one reason why it took me... It feels like it took me forever to just finally say "I'm done and I don't wanna do this anymore." I really tip-toed out of it and, "I won't tell my manager, I'll just stop being very proactive. And I won't tell my friends, I'll just stop auditioning for this kind of thing and... "

**0:15:35 LS:** Because it wasn't awful, but it wasn't... It also just wasn't fundamentally what I wanted and it wasn't enough. Yeah, so I think that's another part of it, is being able to make peace with letting go of something that's okay, but is not right anymore.

**0:15:53 NA:** Yeah, I'm interested in personally, what you did next, what the bridge is between feeling like, "This isn't the thing for me anymore," and then you know, kind of getting into what you're doing now, what that, it looked like to kinda cross that bridge? Particularly because it sounds, and obviously, correct me if I'm wrong, it sounds like what you knew was "not this", but you didn't know what next.

**0:16:17 NA:** And that also can be really challenging, of, "I know that this isn't the thing and this doesn't feel good, but how am I gonna leave this thing if I don't know what I'm leaving it to go toward?"

**0:16:29 LS:** And honestly, I think that valley is the most uncomfortable part of for me, and I've seen for others for the entire career change process. I'm ready to say, "Not this," and now I'm just in no man's land because I don't know what comes next. So that space between, "I know I'm done with what I've been doing, but I don't know what comes next," really, I think is the hardest spot to be. Because you're in this no man's land of...

**0:17:00 LS:** I mean, I have clients who described this, like, "I'm in the ocean, barely clinging to this piece of driftwood and I don't know which way land is. I just have no bearings for what is gonna come next." And for me, that was just a really messy fraught period. Because I thought, "Okay, well, here's how I'm gonna figure this out. I got into acting because I loved it, right? That was my passion and I enjoyed it. So I'm just gonna find something else I love, and that'll be it".

**0:17:33 LS:** So I thought maybe that thing could be web design. I had my Mac, I had... What was it called? IWeb. So maybe it's gonna be web design. And I kind of played around designing some sites on my own and I thought, "I think I could make a thing of this, I'm gonna offer to design something for a friend to see how I like working with someone else." And I did that and hated it.

**0:18:00 LS:** I discovered that I enjoyed bringing my vision to life, but was not so interested in bringing someone else's vision to life, so I scrapped that. And then I thought, "Well, maybe I'll be..."

Maybe I'll be an acting teacher." I had gotten a call from my graduate school, they were looking for someone to come fill in for a professor who was gonna be on sabbatical, to teach graduate school for a semester.

**0:18:23 LS:** I thought how awesome it would be, I loved school so much, I'm gonna go back and be on the teaching side of things, and did that and thought, "Gosh, maybe I need to go get a certificate that's gonna make me more competitive in the academic market," and was kind of leaning towards that direction, but just kinda got cold feet and pulled the plug before following through on that, because I just didn't think, ultimately, although there were aspects of that that were a good fit, I just didn't really see myself making a home in academia for that long.

**0:18:54 LS:** So I dropped that. Which sends me like looking at Craigslist and seeing all these jobs that are kind of minimum wage must love answering phones and multitasking, and I'm thinking, "I have no other marketable skills, I'm going to be responding to Craigslist ads and answering phones in the front of some office until my soul is crushed."

**0:19:24 LS:** Just was very... And not even "discouraged" is the right word, just completely disheartened about what my future was gonna hold. Because I felt like, "I know I'm a capable person. I know that I can do things, I know that I'm smart. I just don't know... I don't know where to channel that." And I felt like if someone could just tell me what I'm supposed to be doing, I know I could go do it. I'm not... Like I moved to Los Angeles and did the actor thing, like I know I can go for something and I'm gritty enough, but I just don't know what to do.

**0:20:02 NA:** Yeah, it's like the missing... You know that you can drive the car, but until the GPS is like pointing you somewhere, "Okay, well, where do I go?" And that frustration of it's not necessarily a lack of motivation, it's not that you don't wanna be doing something, it's the question of, "Okay, but what do I do?"

**0:20:19 LS:** But what? But what? Right, so for me, the real turning point was, been thinking about this for months and months and months, and doing these little experiments with things to think it was gonna be the right thing. And finally I remember that so clearly I was in our little guest house we were living in in Los Angeles, I was sitting at my desk and I pulled out a sheet of paper, then I made this grid on it, and I thought, "Okay, what are these things that I have been really attracted to? Acting, teaching, web design. What do those things have in common?"

**0:20:49 LS:** And I started thinking, instead of, "What are the things that I love? What are the activities that I love?" And I started thinking about, "Why do I love them? Why am I drawn to them? What about those things is satisfying for me?" And when I started to look kind of below the surface, that's when things got really interesting, and it just, it just shifted how I thought about my career.

**0:21:15 LS:** So it was much less about, "What do I love and what do I do?", and much more about, "What is my motivation and why are these things a spark for me?" And that eventually led me to, "Okay, I'm gonna start my own business. I'm gonna be helping creatives, I'm gonna be helping other

people figure this stuff out." Because I got out of that, "You have to do what you love." That's what I had done, that's what I thought I had to do, and when I got out of that mode, that's when things really changed for me.

