

00:00:00 If you're listening to this episode, chances are you grew up hearing the same recipe for success that I did the recipe went something like this, go to school, get a degree, maybe a second degree or a master's or a PhD, get a stable job with benefits and a retirement plan. Stayed there until 65, then retire. And bam, success is inevitable.

00:00:24 Much has been said on this podcast about this path. The fact is the awakening of myself to the fact that this path is A not for everyone, and B, not the only one, is what led me to becoming a speaker, a coach, and creating this podcast in the first place. The fact that so many people are still stuck, thinking,

00:00:44 feeling, living this life where this is the only recipe for success. That honestly is what drives me and my team day after day to create content to coach and to lead you and all of us to see another way. Let's talk about this advice here for a moment. This advice has been lovingly passed down for the last few generations to us, and it was great advice a few decades ago,

00:01:09 but you and I know this, the world has changed, but this advice, the success recipe, if you will, it hasn't changed. The reality of today that I see is that so many people are stuck in jobs they don't like. And in work environments or situations that aren't supportive of the life they truly wanna be living, their gifts aren't being shared,

00:01:28 their potential isn't being explored. Maybe that's you. You're doing work that you don't enjoy. Maybe you have a creative pursuit or a passion and you don't know how to go for it. Perhaps you know that there's untapped potential within you and you know your job isn't the way it's gonna come out today. Most people will have at least seven careers in their lifetime,

00:01:50 and the average person holds 12.4 jobs between the ages of 18 and 54. Think about your own career. How many jobs have you had already? How many companies have you explored working at? And if you're the one unicorn who's listening to this and stayed in one role or one company for over 10 years, look around you. I know you're gonna notice,

00:02:11 friends, family, your network, they certainly haven't. Today, jobs, career paths and companies are all evolving. As technology changes, the world changes. And as humans, I believe we are collectively stepping more into our power and we're deciding to stop settling. All this culminates in the workforce with the rise of freelancing.

Here's the thing I know, I know that taking the leap into freelancing can be scary and overwhelming,

00:02:41 and that's why I'm so honored to be joined today by Joy Batra, author of the new new book, the Freelance Mindset, unleashing Your Side Hustles for Better Work, life and Play. Maybe you're thinking, I don't know how, how do I actually make the transition into freelancing? Maybe you're afraid. No, probably you are afraid. Afraid of not knowing how,

00:03:02 afraid of failure, of not being able to pay the bills or afraid of not being taken seriously by friends, family, and colleagues. We all know that when we quit the quote stable job, we miss out on the quote, stable paycheck. With freelancing, there will be ups and downs in the pay, and maybe you're not sure how to navigate those ups and downs when the expenses in your life like mortgages or rent are the same each and every month.

00:03:24 And of course, if you're listening, you're driven, you're ambitious and you're passionate about, about doing cool things and cool work in this world. And you might be worried that your career growth may be stunted or you won't be able to see any progress without a corporate ladder. To climb all of this and more is what Joy is here to help us with.

00:03:41 In this episode, you're gonna learn how to prepare for a leap into freelancing. You're gonna discover how freelancing can be either a way to challenge your creative pursuit or passion, or be the part-time job to fuel and

fund your passions. You're gonna be able to answer for yourself whether you shed quit your job to follow your passions, you're gonna learn how to answer that inevitable question.

00:04:01 What do you do as a freelancer and how to handle when it comes up? You're gonna hear tips on how to deal with the feast or famine cycles and understand ways to grow your career, even if you're not only climbing the corporate ladder. One of my favorite parts of this episode is that you're gonna hear a lot of real life examples of people in all kinds of industries who have created both career and personal success without a traditional nine to five job.

00:04:24 By the end of this episode, you'll realize that freelancing can actually be a more stable option than having just one job. You'll understand what it takes to become a freelancer, how to handle the ups and downs, and be ready to step into the freelancer mindset. You're gonna feel confident, empowered, hopeful, and most of all, like you can create whatever life and career success it is that you desire.

00:04:44 So if you're ready to stop settling for a job or career that isn't working for you or ready to stop hiding your passions and ready to bring out the best in yourself, tap into your unrealized potential and truly take control of your career and life. This episode is for you. Be ready to be inspired, motivated, and transformed by the wisdom of joy batra and the insights we're sharing today.

00:05:05 So listen in and discover the power of creating your own recipe for success. Welcome to the Goalden Girls Podcast, where we believe you can have it all. I'm your host, Lisa Michaud, and I'm spilling tangible tips, goal getting strategies and real life stories to inspire you to tackle your biggest dreams. You're a woman who knows you're made for more. Get ready to leave the excuses and self doubt behind by being vulnerable,

00:05:34 sharing your truth, and having honest conversations so you can succeed on your terms. Together we'll set goals you'll actually achieve by staying motivated, having fun, and building a community of women, empowering women. It's time to tap into your best self, get confident and truly have it all. Goalden girl. Let's dive in. Hello Goalden girls, and welcome to this episode of Goalden Girls Podcast.

00:06:01 Today I'm so excited to be joined by Joy Batra. Joy is the author of the Freelance Mindset, unleashing Your Side, hustles for Better Work, play, and Life, which draws on her decade of freelancing experience and interviews with 50 freelancers. Joy is the founder of Courts Consulting, a freelance consulting firm that has advised startups, venture capital firms, fortune 500 companies,

00:06:24 the head of legal at Syndicate protocol, and a former Bollywood actress. And I have to say, if that doesn't speak to the novelty and excitement of what is possible with the freelance lifestyle, I don't know what does. So joy, I love the variety in that. Thank you for being here. Let's talk about being a freelancer. Yeah, let's do it.

00:06:42 Thank you for having me. Thank you for being here. Now I have a sneaking suspicion you did not grow up at, you know, at the age of three and five saying, I wanna be a freelancer, I wanna be a freelancer. And in fact, I know that your, your story has some real heartbreak in it. Would you share with us your journey from growing up?

00:07:01 You know, thinking you had to have a nine to five and how now here you are doing lots of different things and even writing a book on freelancing? Yeah, growing up, freelancing was not at all on my radar. I wanted to be an actor, a singer, a detective at one point, a mathematician, but kind of every random thing under the sun.

00:07:21 And as I grew up, I have wonderful parents, both are immigrants to the, to the United States and with kind of an immigrant mentality, what's top of mind, just really having stability in the new country. So what would've

really excited my parents when I was younger is if I said, oh, I wanna be a doctor or an engineer. But it was very clear those were not my calling.

00:07:40 Eventually it kind of landed on, you know, being a lawyer, I thought that looked really interesting. I saw some court cases on TV and was like, oh, that sounds fun. Yeah. And so that kind of became my life plan for a little bit, like for, you know, through high school and early college. But as I got toward the end of college and time became real for me to actually go to law school and make this official,

00:08:03 I started to get a little nervous and I wondered, when I saw other lawyers, I wondered if that kind of lifestyle was something that I could sustain for an entire career and if that was really the right fit for all the parts of my personality that I wanted to express. And I, you know, had these thoughts in the back of my head and I would kind of talk about them with my family.

00:08:23 But my dad was actually unfortunately terminally ill for about the past decade before I graduated college. And so right around graduation, he was hospitalized for the last time he had a disease called ALS and he was on a ventilator and it was very clear he would have to be on life support for the rest of his life. And you know, at this point he's kind of,

00:08:45 you know, saying goodbye to, well the life on earth and his, his family. And he and I were kind of talking about the future and I raised with him, you know, maybe what if I don't go to law school? What if I do something else? And it was not the right time for him to have that conversation. Obviously he had a lot going on and everything was kind of set.

00:09:04 I was going to take the LSAT, which is the test you take in the states to go to law school. And he said, you know, no, like this is, this is the plan. Like why, why are you changing the plan? And I get that, I, I get that it had been our plan for a very long time and there are parts of it I loved.

00:09:18 So while he was in the hospital, I took this law school test and then he, he came off life support and we thought he would have just, you know, a couple of hours because they told us he couldn't breathe. But he ended up lasting well over like about a week. And we were like, wow, is he gonna make it?

00:09:35 What is this a miracle? And at this point, my mom and I had been in the hospital for a week, hadn't showered, hadn't changed our clothes. So we said, okay, we're gonna run home, quickly change and come back. And we ran home, quickly changed and checked the mail, and in the mail was my law school results for the test.