**0:21:44 NA:** Yeah, yeah. Okay, so let's dig into this. How do you understand what constitutes right-fit work? How do you think about that?

**0:21:54 LS:** I actually came up several years ago, I'll give you my five-point working definition. [chuckle] Because I discovered early on working with people, one of the first challenges we ran into is, we were talking about meaningful work, but we were talking about completely different things. We didn't have a shared definition of what that was, or even what we were working towards.

**0:22:18 LS:** So I thought we were working towards this thing over there, and they're thinking, "Oh, I just need something that'll make me happy, I just need something that'll pay the bills that I don't pay, I just need..." And so, here's my framework, five things. Number one, it's got to allow you to contribute any way that's meaningful for you. So these BuzzFeed lists that's like, "The top 20 most fulfilling careers." No, there's no career or field that is inherently meaningful, it's all about a person's personal connection to purpose.

**0:22:53 LS:** So I would not just say, "Nicole, you oughta go be a nurse because that's meaningful." If you don't have a connection to that, we gotta toss it. So it's gotta have... Contribute in a way that's meaningful for you. Two, we want it to use your strengths, so that you're doing activities throughout the day that are things that you're in your sweet spot, you're able to get in flow, you feel good while you're doing that.

**0:23:18 LS:** Three, it's gotta be able to support you at the level that you need in your life. And that's really subjective. That's also not saying it has to make \$50,000 a year or it has to make \$120,000 a year, it's really up to each person's stage in life, their lifestyle and their savings goals and their aspirations.

**0:23:40 LS:** Number four, it's gotta support the life that you wanna have. If someone wants to have a nomadic lifestyle, well, your job needs to support that. If someone wants to put down roots and buy a home and have five kids, then it's gotta support that. So whatever your life, dreams and goals are, we want to work to support that, instead of compete with it, which is what kind of more traditional work we end up seeing.

**0:24:10 LS:** And then really the fifth element is harder to put your finger on because it's more of a feeling, but really ultimately we want it to feel like you're at home, that you can be you. That you don't have to put on an act, you don't have to perform, that you just are you in your own skin doing your thing, and it feels like home.

**0:24:28 NA:** Yeah, what you just described sounds really lovely, all of those five things. That's the dream, right? [chuckle]

**0:24:35 LS:** That's it.

**0:24:37 NA:** Yeah, so I'd love to talk about something that I've heard you share before, the advice for folks to ditch their passions and start with purpose. You've touched on that a little bit, but will you go deeper into what that means?

**0:24:47 LS:** Sure. So I think a lot of us have been taught, "Follow your passion, it just, if you love it, the money will come. Do what you love." And I will say, if that's working for you, keep doing it. Like I'm all, let's do what works. And I can think of people who that seems to have worked for. So it's not a don't follow your passions, if it's working for you, do it.

**0:25:09 LS:** But if it's not working for you because you don't have any passions, you have too many passions, you try to follow your passion and you couldn't make any money at it, whatever. Then I think we've gotta change that advice because that advice doesn't work for everyone. So instead of following your passion, the way I'm working with clients, and what worked for me is to start from a place of purpose.

**0:25:31 LS:** Why do I wanna work? What difference do I wanna make in the world? How do I want the world to be different because of my efforts? Who am I in a unique position to champion? What kind of legacy do I wanna leave? How do I wanna serve? We don't usually start there, but I think it's a really fertile ground to point towards something that's not only gonna be fulfilling, but it's also going to allow you to make money.

**0:25:57 NA:** Yeah, because a lot of the things that I'm... I don't even know if "passion" is the right word, I feel like I don't really know what that means anymore. It's been quite overused. But if I look at things that I really enjoy or, like, "Okay, I wanna eat pasta, eat delicious pasta and read novels in bed all day. I'm very passionate about that. That sounds great." That would be... [chuckle]

**0:26:18 LS:** Oh, what does that tell you? Right? You asked me at the beginning of this conversation, what are things I love? Well, I love being outdoors, I love collecting acorns, I love building a fire outside, I love reading novels under the covers and having a... What does that tell me? That doesn't help me actually choose a career path.

**0:26:35 NA:** Except in situations like you said, if that really does work for someone. But I feel that that is most likely to be an outlier, and I say that as someone who has monetized personal passions quite a bit in earlier iterations of my career, and I stopped doing that because it felt like a cage almost.

**0:26:57 NA:** I think about it in term... I did it with running, I've done it with other things, and it's not that those were bad decisions, it's not like I really enjoyed it when I was doing it, it was certainly helpful and useful for people who are interested in that same thing, but what happens when you're no longer as interested about that thing? And maybe that doesn't happen for someone, maybe running is their life-long passion and they wanna coach runners forever or help people forever.

**0:27:18 NA:** But for me, I found that as I was making a business around my changing iterations of what I enjoy doing in my personal life, there wasn't enough space for growth, and I had the realization that for me personally, I need to have a little bit more separation between my hobbies, so to speak, or the things that I'm interested in, and my livelihood. It was all just too wrapped up for me and it didn't feel good.

**0:27:42 LS:** And I think I have more of that separation now, and I have some friends and colleagues who have businesses, and it really, the business changes as their interests change. And so they're constantly coming up with new offerings and, "Join this new community and do this new thing, and here's this new program." And that, for the right kind of person, I think that can really work. I don't want something for me that is that changeable and dependent on just what I happen to be into at the time, I wanna be able to have a new hobby and nobody on Instagram knows about it. [chuckle]

**0:28:23 LS:** My stream of income is not tied to whatever new thing that I'm fascinated with. I get to have a fascination that is mine, it doesn't have to be monetized and nobody even needs to know about it, and I get to experiment and then love it, and then move on to the next thing. For me, that works really well.

**0:28:42 NA:** Yeah, it works well for me too, and obviously, we're both saying if someone's on the other side of that, then that's great too, but the heart of it is knowing what feels good for you and what works for you. I remember that happened for me as I started getting more and more into backpacking and long distance hiking, that there definitely was the route, I was presented with a couple of opportunities to sort of go the influencer path, the Instagram influencer path.

**0:29:04 NA:** And that just was not for me, it's not what I wanted to do, and I really stopped and thought, "Am I gonna wind up hating hiking, this thing that I love, if I turn it into work somehow?" And for me, the answer was yes, and I'm glad that I didn't do it. Again, that might not be the case for other folks. But just sort of being willing to look at this standard advice, like you said, "Just follow your passions," being able to examine that and unpack that can be really useful, I think.

**0:29:31 LS:** And I think from my vantage point, since it's not just about what's gonna work in my career, I'm helping other people find that path for them, I've gotta teach something that is repeatable and it's gonna work for most people. And "follow your passions" ain't it. So it's, yeah, I think you're right that that's an outlier kind of situation.

**0:30:01 NA:** This is potentially a strange question, but if you had to estimate, how many people do you feel like you've worked with in this capacity by now?

**0:30:11 LS:** 200 to 300.

**0:30:11 NA:** Okay, yeah, so you definitely have a bird's-eye view of something that's repeatable. I ask that because I'm curious what... From all of that, like your personal experience obviously is relevant, but then literally hundreds of other people's experience. What do you find are the common

mistakes, or potentially even cultural messaging, that makes it hard to figure out what our right-fit work is? What's getting in the way?

**0:30:34 LS:** We can talk about this alone for an entire hour, seriously, because there's so... The messaging around this that we get is so messed up. But we've already hit on "follow your passion". There's something else I call it the "boomer blueprint", which is like, "You just need to buckle down, you just need to be practical, you just need to pick one thing and stick with it."

**0:30:54 LS:** Again, if that works for you, great. That doesn't work for most people, to just do the thing you were good at in high school, and majored in in college and do it for the rest of your life. So I think like the "boomer blueprint" and "follow your passion" are kind of on opposite ends of the spectrum and fight each other a bit.

**0:31:11 LS:** Which also, if I look at my story, I grew up with a dad who's an attorney and a mom who is an artist. And so Dad is very Boomer blueprint, he's been with the same law firm now for almost 50 years, knew that's what he wanted to do when he was a kid, so there's lots of messaging around, "Do what's... You gotta do this practical thing, I don't always love it, but this is what I do." And then there's Mom, who was in college for seven years because she couldn't pick a major, is a painter, piano teacher, just more eclectic renaissance woman, "Do what you love, following your passion."

**0:31:49 LS:** And so I'm getting both, like the advice from both. And I think a lot of us absorb the messages from both of those influence. If it's not literally your mom and your dad, you're still getting those messages, and so then that's really confusing. It's not even that you're being told one way to do it, you're being told opposing ways to think about this.

**0:32:12 LS:** And then we get, I think influence from our educational system, which is very linear and things live in different boxes and history's over here, and math is over here, and science is over here, and you kinda pick one thing and you stick with it. I think there's messages from spiritual community around finding your calling and looking for signs. It just, there's a lot of different voices and competing messages.

**0:32:44 LS:** And the thing about so many of them is they're not actionable or they're not repeatable. And so that's where I really wanted my work to be able to step in and say, "Okay, it's nice to have all these theories floating around, but when you're sitting there with another human being who is in distress and can't figure it out, what are the actual steps they need to take?" So that we're not in a loop of "I'm just gonna go... I kind of give up on the career stuff, so I'm just gonna go take a lot of bubble baths to make myself feel better".

**0:33:19 LS:** Or, "I'm gonna kinda give up on the career stuff, so I'm gonna make a lot of... Do a lot of hobbies, but still in the day feel too drained to do my hobbies because my day job is exhausting." So ultimately, there's all these little Band-Aids we put on it, there's all these different influences and voices. But at the end of the day, you've gotta be able to know, "What steps can I take to actually facilitate this change?"

**0:33:43 NA:** So I'd love to hear a little bit because I definitely want you to share some of those actionable and repeatable, tangible steps, that would be great. But before that, I'm interested in hearing if you've noticed any commonalities of steps that folks take that they think will work? What are the approaches, like the common approaches to solving this question of, "What's my right-fit work, what should I do next?" That seem to make sense but that don't actually work?