00:09:51 And I ended up scoring in the 99th percentile. And I went back to the hospital and showed it to my dad and was Dad, look, I I could go to Harvard and he s he like patted my hand and he smiled and within an hour he passed away and part of me kind of thought that and still thinks to some extent he wanted to see me settled and he was waiting for those results before he moved on.

00:10:13 We'll never know, but that's, that's part of what I believe and it's because he cared a lot about my stability and, and cared a lot about my future of course. But for me, when I got to law school and I did end up going to Harvard, this prompted a little bit of an existential crisis because I thought, okay, this is an amazing opportunity and yet there are parts of me that I'm still not expressing the part of me that likes to act,

00:10:37 likes to sing, likes to dance, whatever it is. And as I got closer and closer to graduation, I thought, okay, I don't know anybody else who is taking any kind of creative career coming out of law school. So I think the, the choice is either this law firm job that I have lined up or I don't know, like I don't know any other option.

00:10:59 So I accepted a law firm job and then I took the bar exam and went to India to see my family. And one thing kind of led to another where I thought, I'm in India, let me explore this passion I have for Bollywood. I took an

acting class and then got an audition and then ended up getting a talent management contract to act for kind of like a TV and film studio and existential crisis.

00:11:20 Number two, do I take the path of traditional security or do I just take this life of adventure but also no financial kind of plan whatsoever. And I ended up spoiler alert taking that, that plan and that leap into acting and turning down this corporate law job, which prompted me to well find cash fast and become a freelancer in addition to the acting.

00:11:43 So that was kind of the journey to freelancing and it was a very unexpected one for me. It was a little challenging one within the family because you know, nobody had done something like this before, but ultimately it was really, has been really rewarding for me and I'm really excited to share it. Wow, that is such a powerful story and so beautiful.

00:12:04 Thank you so much for sharing and I'm so sorry for your loss and you know, I don't know your father, but I'm sure he would be so proud of you today and the woman that you are and, and you know how you're showing up in this world, whether it's, you know, Harvard or not, you're amazing. I, the time we spent together has been such a gift already.

00:12:24 Thank you. So, I mean you were obviously a pioneer in this, doing this for over a decade and I can imagine doing this, you know, from Harvard to Bollywood and and your own career, a lot has changed. Why do you think right now and today is such an important time to talk about freelancing, why do you think it's like starting to really gain traction?

00:12:47 Why is it so important right now? I think we're in a moment that has been building for the last, you know, three to five years. It was especially accelerated by the pandemic when two things happened, a lot of people lost their jobs and a lot of people were dealing with a lot of fear and loss of control over what you could do with your time with your body and really wanting to take back some of that agency and that reminder that life is short and we have all of these other parts of ourselves outside of the nine to five world that we need to take care of and that we need to honor.

00:13:18 And now we are in this moment where again, we have economic uncertainty. A lot of people are, you know, losing their jobs unfortunately. And a lot of people are realizing that the jobs available to them are not the quite, you know, are not quite the right match for what kind of worker or human they want to be for the rest of their life.

00:13:38 So this is a really important opportunity for us to think about how freelancing can give us a little bit more security, how it can give us multiple sources of income, multiple clients so that we can have a livelihood that a can't be taken away from us by any one person. And B also allows us to express different parts of ourselves that we care about and and use our many different skills and gifts.

00:14:01 And so this, this moment of freelancing I think is only going to accelerate because we are all realizing that by having our side hustles, we have this form of freedom and expression that wasn't otherwise possible. Especially you know, just a few years ago when you had to choose just a single job. Oh, I love how you reframe that because I, my parents are also immigrants and I think I know a lot of people listening are gonna resonate with that idea that all that our parents really want for us is stability.

00:14:28 And I'm also, I'm married to a guy who's like his core value is stability and I just find it really interesting how you flip that because I think you're right. Like I think for our parents generation stability was the job that would keep you for 20, 30, 40 years and you've got the pension and the benefits and all that. But you're right, like there's

also stability in being in control and there's stability in having multiple streams of income and there is stability in having autonomy over your career,

00:14:56 over what services you provide or don't provide work you do or you don't do, you know, and what kind of clients or projects you work on. And so I love that reframe that stability can actually come from not just from one source but from diversity and from multiple different projects or initiatives or ways of creating income. Yeah, absolutely. It's something we don't think about that much,

00:15:20 but if you're going to have for example, just a single job, the job you choose matters so much. And there's an example you use a lot, which is if you could invest your time in just one employer, and let's say like in this very contrived example, you know, the only two options for employment are a hot chocolate shop or an ice cream shop and you pick the hot chocolate shop.

00:15:39 Well I mean if it happens to be hot, I'm sorry you're out of luck, you won't have any clients, you won't have any work. And the same is true if you choose ice cream and it happens to be cold. But you know, with this kind of mindset of a freelancer where you're able to split your time between multiple things that matter,

00:15:54 you would be able to have hot chocolate and ice cream as your trade and then no matter hot or cold, rain or shine, you're going to have work and you're going to have something that's available to you to be able to support yourself and your livelihood. So good. So good. Okay, we haven't, we didn't talk about this ahead of time,

00:16:13 but I feel like one other layer in this is also AI and like this new introduction, you know, just a couple months ago chat G P T came out, we're gonna be doing a podcast all about that and, and AI really is starting to, I think hit the average person's desk if you will. How do you think that ties into all this?

00:16:37 Yeah, it's a really important thing for us to be mindful of because with AI we now have to pivot the kind of work that is going to be valued by the economy and that we're going to be able to sell. So initially, for example, when it comes to writing, a lot of people would, you know, be able to sell like a,

00:16:55 a draft of copy and their ability to draft was really what set them apart. But now when AI can quickly make up a a draft, then the next question is, okay, how do I curate this? How do I edit it? What is, you know, what is this draft being used for? So the skills are changing even if the role is staying the same,

00:17:11 which is content creator or or something else. And what a freelancer does is you're able to always stay on the forefront of that because you are pitching clients constantly. So your skills are always getting tested by the market. It's not that you're sitting in a job pushing paper every single day and being kind of insulated from what companies actually need on a day-to-day basis to solve their problems.

00:17:32 So you are on the cutting edge and what I saw with so many freelancers before AI is that freelancing really helped them pivot quickly and gain new skills and gain new clients. So a number of writers that I interviewed have been writing for a few decades as freelancers and about 15, 20 years ago it was very popular to get hired by companies to write annual reports for these glossy magazine style reports.

00:17:57 And then something happened where the trend changed and suddenly it's like a very short P D F and then a lot of numbers at the end. And you don't need to hire an outside freelancer to write an entire document for that. Somebody in-house can do it quite quickly. So the freelancers who had to pivot because they had multiple clients and they weren't just specialized in the annual report,

00:18:17 which happens, you know, once a year, they were able to then expand from annual reports to marketing brochures to kind of blogging and content creation and other aspects that the company still needed even if

they weren't making that one specific product. So something like chat G P T or AI in general is going to accelerate the shift and it's going to make certain tasks ob obsolete or less valued.

00:18:39 But by staying on the cutting edge and by continuing to find what the new needs are, now the need is curating chat G P T or finding and getting the AI to do what you actually want it to do. That is what's gonna keep you ahead of the game. Oh, such a great, great reframe on that. And I also love that example of,

00:18:56 you know, free, this has been happening forever and ever and ever in our societies, in our history, in our being as humans. So I love that, that story, that example of annual ports to, I mean look at blogging, right? Look at all the copy. I feel like we now need actually more copy and more writing than ever before if you look at it that way.

00:19:14 And I sort of think, see the same way around like graphic design, you know, I, I think a lot of people had fears around Canva coming out, but I feel like we need more and more graphic design because of tools like Canva. So yeah, that's a great, great perspective. I've heard you say that allowing us to connect with our inner spark and a work that calls us and having,

00:19:36 you know, our financial future protected. That's, that's the important thing. And the answer in having all those three of those things is thinking like a freelancer. So for those people that maybe don't resonate with a forward freelancer, what are some other ways that we might define it? Yeah, freelancing was a surprisingly controversial word. There were a number of freelancers I interviewed who didn't,

00:19:59 didn't necessarily see themselves as freelancers. And I think that's because we have a stigma as a society where we think about entrepreneurship as being very glamorous and kind of sexy and it is. But at the same time we think of freelancers who are doing many of the same skills as, you know, maybe not serious about their careers and we need to shift that.