**0:34:09 LS:** One is, people just kind of press the emergency exit button, they're just gonna quit and they're going to take the time to figure it out, as if time is the big thing that is keeping them from being able to figure this out. So I've worked with people who have quit their jobs or they've gone on medical leave or something, they're gonna travel, they're gonna volunteer, they're going to kind of experiment, they're gonna journal, they're gonna use this time to really get to know themselves and figure it out. I don't really see that work.

**0:34:48 NA:** That's interesting. Yeah. Will you share... I know you shared... I think you shared this on your blog, the chocolate cake analogy?

**0:34:54 LS:** Oh my gosh, if I can remember how it goes. Yes. [chuckle] Okay, so the time fallacy, "If I just have enough time, I'll figure it out." So imagine that you want to make a chocolate cake, but you've never made one before. So you go in the kitchen and you're like, "Well, I know there's chocolate, there's gotta be flour, maybe an egg. Maybe baking soda? Is it baking powder? Baking soda? I'm not sure." So you put all the ingredients in there. "Do you have a pan?" "I don't know." "Do you know what temperature to set it to?"

**0:35:27 LS:** There's so many things you could get a little bit wrong, and you're not gonna come out with a edible chocolate cake. If we give you a year to figure it out, you still might not come up with a repeatable, great chocolate cake. So we can give you a lot of time in the kitchen, but if you don't have the right ingredients, if you don't know how to pre-heat an oven, if you don't... Maybe you don't have an oven.

**0:35:56 LS:** If you don't have the right tools and the right understanding and baseline knowledge of baking, you're gonna make like a gross chocolate puddle of stuff, right? So to actually get a cake that tastes good and is a chocolate cake, there's specific things you have to follow in order to get there, and having more time to experiment doesn't necessarily yield a chocolate cake.

**0:36:20 NA:** Yeah. I feel like that is such a common potentially misconception of, "If I just had more time." And you've said this multiple times that, but if this is working for you, we probably don't have to keep giving this caveat, even as I'm just about to give the same caveat, that for me, I took two months off work this summer, a little like two month sabbatical was the first real, proper proper time that I have taken off from work in literally 15 years. Which is a whole other conversation.

**0:36:44 NA:** But it was exactly what I needed because the question that I was trying to answer was much smaller. It was, first of all, I just needed time off, it was I was really burnt out, I had

overworked myself in a couple of different areas, I was doing some things that didn't feel good anymore, and I needed a break. And then to be able to have some space away from the work to answer some really specific questions about what I wanted to do next with the business.

**0:37:08 NA:** And for me, that was super useful, having the time, and then also having, like you said, some tools and skills and people to talk to and stuff to figure out what's next. But just the time alone, at earlier iterations of my life, wouldn't have helped.

**0:37:22 LS:** Right, and I see this too with a lot of new business owners who are like, "If I could just quit my job and I had more time, my business would grow so much faster." My business wouldn't have, because I didn't know what to do to grow it. So I don't think more time necessarily is always the answer for figuring out your career, starting your business. You've gotta know how to use that time.

**0:37:42 NA:** Yeah, yeah. That's a really good reminder, because... But also I think that we can get blocked by the, that umbrella assumption of time is absolutely the problem. And sometimes time is the issue, but like you said, it's easy to latch on to the idea that a lack of time is an issue, and that can cover up whatever, the lack of a recipe, so to speak.

**0:38:04 LS:** Right, right.

**0:38:05 NA:** Okay. Anything else other than that lack of time fallacy, or "If I only had more time."?

**0:38:09 LS:** Yeah. Taking time off, other things people will do is they will try to figure out, they'll wanna, "Maybe I can stay in my job but just take on other responsibilities, or maybe I can stay in my job and they'll give me a new project." Which, I mean these things on the surface makes sense, so it's not like if people are doing this like, "Ha ha, you fool." These are... These make sense to try to do these things, right?

**0:38:33 LS:** So they will try to take on more responsibilities at work so they can maybe get a little more satisfaction, they can be stretched in a new way. Most of the time, what I find that does is it might buy people some time, so that there's a little bit of novelty at work that kind of hooks them for a little bit. But at the end of the day, you're still in your role, and you're still in the same managerial structure or whatever else is going on, and it doesn't... It often will buy people time but it generally doesn't solve the problem.

**0:39:03 NA:** Yeah, and sometimes, like you said, needing to buy more time, or it makes a lot of sense to start with the smaller changes. Why burn everything down if the 5% or 10% change actually does wind up being enough? So I guess from here, there's a couple of different ways that we could go, but do you wanna share what you feel like are some of those actionable and repeatable things that do work, like what the strategy is for figuring it out?

**0:39:28 LS:** You know, I think you've gotta have a strong foundation of being... You don't wanna just blindly start pushing buttons and twiddling knobs. There really needs to be a foundation set of,

"How did I even get here?" Right? "What choices did I make, what... Whose advice did I follow? What messaging did I absorb that led me to this problem in the first place?"

**0:40:00 LS:** And I always have clients, we're kind of examining their personal patterns for how they get in work situations like this. Because we don't... Above all else, like, let's not repeat the same stuff you've been doing that got you here in the first place, and whether that is, "I keep making decisions to please mom and dad. I always stay somewhere way longer after I know it's not a good fit. When I have overbearing male bosses, it never works out." Whatever it is, being able to identify what those things are so we can kinda wipe the slate clean, is always kinda where I'm starting with folks.

**0:40:33 LS:** And from there, I mentioned that definition of meaningful work, we've got those five different categories, being able to move through those different categories and identify, okay, if we're talking about work that allows you to contribute in a meaningful way, what are things that are meaningful to you, what do you connect with just on a personal level, so we can start to understand who you feel connected to? Who there's a warm place in your heart for? What needs of others can you perceive and you'd be interested in helping people make progress towards that or solve those kind of problems?

**0:41:11 LS:** And really be able to go kind of in a methodical way through those different categories and assess, "How do I relate to these things? What do I have to give and what do I need in return?" In order to keep all of this grounded, one of the things I have my clients do is create an income range. It's great if you wanna go be a nurse or you wanna be a musician, or you're interested in being a marketing specialist, but let's look at the real numbers of what you need to live in your life, because if it's not gonna help you reach that, then we gotta go back to the drawing board.

**0:41:48 LS:** So really, it's being able to collect the criteria from these different areas, and use that criteria to come up with and evaluate options. Rather than starting by, "Let me list all the job titles that I think I might like to do, or let me go to my college's alumni website and look at all the things that someone with my major can do, or let me make a list of stuff that I thought I might wanna do when I was a kid."

**0:42:15 LS:** It's much more about now, given the person that you are and the life that you're in and the goals that you have, what's the criteria in order for you to be satisfied in these different categories that add up to meaningful work?

**0:42:28 NA:** This feels very comforting, just the methodical nature of this, because it can be such an overwhelming question that almost seems like it requires some kind of magic and alchemy to... You either happen upon the right fit answer for you, or you don't. And if you don't, oh well, you just try this string of other things and being able to...

**0:42:51 NA:** And it's almost like I'm hearing you describe a problem solving tactic or a puzzle, that the question to be solved is, "What do you need in terms of these different categories or buckets or criteria?" And then, okay, starting with the data. It seems like very comforting to me.

**0:43:09 LS:** I find it comforting. Because there's... I can't help everybody. If someone just wants to climb the corporate ladder and they don't care how they do it or what they're doing, I'm not gonna be your person. If someone just wants to be creative and express themselves and they're not interested in doing that from a place of service, or they don't care how much money they make, like I'm also not your person, that's not really the framework that I'm working within.

**0:43:36 LS:** But for the person who's like, "I wanna do something meaningful, it needs to support me." You know, "I wanna feel good about the work that I'm doing, I wanna make a difference." Yeah, we can break that down into what are the things it takes to have that kind of career and use that to build into what are the best options for you. And even from there, sometimes there are competing pieces of criteria.

**0:44:03 LS:** People, again, we're messy. We have contradictions. So what do we do when there's a contradiction? Well, there's even a way to assess making a decision when the decision is difficult, and I'm gonna be choosing between more stability or less pay, or I'm gonna be choosing between less autonomy for more freedom in this other area.

**0:44:21 LS:** So there still can be some difficult decisions to make, but at least there's a framework for analysis in making those decisions, so that when everything is said and done, you can be like, "Okay, I looked under every rock, I asked every question, I'm aware of the trade-offs that I'm gonna be making them. I accept those trade-offs and I'm ready to go." And then you just don't have to second guess and question and be in that doubt of a valley, I mean, that valley of doubt anymore.

**0:44:56 NA:** And for me, it's also involved accepting that even the right fit thing, I'm not gonna love it 100% every second of every day, and I think that there can be some misconceptions with that too. I wanna dig a tiny bit deeper on what you just shared about the competing criteria, 'cause I think that's interesting, and I'm obviously aware of the fact that an entire framework and 10 years worth of work that you have been doing cannot be boiled down to one thing, so obviously I understand that. But could you give an example of something that might help evaluate that competing criteria?

**0:45:28 LS:** I think in the most simple way, it comes down to knowing what matters most. Right? So something that I will, that I do regularly, and will have my clients do, is you take out a blank sheet of paper, you write at the top, "What matters most?" And you answer the question. And so when we're talking with career criteria, instead of looking at 50 data points or 30 data points, eventually, if we're in a tough decision-making spot, we start to narrow it down to five or three or one.

**0:46:02 LS:** And that may mean that you're trading some other stuff, you're saying no to some other things that were important to you, but at the end, we want you to have what matters most. This is not about, "Let me make a wishlist," and then I don't get everything on my list. It's about, "Let me get as close as I can to what I have said is ideal for me in terms of how I wanna contribute the money I wanna make, the life I wanna live." And not all data points are equal.

**0:46:31 NA:** Yes.

**0:46:32 LS:** Not all criteria is equal. So for you being able to say, "At this stage in my life, given that I have this kind of debt, or this kind of responsibility to my aging parents or my children," or whatever, making those decisions based on the real stuff going on in your life and what matters most.