00:20:19 And so other words that I've heard people say that they found more empowering or things like, yes I'm an entrepreneur or I'm a fractional executive, or I'm a whatever, my trade is like an accountant or a designer. There are, you know, a variety of these different terms out there. People call themselves thought leaders, content creators, influencers. But every single one of them has this sort of freelance mentality where you're running your own business and you're also taking care of all the employees,

00:20:48 which hey are mostly you. And so you have to take care of all your needs from the financial to kind of the maintenance of like legal tax, sales, marketing to the emotional, how do you retain yourself when you don't necessarily have someone to give you vacation time or sick time? How do you take care of yourself as an entire person? And to me that's the freelance mindset.

00:21:09 But the freelance mindset can take many different shapes depending on what resonates with you and your audience. And I think that's the most important thing ultimately is that people are communicating their skills in a way that will land with the person they're talking to. Because at the end of the day, in my opinion, we're all freelancers. But then you need to get a little more specific of what kind of freelancer are you.

00:21:30 I totally agree with what you just said, that at the end of the day, all of us are freelancers. One of my favorite lessons is something that a friend said to me about eight years ago at the time she was in a job that she hated. She was just done, it was her a manager job. She was making six figures, all the things she thought she wanted,

00:21:49 but in the end she was actually miserable cuz she wasn't spending time with people she loved, she had all this money, nothing to do with it, it was just not working. So her and her husband set a goal to retire by the age of 40 and they were a few months away from hitting this. And one morning I, I'm sure many people can relate,

00:22:03 she just like looked at her husband and was like, I just, I can't do this anymore. Like I don't wanna go in and work for them, work for this company, work for this bus, like it's sucking my soul, I'm, it's taking me all out. And her husband looked at her and said, you don't work for them, you work for us.

00:22:21 Everything that you're doing is in service of us. It is in service of our vision and our goals too. And that has always stuck with me and I think it's such a great sentiment. I wish more people looked at their life and their careers through that lens of, you know, at the end of the day like is even this thing that might be crappy in this moment is this thing serving my ultimate bigger goal of bigger vision?

00:22:44 And I, I wanna be really like, insert the caveat here, I wanna make sure everyone really hears this. My point here is not to stay stuck in a miserable job forever because it pays the bills. It's like the opposite of everything that I believe in. And I'm sure you too joy. But the point is here to remember that you're in charge and you are in control and that even if you're working for somebody else,

00:23:01 you're still working for you and your goals and then you can evaluate that job, that company, that work environment is at working for me is this helping me. We create, create what it is that I want in my life. And I know for my friend this changed everything and they were able to look at the next, she was able to look at the next,

00:23:17 next few months. She went to work that day, which is great. And for the next few months, knowing like not from a bitter like, oh I'm still here still doing this, but I'm doing this for us, I'm doing this for our partnership, for our goals. Spoiler alert, she, you know, they retired shortly afterwards they sail their sailboat around,

00:23:34 they like have a great, have a great life. And that really stuck with me. So I, I think about that too often. Like, and I'm in this this suck even when it's hard I have to think about like, is this in service of my goals? And cuz I work for us and we all, we all work for us and if it's not,

00:23:48 then I will reevaluate. So yeah, I just wanted wanted to share that anecdote because I, I think as soon as people recognize that they're in charge and they're in control, once you realize that it changes everything, I love that story. It speaks to my soul. I mean, how many times do we think we're, you know, doing something because someone else has told us to,

00:24:06 when really it's serving us and we have this bigger purpose behind it, but we forget, we get kind of caught up in the weeds or in the day-to-day and it just slips away. So many freelancers have moved away from this kind of idea of a career ladder and the only way to grow is vertically within an industry or a company and have moved toward more of a portfolio career.

00:24:25 And I know many of your audience members are investors or interested in kind of real estate and your career, like your portfolio of investments is something that is in service of a goal but can also be recalibrated and should be recalibrated from time to time. You do end up overexposed in certain sectors sometimes and you need to realize, okay, this is, this is a moment where I'm spending more time or have more of my assets tied up in one particular area than would actually serve my goal.

00:24:52 So I, I fully agree when you're doing something that is in service of a larger goal, like keep doing it, but there are also moments when that takes on a life of its own and it kind of has this scope creep and, and there are moments when you do need to kind of dial down exactly how much of your energy and your life force you're putting into a particular activity because it,

00:25:14 it may no longer be serving you. Brilliant. Thanks for wrapping that up so, so beautifully. Okay, so can you share, cause I know you, I mean you've interviewed 50 people, you've gotta have some good stories. What are

some examples or yeah, stories from some of these successful freelancers that were able to find that fulfillment, you know,

00:25:35 both financially, emotionally from their passion in their work without having their traditional success career path? So I think the first thing is that success looked different for everybody. And this was one of the questions that I asked people is how do you define success? And one woman I spoke to defined success as you know, really being able to grow in how much she was earning and being able to have her work represented in more prestigious places.

00:26:03 She was a writer but another woman was a friend of a friend and for her success really looked like, you know, being able to walk her dog in the mornings and be able to take long coffee breaks. And it really was, being able to have that agency over her entire time and knowing where you fall along that spectrum is incredibly important because what is success to us changes over time.

00:26:27 And I'll give you a story that's, it's a little bit heartbreaking, but at the same time it shows what, like how our definition of success evolves. So there's this woman that I know of who is an actor and she spent decades auditioning and and working as an actor in New York, York. And she got some roles and always wanted to do more.

00:26:46 I think she was hungry for something bigger and she was finally cast in a television show. That was her dream role, it was happening, it was a big network and she was so excited A couple of weeks before they were about to shoot this, the role got canceled and the show wasn't made and her heart broke. She had spent decades kind of pursuing this dream and there's a lot of rejection in acting and you keep picking yourself up and and going,

00:27:13 and this one was too much. She said, okay, you know, I love my craft, but for me having agency having control would be success. And so what that looked like for her was actually pivoting into something you love, which is real estate. She studied and got her real estate license and now she's able to use her gifts to be able to connect with people,

00:27:32 to be able to give them something they need, help them find their hopes and dreams in the form of a new house and also be able to have some control over what happens next in her career. So success really shifts from moment to moment and over time in our, in our journeys. And that's kind of the beauty of why the freelance lifestyle is so flexible and how we can keep recalibrating our portfolio to match whatever is coming up for us both internally and externally in the moment.

00:28:00 Oh, so good. So what do you define as the freelance mindset or a freelance mindset? Yeah, to me the freelance mindset is thinking of yourself as the entire company and like I kind of alluded to earlier, that means you have to take care of yourself financially and you need to have a functional business model, but because you are the staff of your company,

00:28:22 you need to be able to retain yourself for the long haul. And so you need to make sure that you are getting enough rest, you have enough time to pursue your hobbies, you're using the skills that you actually value and want to advance in your career. And being able to solve all of those for yourself and carve out a path may not look like anyone around you because well we are all different and we're all carving paths at different moments and,

00:28:48 and honor that and really be able to take that ownership. Hmm. So good. So good. And I feel like a part of that must also be making sure that you're living up to your definition of success, whatever that is, right? Absolutely. Living up to your definition of success and knowing what success is for you at any given moment because I mean we talk about Maslow's hierarchy of needs a lot,

00:29:12 but it is relevant if you are not able to pay rent, then of course having a client that pays you well will absolutely be a definition of success this month. But if you're a kind of on like a place where you're amorphous study state and you want to, I don't know, reconnect with a part of yourself that you used to be when you were younger and really rediscover that energy and that life force success is going to look different.

00:29:35 It, it might even look simple. It might be like, okay, this is a, a kind of a silly story, but I'll tell you this one, I was working with a coach and she and I were doing some shadow work when I was in the process of writing and I was very terrified to get my voice out there. I had a lot of writer's block and imposter syndrome and,

00:29:53 and the whole nine yards. And so for me success was just taking a tiny risk. I was out having coffee and sitting outdoors and it was very cold and there were these heat lamps but they weren't on. And I'm looking at the heat lamps like, oh my god, would somebody turn them on? And there was nobody coming by. So I thought,

00:30:09 okay, if I just take a chair stand up, I can reach the heat lamp and I will be able to turn it on. But I was so terrified, like I thought maybe the store clerk will yell at me some passers by, I'll be like, what are you doing? Maybe I'll fall. Yes. So I took all my silly little courage and turned on that heat lamp and then for me that just like unlocked something in me where I was like,

00:30:28 oh yeah, I mean I can, I don't need somebody to come to me and like make sure I'm comfortable and make sure the heat lamp is on. I can turn that on for myself. And then I was able to write the rest of the afternoon because I was able to, you know, make this little shift. Ah, it's so true.

00:30:44 You know, it's so interesting how often we wait for permission or we like have these rules that we, that aren't actually rules, but we have them in our head and we think we have to follow them around when what we can and can't do and how we do and don't live life and when we write and when we turn on the heater and all those things.

00:31:01 So yeah, I think that's so kudos to you and hopefully somebody here listening to this goes ahead and turns our heater on own heater onto whatever that means for you. That makes me think too about the way that we work because I feel like we have a lot of stories, probably most of them made up illusions about the way that we work. What,

00:31:24 what are some of those illusions you think we have around the way that we have to work, the way that we are successful with work and what do you actually think is true? There are a lot of misconceptions and a lot of myths that we have about the way we work. And some of those get started early. So for example, you know,

00:31:44 when you're thinking about the path to stability a generation ago that absolutely was a professional degree and that was learning a trade today, I mean it is still helpful. I'm not saying don't become a doctor or a lawyer. That absolutely can be a great thing, but it's not the only path to stability. And one of the big misconceptions about freelancing is that it's this absolutely risky path.

00:32:07 And it can be if you do it without a plan. Absolutely. Like you need to find a way to get money in the door to take care of yourself. If you're in the United States, you need health insurance. But there are many ways that freelancing can reduce your risk or manage your risk. And we talked about some of those where if you have a variety of clients,

00:32:25 you'll be less dependent on any one income source. You'll also be catching market trends faster because you're on the cutting edge and you're also getting that cross pollination from different industries at the same time. So that is, that is one of the big stories we're told is that going out on your own is risky, it's dangerous that bad things are going to happen.

00:32:44 And when the reality is okay, yes, it is risky, it is dangerous, but we can prepare for the bad things and make them less likely to happen. And what happens as a result is more good things can happen. You might have much larger upside. I was surprised over and over again the number of people who told me they're earning more as freelancers than they were in full-time work.

00:33:04 It's not always the case, you have to plan carefully for it, but it is possible and you can carve out a life where you're choosing the projects you want to work on and doing a good job at them and then getting more and more of that kind of work. That was something that emerged over and over again that every time we try to deviate a little bit from the pack,

00:33:24 like we're social animals and when we do something a little different, it's scary. There's that fear of rejection, there's the feeling that nobody knows exactly what we're doing and they can't relate to us, but it can pay off and you can find something that fills your needs and your lifestyle and your unique gifts and contributions much better than something someone else has created for you.

00:33:45 Yes. So good. So good. Yeah, it's amazing all the fears that come up, especially anytime we wanna deviate. Like we're such, we're such social beings and you know, I'm, I'm recovering people pleaser, so I relate to that so much, so much. So what do you think are some of the biggest challenges that people experience when they are just getting started with freelancing and,

00:34:10 and how do you work through those? Obviously some of these are mindset, I'm sure. What else is there? Yeah, mindset. Absolutely. There's so much fear. The next thing is really around understanding what freelancing means to you, because we think of freelancing and you assume, oh my gosh, that means I need to quit my job and like go to a coworking space in Tulum or something.

00:34:31 And we, you know, we can, but Please, but please can we do that? Yeah, actually let's, let's pause the podcast and go, Let's go to Tulum and record this. Okay, I'm a new idea, a new book, but so no freelancing is actually very flexible and you don't have to be all or nothing to be a freelancer.

00:34:49 I think we are all freelancers and the amount of work we're taking on as freelancers at any given moment might vary, but you have this entire spectrum that you can slide up and down. You might start, Lance, sorry, you might start freelancing by being full-time and just thinking about freelancing and like getting your business model together. And then you might add on a few clients nights and weekends.

00:35:09 And once you start to see some traction and start to see what's working well, you might say, oh, maybe I can, maybe I can go part-time. That might be an option. And so you're part-time working and part-time freelancing. And then there might come a moment where you say, you know what, this is actually right for me. And you go all in on freelance and you figure out a way to solve for all your needs from financial to emotional to things like health insurance in the states.

00:35:33 But you know, where you are on that spectrum can come and go. And this is really kind of one of the big misconceptions and one of the things that holds people back from starting because they think, oh, you know, freelancing, that's for somebody else, that's not for me. It doesn't fit into my life. But it's flexible enough that you can incorporate the elements that do fit into your life in this particular moment.

00:35:53 And then if it serves you, build on them or just stay with that kind of limited exposure, but know that it's available to you and it might be a tool that could help you solve some of the challenges that are coming up in your daily life. I feel like, you know, we're recording this end of February, March, 2023. There's so much talk about mass layoffs.

00:36:14 There already have been mass layoffs happening. I feel like every day I look in the news and there's another big corporation laying people off. So I have a feeling, you know, people, there's gonna be people listening to this episode that have, have been recently laid off or perhaps have the fear of, of layoffs, which is why I love everything you're,

00:36:32 you're talking about and teaching. And I hope that this starts to plant the seed that freelancing is an option for those people who maybe they've just been laid off or maybe they're really afraid and they need a little bit of hope. What, what story or what could you share that might inspire people that maybe right now don't even think that's possible for them? That freelancing could be a part of them,

00:36:56 especially, you know, coming out of a layoff, which can be a really tough season of life. It's so hard and my heart breaks for that. But one gentleman I interviewed had been freelancing, I think it's now, gosh, it's probably 30 ish years, he's 70. And he, his wife likes to joke that he's unemployable and he was repeatedly laid off and he said at one point he said,

00:37:23 oh, you know, we're all just one pink slip away from retirement. You never know when that's coming. But for him, he realized that his gift was really in his ability to be entrepreneurial, to be creative and to do work. He's a writer and he loves to write and he could generate really, really quickly. And he was able to kind of demonstrate that to a couple of people.

00:37:44 Some were at his former employer, some were people that he met through just networking in general and was able to start getting a client. And then that client sort of builds a little bit of momentum. You start to get some good energy because you're doing something productive, even if it's not necessarily paying. There was, you know, at one point I also had a long stretch where I was going without clients for a moment,

00:38:06 and then I started to help a friend who had been laid off and I was doing legal work advising this friend, and we were working on it every day and it just felt really good to be able to help somebody with something. And then that led to other momentum and to other doors opening. And the same was true for this gentleman where he then was able to get repeat clients.

00:38:24 But another story that comes to mind is one woman who's incredibly impressive, she is an actor, she has an mba, she's a film producer, and she was in a, in a corporate phase of her life and she had just joined a large company and moved across the country from New York to California to work for them. And she had rented this beautiful apartment,

00:38:45 it was facing the ocean, and she was like, ah, I've made it. About a month later she was laid off and it was like, oh my god, what do I do? Like, I mean, I uprooted my entire life for this company and now here I am, I don't know if I can afford this apartment, I don't have any friends here.

00:39:01 What? And it was a really challenging moment for her because she had to kind of figure out what comes next. And for her, what came next was going back to her family, going back to New York and kind of picking up the peach pieces and rediscovering acting and being able to create her own films and being able, she turned out to be very good at fundraising,

00:39:22 was able to raise funds from, I think it was a kickstart, a Kickstarter or a crowdfunding campaign, and be able to produce her own work in her own stories. But in that moment of transition, it was terrifying. And she thought, you know, I've done the stable thing. I took the job. I, you know, I didn't do acting,

00:39:39 which was the risky one, what happened. And now as a freelancer, she feels much more in control of her destiny because she's in charge of how many projects she's working on, how many different industries she's in

and where, you know, where she's contributing value and what she's getting paid for at any given moment. So that was a really like eye-opening story for me.

00:40:00 And I'm hoping that if anyone has been laid off and is kind of looking for some, some hope, it's that the stable path is not stable. We've been told that it is and it's just not. And what is stable is being able to come back and bounce back from these moments and being able to pick yourself up, being able to put yourself out there again and to keep knocking on doors.