**0:46:51 NA:** Being able to be honest with myself about the trade-offs and sacrifices that I am and am not willing to make at any given point, has been profound. And that... And not just with work, with... I thought about it a lot right now, at the time of this recording, I've moved out of my van where I typically live during the warmer months full-time, and I'm living with my partner and his dad in Massachusetts waiting out COVID and wildfires in Oregon, and the winter and all of that.

**0:47:22 NA:** And moving here was definitely a make a pro-con list type of situation. I love where I usually am in Oregon, that's where a lot of my community is, and am I willing to go to a town where I don't know anyone else except the people I'm gonna be living with? Socially distance means I really don't have any prospects for making friends, it's gonna be cold. Just listing out what, "Am I willing to do this or not?" And what really helped me is exactly what you're saying, identifying what is the top priority.

**0:47:50 NA:** And for me, it was sort of a tie between being as safe as possible and being able to do really good focused work, especially after having taken a couple of months off, and what is the environment that's gonna allow me to do my best work? Okay, living inside, having really fast internet, all of these different things that... It was abundantly clear that this was the right choice. I'm certainly sacrificing things to be here, but it was a lot easier of a decision to make once I was honest with myself of, "Okay, this comes first."

**0:48:25 NA:** And not, "This comes first forever," I'm certainly not gonna live here forever, but at this particular season in my life, this is most important. And that, it just gave me a lot of ease in terms of being able to then trade off the things that I definitely do miss, but feeling empowered in that choice has been really helpful. And I can absolutely see that being the same with exactly what you're saying and evaluating career criteria.

**0:48:46 LS:** And I think it goes back to what we were talking about earlier with just being able to be at peace with your own decisions, and being able to tune out the opinions that you don't need, being able to reconcile, "I used to feel like this, or, I used to be like this, and now I'm choosing this."

**0:49:07 LS:** Part of the reason that we're even talking about career change is because people change. You may not feel the same way you felt about things when you were 20 years old and choosing a major, or when you were 18 years old and deciding not to go to school at all, and to get right into the workforce. Or when you were being a single parent and all of your resources were going into taking care of this other person. Things change and we change, and it's normal and

natural for your career to change along the way.

**0:49:42 LS:** But as you kinda hit each of these new life stages, your priorities are gonna shift, right? So there's gonna come a day where like, no one could pay you any amount to live in a van. It just, it may not be desirable. Or there may come a day, where like, "There's no way I'm working with clients on the internet, I only wanna be in the room and in person with someone." But for now, you look at where you're at and what you need now.

**0:50:08 NA:** Normalizing change is what you're talking about, that I think is so crucial. I'm almost interested in a collective turning down the dial a little bit of lessening the sense of urgency and the stakes around this question of right-fit work, because even during periods in my past, I felt like, "Okay, I have to solve this puzzle and come up with the one capital R right answer. Not just the right answer for now, but what is gonna be the right answer forever."

**0:50:41 NA:** And potentially that's a little bit of that boomer trap that you were talking about, of, "I need to put myself on the specific career path that I'm just gonna continue to climb this one very narrow ladder," and that's the right and best way to be "successful", whatever that is, and to actually normalize change. And I feel like with all of the criteria that you were talking about, it's like the end of that sentence to me is "for now".

**0:51:10 NA:** "What is enough money for now? What feels meaningful right now?" That idea that what's gonna be right, right now might not be right in five or 10 years, and that goes back to what you're saying about having a system that's repeatable.

**0:51:25 LS:** Well, and that's what I tell my clients like, "You've got a now problem, so we're gonna figure it out for now. But I also wanna prepare you to make another change in the future. So you've got a process to return to, so when something needs to change because your interests have changed, your priorities have changed. Now you've met someone and you're blending your life with theirs, or you were relying on someone else's income and that vanished, now what?"

**0:51:52 LS:** It's not that you figure this out once and then you're done. It's knowing how to navigate this kind of change, that... That's such a huge skill set. I fully expect clients that work with me, it's not like they're gonna figure it out and then they're done forever. I expect that they will go back and use these tools five years from now, 11 years from now, 16 years from now, when something in their life changes because they have decided to change it, or they have to respond to something that's completely outside their control.

**0:52:19 NA:** Yeah. What role do you feel like mindset plays in finding your right fit right now, where particularly for folks who might not feel confident about the options that they think are viable for them?

**0:52:32 LS:** I think it's critical. And I'll say that it's critical when paired with the right strategy. It's not just that if you just think happy thoughts and feel really confident, you're gonna figure it out. I don't wanna build personal development work or building your self-worth or building your

confidence, that is not the same as career strategy. But I have also found that career strategy, trying to do that with a person who is mentally at the bottom of the barrel, it doesn't work.

**0:53:08 LS:** And really, you've gotta have this combination of knowing the right steps and tactical moves to make, coming from a place of like, "Okay, I like who I am. I'm aware of my competencies, I feel hopeful about my future. I know there's gonna be obstacles but I feel determined to find my way forward even in the face of those obstacles." If that is not there, career change is hard. People are gonna shrivel up and give up the first time they hit a bump.

**0:53:44 LS:** So it is not just that having confidence or feeling self-worth, it's not just that it gives you a feeling where you can go out and being invincible in the world, it actually changes what options people think are available to them.