00:40:23 This is what freelancers do every day and this is what you can do now, and you'll get a yes. And the yes then leads to other yeses and it builds a momentum of your own. And this is just a moment in time. It happens to all freelancers. Freelancers often have really busy seasons and then slower seasons. And learning how to balance the two is kind of one of the really powerful things of what I think the freelance mindset is about.

00:40:46 Mm. So inspiring. I feel, I feel hopeful and I know everyone listening well too. So I think for most people, the, I mean, this is like the most common question of anything we ever talk about. And it's the how, how do you get started? How, how do you suggest people prepare for the leap into freelancing? What are the steps you can recommend?

00:41:10 How do, how do we do it? Like, you've sold me joy, tell me all about this. Yay, come over. Okay, so the first thing you need to do is understand why are you freelancing? And it'll be different for different people. Some people it's simply to get more income. Other people it's because, you know, you want creative fulfillment.

00:41:30 For example, I know an accountant who spends nights and weekends dancing and creating content in teaching classes. And depending on where along the spectrum you are, your, your next step to freelancing is going to look different. The next thing is how much agency or control do you want to have over your business? For some people it's enough to have freelancing, be a side hustle and to have a day job that will,

00:41:56 you know, be stable and will allow them to pay for their needs and their lifestyle and then have just a little exposure to the thing that excites them or this other side hustle and sort source of income. And for other people on the spectrum, you want to be your own boss and you want to decide all your projects and what you're going to do every day.

00:42:13 And figuring out where along that spectrum you are today, I think is the next most important thing. Once you have those two pieces of information, you know, kind of how much you need to push and how, how many clients will really be success for you. So if you're on kind of the, the financial side of, of wanting freelancing and also on the side who wants a lot of control,

00:42:38 you're going to want a lot of clients, probably at least three, you're gonna want them to be larger. And if you're on the other end of the spectrum where you're looking for more creative fulfillment and maybe you're okay with it being a smaller part of your life and not, you know, bringing in finances at the same time, then one project that you're really excited about could be that.

00:42:57 But I think we all need a moment for self-reflection and kind of pausing from all the other busyness in our life to think about what exactly am I solving for? What itch is freelancing going to scratch for me? And then the next step that becomes clear. So good, what itch does a scratch for me. I love that. So awesome. Let's talk about,

00:43:22 let's talk about money here because I mean, like you said, there's a reality that's what we all need to live in and it can make a really big difference in our lives. I, Troy and I, both my, my husband and I, we worked in a community where it was people were paid very well and it was often called the Golden handcuffs.

00:43:39 Like people came for two years, ended up staying for 20 because of the Golden handcuffs. And like truthfully, there's something really great about a steady paycheck. And I think this is a really big question for so many people. You've touched on it a few times that there is gonna be that feast and famine cycle. What tips do you have to share for people that help them to move through those cycles and either make sure they have a consistent flow of work or some other strategy that makes them feel like they have that stability that,

00:44:12 that they still need to live their real life? I think that it's really important to remember that this pendulum that swings from, you know, famine to feast and back again, this pendulum is always swinging. It's going to swing now and it's going to swing again. So whatever moment you're in, it's temporary. And I think it's very important for us to remember that almost daily.

00:44:36 I mean, there are some kind of stoic and Buddhist practices around this, but even if that's not part of your daily routine, just thinking that, okay, you know, what I have on my calendar today is what it is, but it could change. And so when you're in those moments of of feast, you have so many demands on your time,

00:44:53 you have a lot of ideas and things that you say, oh my god, if I had more time, I would just do X, Y, and Z. But you can't because there are people who need things from you and things that you want to do, write those down and have those handy for when the pendulum swings to the famine. And the same thing comes true when you're in this famine.

00:45:10 You say, oh my god, you know this thing, I haven't had clients come for X amount of time and there's not enough, as much money as I would like. Oh wow, this is really tough. It is really tough. But also what's happening in those moments is you've probably reduced your expenses and you've probably found new ways to save and stretch your dollar.

00:45:28 Remember those, because when the f when the feast side comes, again, it can be really tempting to spend on everything that you've deferred in the famine period, but did you actually need that stuff? And if the answer is no, can you buy yourself a little bit more freedom by not succumbing to that temptation? And this kind of back and forth is,

00:45:47 it's an essential part of the freelance career. But I think it's also what makes freelancers so powerful because we're so mentally resilient by having to deal with these ups and downs and know how to pick yourself up, know how to slow yourself down depending on what's going on in the season. And it's a really, really powerful catalyst for your growth as a human being and maybe in a spiritual sense if that resonates with you.

00:46:08 But even if it doesn't, it really builds this muscle of perseverance that I think serves you well no matter what you do. And no matter how long you stay as a full-time freelancer. Mm. Oh my gosh. Well I was selfishly kinda hoping you'd be like, well here's my magic wand and here's how to make it so there's never a piece of famine.

00:46:26 But that was a way better answer and I think that was so much more honest. And I think it really highlighted and highlights the power of both of those seasons. And I think sometimes we're so quick to try and like we just wanna avoid the discomfort and, and just be as comfortable as we can all the time. And I think what you shared there around like how to make the most out of both of those perhaps seasons of that could be discomfort in some ways.

00:46:54 I think that was just so, so powerful. Thank you. Are you, can you share some of the stoic and Buddhist principles as well or some of the tools there? I'd love to hear what some of those things are. Absolutely. So I'm a little more familiar with the Buddhist side of things, so I'll speak to that. But in Buddhism,

00:47:13 impermanence is a really powerful concept that comes up over and over again. And one of the core messages is, the reason that we struggle in this life is because we have attachment to things and we want things to be permanent. And then those things come to an end or they change and it hurts. And, and we, we try to have control and we try to make things go back to the way they used to be and we just can't.

00:47:37 And in order to really grow as a person, noticing what you're attached to, whether it's kind of, you know, having your skills be in demand, whether it's having a certain job, having, you know, any of these other stories that our identities sometimes seems to get wrapped up in. And if any one of those things falls away, know that you are still you,

00:47:57 you still have the same existence and the same value on this earth as you did even with all the trappings of success or whatever. You had just a moment to go. And really being able to practice and notice when that discomfort comes up because something is changing or something is being taken away from you, how can you grow through that and how can you realize like,

00:48:17 I am bigger than both than this entire situation because I am me with the job, I am me without the job and I have the same intrinsic value, the same contribution throughout. And one of the tools that is popular in Buddhism is you can essentially do kind of an end of life reflection and kind of in, in some of the lore there was meditations and,

00:48:40 and char grounds, which is where cremations are done. And you would look at people who, some of them would be kind of corpses, they passed away, some of them were families of people grieving the loss of a loved one. And it really puts things in perspective. You see the, the scene in front of you and you say, okay,

00:48:57 yeah, I mean one day that will also be me and my, my time will come. I don't know when or how, but all of these other things that I'm really wrapped up in right now, they'll go away. I mean, they're not, they're not going to last an entire lifetime. And so for, for me, I guess on a personal note,

00:49:15 when my dad passed away, he had, he had plans for his retirement. He actually thought that, you know, he would travel the world and you know, I think maybe go on a boat and, and many other things, but he got sick before he could retire. He retired out of necessity and then travel was not an option at that point.

00:49:32 He, he didn't leave, gosh, he didn't leave the house for a, a long time for, you know, many years. And we tell ourselves these stories of, oh, I have this idea of what I'll do when I have more time. And really trying to remember that our time here is precious. We don't know how much of it it have we have.

00:49:53 And if we can incorporate just a little bit more of that thing that, that we would do if tomorrow were our last day, we'll be a little bit more satisfied and hopefully a little less hung up on the stresses and kind of the ups and downs that come with just making a living in passing through the existence on this planet. Hmm. Love the spiritual perspective.

00:50:11 Beautiful. Beautiful. So good. So I mean, so much of, I was just doing a keynote the other night and I always ground down like everything. Goal setting to me always comes down to living with intention and living with intention so you can die without regrets. And that brings me to the next thing I wanted to ask you about, which is,

00:50:31 you know, we've all heard, or probably almost everyone's heard the idea of like, follow your passion or if you love what you do, you won't work a day in your life. And yet so many people, we've probably all heard it, but how many people are actually like following that advice or that wisdom? And I think there's so many blocks and fears around that.

00:50:49 There's doubt around what it actually means to follow it. Is it possible to follow it? All those things, you know, I love what you said there, like how can we take a little piece of the things we say we're gonna do one day someday and actually start doing them now? How does that tie into you the advice that you give to people on whether they should,

00:51:08 like one day quit their job to follow their passion or do it now? How does, how does that all tie in? Yeah, I think one of the big surprises is that, you know, following your passion and one day, like if you quit your job to do so, it may not actually look quite like you imagined and it can be quite,

00:51:27 quite different. And there are a few things that I suggest people reflect on when they're thinking about like, oh, should I go all in and follow my passion? I think the first one is, well, are you able to understand that the work that you might do when you're following your passion, so to speak, may not actually be the work that creatively fulfills you?

00:51:48 You're still going to have to work. And so I, I give this as an example. I think maybe in acting context is useful. People in acting classes maybe love to do like a really dramatic monologue or a very meaty scene. But what may actually pay the bills, you know, in their first few years of acting could be a national commercial and may not,

00:52:06 may not even have like speaking lines. I don't know, it may not scratch the same creative itch that they thought it would when they first entered the profession. And I think that happens over and over again, no matter what profession you're in, whether it's your passion, so to speak or not, as you spend more time in it, what you can get paid for tends to narrow a little bit and may actually separate from the part of your passion that you actually enjoy the most.

00:52:31 I can give one, one other quick example is there was a, a film producer that I knew he was a cinematographer and I interviewed him for this. And as a cinematographer, he really loved to shoot like documentaries that were interesting and edgy. But when he worked for a company and was hired to essentially edit their video content, he ended up having to narrow,

00:52:50 he started to manage a team and then had to do a very like specific specialized element of film production and couldn't shoot an entire scene or film or anything from beginning to end. And so he had to turn to freelancing on the nights and weekends to be able to scratch that creative itch, to be able to try out new technologies to learn and energize so that he could come back to his day job with that fresh energy and fresh insights and be able to do it better.

00:53:15 So following your passion may still separate from the part that you want to do. And that can be tricky because we're motivated by both the passion and the money. And there's a lot of literature about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. And the literature shows that when you do something for the joy of it, the intrinsic motivation, and then you start getting paid, the extrinsic motivation comes in,

00:53:37 the joy you get tends to diminish. So from doing the same activity, so are you prepared to make that trade off or do you want to protect your passion and just have it be something that's an outlet for you that energizes you that isn't necessarily tied to your livelihood. It may be more fun, it may be more rewarding that way. I don't know.

00:53:57 And then the last piece is really around taking, taking breaks and knowing how much of this you can sustain. Because when you start to, if you start to get some traction, it can be great, but it can also be incredibly demanding on you. Like any, any feast period would be on a freelancer, but it can be especially demanding depending on what your passion is.

00:54:18 So for example, some dancers that I interviewed, the more you have to train, the more you have to perform. It's really, really difficult on your body. And that can then take a toll on your mental health and knowing what your limits are and when it's time to take a break, there may be times when for the good of your passion,

00:54:36 you need to step away. And there were dancers I spoke to who had really hit this, this inflection point where it was too much and they wanted to be the best dancer they could be, but in order to do that, they needed to rest the body. They needed to do yoga, cross-train, different muscles, take some space so they could come back.

00:54:55 And when you think about your passion, I would really suggest that you think about, you know, the trade-offs. Because in a moment where you're working in a nine to five and your passion is somewhere in the distance, it becomes very glamorous. And we, we think it's this kind of magic cure all to our our world, but in reality there are going to be new challenges even along that path.

00:55:16 And are you, what, what trade offs are you prepared to make at this moment? I feel like that was such a lawyer answer joy. Like it depends. You cut me. No wonder you were nine ninth percentile. Yeah. So I think that's really, those are such beautiful nuances and you shared some really great examples and questions in there for anybody listening to reflect on because it's not just a simple yes,

00:55:47 quit everything, go follow your passion, that's gonna make you happy. There is more nuance to that. And I love how you shared, you know, some of the stories and some of the data and also covered your legal butt because that's what lawyers do. Oh yes. You must work with a lot of lawyers. You know, Funny enough, I also wanted to be a lawyer.

00:56:07 I also loved all the legal shows and I remember I took criminology that that was my diploma, my when I, where I started. And I remember sitting in my law classes being like, this is kind of boring. And looking at my law professors and looking at their lives and being like, that's not the life I wanna have. They don't seem like they have,

00:56:28 they don't have what the TV lawyers have and it doesn't look exciting. Yeah. So yes, I have spent time with lawyers and I went from law to accounting and then yeah, now, now this. So I've, I've been through all of it. That's So cool. One of the things, you know, you've touched on it and I found it real.

00:56:48 I, I find it so interesting that you got to talk to 50 different freelancers. I wish I could have been a fly on the wall for all these interviews. And I guess that's why your book is gonna be absolutely amazing. You talked about the stigma of freelancing and I gotta say, look, I can relate to this. I remember when I was going to become a coach,

00:57:06 I remember the thing I was the most scared about was telling my family, telling my in-laws, telling the people around me. So how do you suggest people answer this? Like, why is it so hard to answer? What do you do? How do we handle those questions and overcome the perception that it's not a serious career choice or that it's, yeah,

00:57:27 the, I don't even know what all my fears were, but there were a lot of them. So how, how do we navigate that? Yeah, this question, what do you do? I mean, it's really taken on a life of its own. And the answer that you give in any particular moment, it, it shapes the rest of the conversation.

00:57:44 You can give an answer that makes you feel more connected to the other person or you can give an answer that creates this sense of distance and separation. And I think that's what's hard for freelancers because especially if you've come from a traditional nine to five world, your identity or label has always been given to you by somebody else. You know, I am so and so,

00:58:03 I work in such and such department. Yeah, exactly. For, for this company, I solved that problem and here's my title and that's it. And you can do with it as you please. Now you don't have a title and without a title,

there's almost this underlying question in our society of, oh my god, do you even exist? Like when you have that conversation with somebody and they ask you what do you do and then you say something and they don't know where to place you,

00:58:27 it suddenly becomes very confusing. It feels very lonely and isolating. And that's absolutely, I think one of the reasons people fear freelancing but also have a, have a harder time at the beginning when you're just starting out. So I think there are like a few concrete things that you can do as a freelancer to really help with this. The first one is first take inventory of what you are doing.

00:58:48 Like how many different different disciplines are you in? Are you focused on one? And you can say, for example, I'm a writer or are you somebody who has a few different projects? Maybe like one woman I interviewed, she is a pharmacist, she's an actor, she's a dancer and she's a photographer. So how many verticals are you in? And have you actually figured that out?

00:59:09 Maybe you're in the stage of freelancing where you're exploring and you'll take anything because you're just trying out to see what you like and then you'll figure it out. So depending on where you are in this spectrum, you wanna give people something that they can relate to. So if you have one industry that you're in, you can say you're a freelancer. And then also say,

00:59:27 you know, I'm a freelance writer and this is what I do and this is what I focus on. If you're doing the work that you want to be doing, share that. If you know what kind of work you want to do but are not there yet, share that instead. That's more exciting. If you have multiple different elements of freelancing in your portfolio,

00:59:43 pick three or two. You can't do more than that. I think once you get past three, people's brains have a hard time processing and, and remembering everything. So keep it simple. And if they're in a lot of different buckets, then try and find a super bucket above them that categorizes all of these. So for the pharmacist slash actor dancer photographer,

01:00:05 I would say she's a pharmacist and an artist. And then when you get into what kind of art, then she can kind of expand on that portfolio. And if you're in the early stage of I am experimenting and I don't know what I'm doing, share that, say I, I'm recently started freelancing and I'm trying up to three things. Say what those three things are and then,

01:00:27 you know, if you know what you would like to do, share that. If you had a project that you really enjoyed recently, share that instead. And if none of those work, say what you like most about being a freelancer, because ultimately people are looking for something hopefully to connect with you about. And the more you can give them to share that common ground,

01:00:46 even if they might be in a totally different, you know, lifestyle than you, I think, you know, providing that information will, will serve you a lot. Because this is, this is so tricky and it's so fraught to be able to answer this question, but I think we can do it. Yeah, I think so too. I think having confidence is a big one too,

01:01:04 and I think that's where it's so hard to have, it can be very difficult to have confidence in something that you're brand new at, but it's also so key because at the end of the day, it's how you feel about what you're sharing and, and yeah, so good. I love your little tip too about picking, picking two, making some bigger buckets is absolutely genius.