**0:54:00 NA:** That makes a lot of sense. Is that something that... That sort of mindset, more emotional, like you said self-esteem piece, is that part of what you work on people with? Or is that something that you're like, "once you're in the place for this, then I'm the right fit for you."?

**0:54:14 LS:** I do intentionally work on that with people, like that is baked into how I work. Because I also figured out at some point, like starting out like, "Oh, we don't get very far if people are having the daily experience of feeling anxious, doubt, they're kind of stuck in that doom and gloom box, there's only so much progress we can make."

**0:54:42 LS:** So I do intentionally work with people on, how do we build confidence? How do we get you oriented towards what you're capable of and what you can go out in the world and do? But there is a kind of bottom threshold of who's ready to do that work, right? And if I ever encounter someone who's interested in working with me, but I feel like I'm, in my best estimation, it would not be an integrity for me to work with them because there's some foundational stuff that just mental health-wise they need first, then I will make some kind of recommendation for where they can find those resources.

**0:55:15 LS:** Which is also not to say like, "You've gotta come in feeling like you're Superwoman before you can change careers." Everybody I work with is afraid. Everybody I work with is doubtful. Pretty much everybody has had anxiety or listlessness, or just to kind of feel like a shriveled version of themselves a little bit because they've been so depleted by their work. But if someone's like, "I'm struggling to get out of bed in the morning," let's get your mental health in a better place before you go try to make this big change.

**0:55:48 NA:** I appreciate that, because it's very much the both/and, that it's not like this one thing has to be completely solved, because is it ever completely solved? Depending upon what's going on, depending on what your circumstances are, if you're in a period of a lot of growth, that type of stuff is maybe gonna pop back up.

**0:56:04 NA:** Literally yesterday, I sent what can only be described as an SOS message to my business coach, that was basically like, I'm drowning in Impostor Syndrome, X... Every time I try to

work on X, this new thing that I'm working on, all I wanna do is take a nap. I feel like why would anybody ever believe me about this or be interested about this?"

**0:56:25 NA:** And luckily, they were able to send back some very comforting things, but I had to step back and even remind myself that feeling that way doesn't mean that I'm doing anything wrong. It's just part of what happens when you're growing, when you're pushing yourself to take up more space or space in a different way. Or you're offering new things in a period of career change, whether it's switching industries or switching jobs, or even making pivots within your own business, that stuff comes up.

**0:56:49 NA:** I think in general, my view of myself is relatively healthy in the ways that you were talking about, and also it doesn't mean that I don't feel so terrified, like sometimes, and that it's like you don't have to wait until you feel like you said this magical Superwoman, in order for change to be possible, it's that that can happen simultaneously.

**0:57:12 LS:** Right, right.

**0:57:13 NA:** Yeah. One of the last things that I wanna ask you about... Well, two things. I guess, first with everything that we've talked about, have you found that there are differences with these sort of guiding principles around right-fit work, whether it's self-employment or a more traditional employment? Do you work with people differently around that question?

**0:57:32 LS:** Not really. I am not pro-entrepreneurship over being an employee. I think either one can be a good fit for the right person. Really, it's just like if we're talking about criteria, whether you're self-employed or not, it's really... It's just a function of what I would categorize as really circumstances and conditions of your work.

**0:57:53 LS:** Do you wanna be the boss, do you wanna not have that responsibility? Do you wanna have this freedom? Are you okay being, rowing someone else's boat? So it's certainly one of the distinguishing things we talk about, but it's not... I think people sometimes come in thinking, "I have to make this big decision at the very beginning, do I wanna have my own business or not?"

**0:58:16 LS:** And really like, we'll talk about that maybe a month in to the work that we're doing, because it's a... In the big picture things like a relatively small piece of what we're figuring out, and one is not necessarily better than the other.

**0:58:30 NA:** And I have found that it is possible to be self-employed and be a terrible boss to yourself.

**0:58:37 LS:** Yeah. [chuckle] Yes, yes.

**0:58:38 NA:** Right, like I said, I didn't take the proper time off for 15 years. So that's cute. That's a good look. That the self-employment is not the ultimate saving grace that sometimes the internet has built it up to be.

**0:58:49 LS:** Right.

**0:58:51 NA:** So the last thing I'm really interested in is this idea of how to balance what I would think of as dreaming big, and then also being practical, I guess both of those things in air quotes potentially, to land on realistic options that still feel exciting?

**0:59:07 LS:** Yes. Okay, so this is where the mindset comes in for sure, and when I'm also, I'm not a big mindset person, I don't talk about mindset, I don't... I really think more in terms of personal resilience. Do you have the capacity to bounce back from a setback, to keep going in the direction that you were headed, or to change and pivot?

**0:59:28 LS:** So coming from that resilience standpoint. I'm a firm believer that the size of the dream doesn't matter. It's really the authenticity of the dream. Not everyone wants to go save the world, not everyone wants to have a New York Times bestseller and do a TED talk, and have a million Instagram followers. A lot of people have real dreams that are meaningful to them that are small.

**0:59:56 LS:** So when it comes to dreaming big, I guess where I'm concerned is, yes there are external obstacles in the world, I wanna make sure that people aren't setting up their own internal obstacles. So that whether your dream is huge or whether your dream is tiny, you are not gonna let your beliefs about yourself or what you're capable of, be what's gonna stand in the way of that.