01:01:22 So good. So good. Okay. One of the things you talked about earlier that I wanna explore a little bit more here, and it was the idea of having a portfolio versus a latter career. And I wanna explore that because I

personally resonate with, I feel like I'm very driven and ambitious. Most of the, the listeners of in our community are gonna also resonate and be like,

01:01:44 yes, I have goals, I'm driven, I'm ambitious, so I'm here for the podcast. And it can be really hard to imagine how to grow your career when there isn't the clear corporate ladder in front of you. You know, I think that's one of the, perhaps the great things about a corporation is that it can give you that ladder and you can see your progress.

01:02:03 It can also be a trapping in that too, but I think ultimately what everybody's looking for is career growth and satisfaction and, and development like personal growth and and becoming the best of you. So how do you do that when there's no charted path? And I'm assuming it has something to do with this portfolio. So can you speak to that for anybody else out there who's driven ambitious wants to have meaningful career growth,

01:02:26 but there's no clear path. How do we do this? Oh, yes, but that's the opportunity because you get to define what success means to you. So if you have thought about and are intentional about your freelancing career, you've started to piece this together, is it more money, more creative fulfillment, more time? And those are some of the opportunities.

01:02:45 But when you have a portfolio career rather than, you know, with a ladder where it's a very clear rung by rung, I have a higher title, I have greater pay. They're basically two ways you can grow your portfolio career. A portfolio grows when you add a new section to it or when one of your sections expands. So if we take my example of this actor,

01:03:07 pharmacist, dancer and photographer, what growth could look like to her would be either if she added a new vertical, which maybe she starts to sing and she says, okay, now I'm gaining new skills that are now helping me. You know, they're energizing me, but they're also helping me be a better presenter when I make pharmaceutical presentations at conferences, they help me act better because I have more control over my vocal tone.

01:03:34 And that can kind of go on and extend through the rest of your portfolio. Or one of the different sections in her portfolio could expand. And as an actor she may book a bigger role, she may actually, you know, end up with a recurring role on on tv and then that's grown and that is, you know, kind of the prestige that we have,

01:03:52 you know, thought about before. But it still also serves the other elements of her portfolio because she is an entire person. And so I think that, you know, thinking about what kind of goal and growth would be satisfying to you is really the big opportunity here with the portfolio career because two different kinds of growth are available and in a latter model we just don't think about that.

01:04:14 We, we really just think about kind of this vertical ascent when the horizontal growth can be just as valuable and even more so sometimes. Yes, yes. That's awesome. I totally agree and I love the examples you shared. They're super relatable, easy to get. And I hope that everybody listening has got some ideas about what having meaningful career growth looks like for you in a portfolio or a ladder or a horizontal ladder.

01:04:38 All the options. Okay. Before we talk about your book, which is coming out super soon, March 8th, I know you are taking some time off starting tomorrow, and we chatted about this right before we hit record. And I think that one of the really, you even touched on it here, like one of the big issues can be this whole idea of work life balance,

01:05:01 work-life integration. How, how do freelancers avoid burnout? Especially when you know, you don't get sick time, you don't get vacation time, and especially after the last couple years, there really feels like there are

no boundaries between work and personal time. So how do you recommend freelancers maintain that, that balance and integration take care of themselves? And what do you recommend for them and what do you do personally?

01:05:27 Yeah, one of the things that I really like to do, especially if I know I have a big push, so either coming up around a book launch or when I had to crank out chapters of the book, and I also was working full-time, I actually made a list every day. Of course I make a to-do list of the things that need to get done that day,

01:05:43 but I make a second list, which is the things that I want to do that day. And those are things that I know the more I do of these things, the more energized I will feel, the better I am. So I want to sleep eight hours, I want to exercise, I want to meditate, I like to pray, you know,

01:05:59 whatever those things are. I made a full page list, I think it was like 20 plus items, and I obviously can't do all 20 in a day and that day has yet to come. But at as the day progressed, as I was able to check off even a little bit of these, I started to feel like, okay, I am working on my goal and I'm also taking care of myself.

01:06:18 And because in these moments, especially when there are a lot of demands on your time, it can be very go, go, go, and you don't have a lot of moments to pause and reflect on what would make me feel, you know, balanced right now and make me feel, you know, more energized or calmer depending on what I need.

01:06:35 And so if you have that list handy, I definitely recommend, you know, starting your day with it, looking at it middle of the day if you get a little breather. And then at the end of the day, if there are one or two things that you can incorporate and say okay, as as you said, like, I'm working for them,

01:06:49 I'm working on this project, I'm also working for me, and how am I taking care of myself in this process? So what do bigger stretches of time off look like? This is a big opportunity. I actually have the, the chance to figure it out. I, I don't have any like massive stretch of time. I have like a, a handful of days coming up in,

01:07:09 in the next week or two, but what I, what a really long stretch of time would look like would be a full immersion into something. Like, I love to, for example, take a course and you know, whether that's online or I'm able to actually do this in person, just kind of explore something that I've never done before. I'm not funny at all.

01:07:29 And I took like an improv course and I was like, oh, this is great because now I get to explore and be a total beginner, but also gain a little bit of perspective that I wouldn't normally have. So if I had a long chunk of time, that's what I'd be doing. But with a, a couple of days here and there,

01:07:45 looking at little classes, I can take little dance classes, being able to do more of that, taking care of my physical body, because right now all of the work has been really kind of a lot of screen time, a lot of mental work and typing. So try trying to find different ways to be able to just come back to groundedness in my body and feel really healthy both physically and mentally.

01:08:09 Such great advice. I think, you know, one of the biggest shifts I hear between the employee mindset and the freelance mindset is so much about control, autonomy, freedom and intention. And I think when you are working for somebody else, generally speaking, you know, they're, again, there's exceptions to this for sure, but like you kind of get weekends off and generally get your evenings off or whatever your,

01:08:34 your set schedule is. Your company generally gives you vacation. You have some sick days and it's almost like someone's there to kind of take, take care of you or look out for you in that sense. But when you're a freelancer, you don't have that, you don't have somebody else telling you, Hey, if you don't take time off, you're gonna get burnt out.

01:08:50 Or if you don't rest you're gonna feel sick or you are not gonna produce what, what you desire to, you're not gonna be able to grow and expand the way you you want to. And it really is, I think about taking ownership

and being really intentional. And I love that you pointed out like the daily things that you can do, the bigger stretches of time and then you know,

01:09:09 the bigger ones. And I think all of those play a role in maintaining that, that balance and that integration and avoiding burnout and keeping, you know, like you said, like your body, your mind thriving and health easily, you can show up for the work that you're doing. So yeah, I love that so much about control. All right.

01:09:25 Now tell us about your book and when it comes out. Yes, my book is called The Freelance Mindset, unleashing Your Side, hustles for Better Work Play in Life. And it comes out on March 8th. And the book is essentially, it's structured as a hero's journey. And the idea is we've heard of freelancing, but it's this new and disorienting world.

01:09:46 And by the time we even think about being freelancers, there's some part of us that has been called to adventure and maybe we haven't been, you know, voluntarily called, maybe we've been pushed into a life of adventure, but nonetheless the adventure is in front of us and we have to decide, are we going to accept this call and explore this new world.

01:10:03 It's difficult, it's disorienting, we need to learn new skills in order to navigate it. So that's kind of what the middle of the book is about, is getting the tools to navigate the trail and eventually we come out to the other side where we were able to succeed and you know, we are now masters of two world. We've existed in this world where we were in a corporate lifestyle and and know kind of what it takes to make it work in a nine to five world.

01:10:26 And now we've figured out what freelancing can look like in the context of our lives and that gives us choice. We can, we can choose which world do we stay in, do we come back and forth, do we pick just one? And then finally the book closes by, you know, really harnessing the power of freelancers because this is the direction that work is going and that we are evolving as people,

01:10:45 how can we make the world better for freelancers and take care of each other and really drive this movement forward in a healthy way. So good. I cannot wait to read it. I got to have a sneak peek and it is, it was just really beautifully written, really exciting. I like, I can't wait to get it all. One of the things you said inside your book,

01:11:08 your dedication says this, it says, for anybody who has ever felt lost because their career didn't look like what they planned, I'm rooting for you. I mean, first of all, I feel like that is everybody. I don't know if anybody's career looks like exactly what they planned, but I wanna know in your words, you know, what's important to you about that and what do you want our listeners to hear and take away from what you just shared there.

01:11:32 Yeah, I think there can be a lot of kind of confusion and shame around freelancing and especially if you're taking this, this brave leap to be able to honor what feels authentic to you, to take your kind of destiny into your own hands. And you're then gonna end up with a career that doesn't really necessarily look like anyone else's and people might not be able to relate to it.

01:11:53 You might not even be able to relate to it yourself. You'll say, I thought I was one person and here I am making all these surprising choices. Like what, how did I get here? And I've kind of been in that boat kind of various times, like many times in my journey and that's good. Like that's, that's the journey. It's terrifying.

01:12:10 It can be terrifying, but at the same time you're creating something that's so much bigger than you. It's bigger than the stories that you've been told about how you can work about the career that's available to you and it has more opportunity, even the ones that you can't imagine right now because you don't know what's going to come next. And so I think that's really the beauty of freelancing is anything could happen tomorrow and it could be,

01:12:31 you know, a fantastic client, a fantastic opportunity, something that very serendipitously, serendipitously connects to something you've done years ago that you didn't even see as synergy or a connection to. And now it's appeared before you. That opportunity is precious and even though it's scary, I am rooting for you that you find it. Oh my gosh, I know everybody listening is probably just as inspired up as I am and inspired.

01:12:57 It's so beautiful. We are linking to the book in the show notes. Make sure you get your copy of the Freelance Mindset. It's, yeah, I can't wait. I've got mine in in the card already. Ready to go. Can't wait for it to come on March 8th. All right, before we wrap off, we've got a couple Golden girls,

01:13:12 a rapid fire questions. So first of all, I wanna know, I feel like if I'd asked you this six months ago, I know it would be your book, but what about today? What is a goal that you're working on right now? Yeah. Right now I am really trying to find a better balance with my devices. I think that my screen time has gotten completely out of control and so my goal is to be able to not check the phone first thing in the morning,

01:13:35 not check it before bed and really kind of remember that I'm a human being in a body and I need to take care of it. Otherwise that's, that's not gonna last very long. Great goal. I feel like everybody listening probably needs this goal too. So Good. Okay. This is ties to what you were talking about earlier and I always encourage people to define success for them.

01:13:53 I think it's so key. So what does success mean to you, joy? Yeah, so success to me means being able to support my lifestyle, but being able to have both the corporate and creative elements of my life available to me. So when I went to India and did this kind of acting journey, I had thought my dream was to go and like,

01:14:13 ah, be a Bollywood star or something like that. But what was actually amazing to me was when I had to start freelancing, I had six figure student loans and so I was spending the mornings doing kind of corporate work, like spreadsheets and such and then the afternoons auditioning. And that actually turned out to be my dream job because I could do the analytical and I could do the creative and kind of integrate them into one.

01:14:35 And so for me, as long as I can have both aspects of myself expressed, that is success. Ah, so beautiful. What is the best lesson you learned in the last year? I think the best lesson I learned in the last year is really around getting out of your own way. There are so many stories that we get told and so many times that we want to do a thing and we're afraid to do it or we think there are 50 reasons why it can't work out.

01:15:04 And yet that spark of you is there, it wants to do it and it's not afraid. And to the extent that we can safely let it out and let it explore will feel so much better. And so for me, in the past year that was really around writing because I wanted to get this story out, I was also afraid and I had writer's block and I also,

01:15:21 you know, was getting busy with work and maybe that was on purpose or maybe that was some subtle form of procrastination. But you know, being able to let that little part of yourself out that wants to play, find a way to do it. And that, that's one of my New year's resolutions for this year. Ah, so, so gorgeous.

01:15:41 One of the questions my coach shared with me earlier this year, and I wanna share it with you because it may, maybe it's one that might help you or somebody else listening, but the question is this, as a more courageous person, person, the thing I would ask for or try to achieve is, and I think that's just such a great question.

01:15:58 I've been asking myself that every couple days, every week, you know, what is the thing as if I was more courageous, what would I be asking for? What would I be going for this week? And it's been really cool. So I just wanted to share that with you because I agree, I think we all have, we all have these sparks and we all have the fears and it doesn't matter like what level you're at,

01:16:15 at every level, you're always facing them. So maybe that question serves you or somebody else listening today. Absolutely. One of the things, one of my goals with this podcast obviously is about changing mindset. And I wanna normalize the idea that it's okay to change your mind, it's okay to get it wrong, it's okay to to to just continue to grow and evolve.

01:16:35 So I wanna know, what is something in your life that you have changed your mind about? Yeah, I mean for me it's, you know, where I am along the lance spectrum, there was a time where I thought I would only be a freelancer, full-time freelancer for the rest of my career. And then around a couple years ago, like in,

01:16:54 in the peak of the pandemic, I started to realize, wow, you know, I miss people, I miss a team, I miss working on something that's so much bigger than myself. And I made the decision to accept what is now my current job at a startup and I'm doing a legal role. So actually there's two things, things I've changed my mind about.

01:17:09 I'm a lawyer and I'm working at it full-time and freelance on the nights and weekends, but you know, that's kind of the fluidity of the, this freelance lifestyle is what you need in any particular moment can change and it's okay. Like let that happen. Mm, awesome. Oh, look at you, walk in your talk, talk in your walk,

01:17:27 all the good things, money. I wanna know what is the best money you've ever spent? Oh my God, definitely that ticket to India when I went to act like a hundred percent, that was, yeah, that was an adventure that I thought, man, I, I was, it, it seemed like just a pipe dream to be going to India and acting.

01:17:51 And I thought, okay, I need a reason. Let me, let me go visit my family, but really I wanna see what's out there and explore. Maybe I'll take a dance class, maybe I'll find an acting class. And then once I was finally on the ground, I was able to find a da, an acting class and some dance classes and then able to meet other people and,

01:18:06 and have that exploration. But the entire time I was like, am I really allowed to be here? Like, why is nobody talking about this back there? Like, you actually can go and do the thing. And I, yeah, I was, I was afraid, but then the more courageous version of me would have gotten that ticket. And so finding that part of myself and,

01:18:23 and allowing myself to have permission and, and try something even though I didn't know where it was gonna lead, I think absolutely Amazing. I feel like plane tickets are just, they're never poorly spent. They always get money. Always. Yeah. What are some words of wisdom that you live by? So I think the words of wisdom that I live by can really vary depending on what's going on right now.

01:18:48 The words of wisdom that really speak to me are trying to get out of my own way. And there are so many ways that I, I can kind of keep myself stuck or from moving as quickly as I would. Like. For example, I now need to be making posts on social media. Oh my god, I'm an introverted lawyer. Like,

01:19:05 what? How am I supposed to do this? And yet, and yet here we are having a conversation about this and then going to share the message and, and get it out there. And so it's really around silencing, like turning down the volume on the fears so you can go and do the thing. Hmm, that's amazing. Thank you so much,

01:19:25 joy. Congratulations on your book. Thank you so much for being here today. Thank you for sharing such amazing words of wisdom for our community around freelancing. I know, you know, I was already sold on the concept before, but I still had a lot of questions like the how and the feast and famine and, and just the whole like the stigma around it and what does it look like to build a career.

01:19:48 And you did such an amazing job of really sharing some incredible inspiring stories, some tangible tips that PE people can take away. And I love how you linked it all to spirituality. I know everybody listening is gonna feel so inspired and hopeful and excited to get out there. I apologize in advance to all the companies that are now gonna

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get there, people quitting or stepping down hours because so many people are ready to take charge and create their own careers and remember that they're working for them.

01:20:18 So thank you for being here. Thank you for having me. Where can people find you? I almost forgot that question. Where can people find you? Yeah, I am everywhere under my name, joy Badra. That's J O Y B A T R a. That's my handle on all social and on my website, so please look me up. Amazing.

01:20:37 We'll make sure all the links, your website, everything is going to be in the show notes for us. Make sure you go out and get a copy of the Freelance Mindset, unleashing Your Side Hustles for Better Work, play, and Life and follow along along with Joy as this introverted lawyer, make social media posts and I know they're gonna be amazing.

01:20:55 Have a great day. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you for having me. Thank you so much for listening. If something spoke to you, send me a message by sharing this episode and tagging me on social media. If you know someone who would love to hear this episode, please share it with them too, because I love surprises.

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