**1:00:22 LS:** So once we've kind of oriented the dream towards what's really in your heart, what you feel connected to, what makes you feel alive and purposeful, when it comes to keeping it practical, that's why we got all this criteria, that's why we have an income range, that's why we're really assessing your abilities.

**1:00:45 LS:** I know I worked with a client not long ago, and he said, "I think I'm having a limiting belief, because what I wanna do, I think I wanna be a producer, but I have this limiting belief that I don't have the skill to do that." And I said, "Well, slow down here. I don't think that's a limiting belief. I think it is true that you do not yet have the skills to be a producer."

**1:01:09 LS:** It's not a limiting belief that like, "Oh, I just don't have it." Literally, today, you don't have what it takes. Can you get there? Absolutely. So let's identify the skill gaps between where you are today and what it would take to be a producer, but it's a realistic belief to think that, "I don't have the skills to be a producer." It would be a limiting belief to say, "I can't figure it out, I can't learn that stuff."

**1:01:33 NA:** Yes, yes, that idea that it's not looking at the most ideal or dream thing, whatever the size of that dream is and like, "Okay, I can either step fully into that right now, or otherwise it's not gonna happen." The idea of what you're saying, "Okay, can you figure it out?" We can all learn new things, just because you don't know how to do something now doesn't mean that you can't learn how to do it, that you can't make steps in that direction.

**1:02:00 NA:** And that element of practicality, I think is a great reminder. As is the... What you said about authentic dreams versus dreaming big, that something could actually be what you want. Sometimes I have to check myself about almost belittling my own dreams, that this story that if you don't want the New York Times bestseller and the TED talk and the million Instagram followers, then you are limiting yourself, that you're not dreaming big enough, you're not giving yourself enough credit, you're not charging what you're worth, whatever that means. And that...

**1:02:33 NA:** I don't know, I've almost talked to myself out of things that I actually do want and that would be really the right fit for me right now, maybe because I feel like they're not sexy enough by other people's standards, and I think that that's really worth unpacking of, if... Once the honest answers to the criteria that you laid out, figuring out what enough is for you and being able to not continuously try to overreach for external validation or whatever the reasons are, that seems really good advice.

**1:03:03 LS:** Yeah. Where's your dream barometer? And who are you dreaming on behalf of? I know sometimes I have felt this, and I think my client's experienced this is, it's almost like you're answering questions or making decisions based for this audience of ghosts, of your past teachers or something your mom said to you when you were 14, or how you think one of your hero figures would respond. And it just...

**1:03:31 LS:** You've gotta eliminate the audience, that invisible audience, and tune into blank sheet of paper, "What matters most? This is my life. I'm the one who's gonna have to live with the consequences of this every day. What do I need? What do I want? What do I wanna contribute?" And making decisions from there.

**1:03:51 NA:** Yeah. I think that's a wonderful place for us to start to wrap up. I'd love to ask, if you could leave folks with one call to action based on our conversation, what would it be? Maybe a question to ask themselves or a small action to take?

**1:04:06 LS:** Try to what matters most, you know, get out that blank sheet of paper and write at the top and see what comes out. And we've been talking about that in terms of career, so you can think of it through that lens, but if there's something else that you are a decision that you're having trouble making, try that trick, and usually the cream comes to the top of what are the thing or the things that really are calling for demanding attention.

**1:04:27 NA:** Yeah, what matters most right now? What are we gonna prioritize? I love that. What's the best place for people to find you and say hi online? Do you have a particular favorite way to connect with new folks?

**1:04:40 LS:** Yeah, I am... I'll tell you, I'm not on social media a whole lot, but folks can find me over at my website, [yourcareerhomecoming.com](http://yourcareerhomecoming.com), I've got a great free training that will go more into the detail of the strategy of how you figure this stuff out. And otherwise every now and then I'm over on Instagram also [@yourcareerhomecoming](https://www.instagram.com/yourcareerhomecoming).

**1:05:00 NA:** I will put links to those things in the show notes. Laura, thank you so much.

**1:05:04 LS:** Yeah. Thanks. Thanks, Nicole.

[music]

**1:05:10 NA:** And that's our show for today. Our music is by Adam Day, who also handles our sound editing. Thanks, Adam, you're the best. And huge thanks as well to every single member of our Patreon community, for making this honest conversation, this entire podcast, and so much of my other work, like my twice weekly personal essay newsletter called, Good Question, possible.

**1:05:33 NA:** Your monthly funding allows me to keep creating resources and gatherings for folks who crave honest conversations, both with themselves and others, and I fully believe that these conversations can change our lives, our relationships and our world. To join us, just come on over to [patreon.com/nicoleantoinette](https://patreon.com/nicoleantoinette). Our community operates on a shame free sliding scale, so you can feel good about supporting this work from within your own means. So I'll see you over in the Patreon community, yeah?

**1:06:00 NA:** And until next time, I want you to know three things. First, that you are enough. Second, that you are not alone. And third, that I'm totally rooting for you.

[music]

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