

Speaker 1: 00:00 Now we're going to open it up to everybody in the audience. Until somebody else walks up, I'm going to ask you the question I am always dying to ask everybody. What is the song you put on the radio when you need to psych yourself up and you've had a terrible day? What is a go-to album or artist or song? You look so scared.

Speaker 2: 00:20 There's an electronic song called "Ya" by a group called Factory Floor, and the whole song is like 10 minutes long. They just go, "Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya," and then techno beats and then more, "Ya, ya, ya, ya, ya." And there's no rhyme or reason to the beat either. It's chaos, but it really pumps me up. That's it.

Speaker 1: 00:41 Anybody else?

Speaker 3: 00:42 Hi, ladies. Thank you for coming out tonight. Can you talk more about the imposter syndrome, especially to other female entrepreneurs, people who are trying to start their own business in the community and are fighting that same drive where you're like, "Okay, I know what I'm talking about, but at the same time, do I really?"

Speaker 4: 01:05 I think if you write down a list of all of your skills, just list as many as possible, go extremely high level to super detail-focused, and then, since you're trying to create a business for yourself, create a business that is utilizing every single skill that you have to offer, it's going to create a business that literally no one else in the universe could have, because there's no one that exists that has that exact list of skills. Once you have a business that's made exactly for you, there's absolutely no way that you can feel jealous or feel like you're a fraud, because it's made specifically for exactly what you have to offer.

Speaker 5: 01:40 The very fact that it's called imposter syndrome ... I don't think you want to be an imposter. I think you want to do something that's unique and original to you within a field where you feel perhaps there are more talented people or more experienced or are doing it the right way or the traditional way.

And like I said before, I do feel like if I had listened to those voices in my head, I wouldn't be sitting here today, I wouldn't have three restaurants, because I really did feel like at that time, to be a chef, you had to do this. You had to know how to make foam or you had to know how to have certain knife skills. I decided to focus on the things that I was really skilled at and really good at and really enjoyed and went from there and created something where I felt like, "Nobody else is doing this,

so I'm going to do it." And I think if you look at it in that way, then I think you're really going to shine.

- Speaker 6: 02:40 Finding mentors is really important too, people that you admire, that are doing things that you want to do. Talk to them. Ask them out for coffee or invite them to look at your work or whatever you're doing, and you'll learn a lot from that and probably develop a friendship. And it'll push you off.
- Speaker 7: 03:08 Hi, ladies. My name is [Precious 00:03:10], and I'm a freelancer. I kind of have a two-part question. The first one would be, how do you deal with your mental health? And the second one would be, have you had a moment where you wanted to give it all up and say, "Fuck it," and how did you deal with it? I promise it's not that heavy.
- Speaker 1: 03:29 I'll start. I go to therapy once a week. I would not be a stable human being if I didn't. It is the single biggest financial expense in my life, and it is worth every single penny. It should be more affordable for everybody. I think we have to talk about it much more openly. There's a lot of talk about it in this issue because I think those two things are really intertwined, and I think about quitting almost every week, pretty much every week.
- Two months ago I decided I was going to be a physical therapist because I went to help my dad ... I went home to help my dad recover from knee surgery, and it was literally a piece of tape on the floor that I had to help him bend his knee too. And I thought, "Oh my god, there are jobs where it's literally this definable, clear thing that ends at the end of the day." I looked up school. I saw the average salary. It was way more than I ever make, and I was like, "That's it. I'm going to knee school. This is happening." But then life comes back in, and you just go back to work. It happens. There are good moments, but yeah, I think more people think about stuff like that [inaudible 00:04:30]
- Speaker 6: 04:30 I was going to be a bus driver. Seriously, I love riding the bus, and I thought, "I'm going to do it." I even went and got an application, and then my husband reminded me that I hate driving. I didn't become a bus driver.
- Speaker 1: 04:57 How do you all handle mental health?
- Speaker 6: 04:59 Exercise, definitely. Walking, running, any kind of exercise, is hard to do in the beginning, and then when you're done you feel really good, and your brain feels really, really good.

Speaker 4: 05:15 I also go to therapy. My therapist is still in New York, and so I FaceTime her. It's great. Technology-

Speaker 1: 05:21 I do the same thing.

Speaker 4: 05:22 Do you?

Speaker 1: 05:22 Yeah.

Speaker 4: 05:24 Do we have the same ... We don't. It's fine.

That's great. She's cool. I also listen to my body and what my body wants. And I realize that a lot of people that have full-time jobs can't do this, which is why I made a job just for myself, because my body's weird. Some days I'll wake up, and I'll feel extremely creative, and I feel like designing, so I'll just immediately start designing and make amazing work. It's awesome. Other times of the day, I feel creatively drained and I can't make anything that I like, and it's really frustrating. It makes me hate myself and want to change jobs.

In those moments, I've learned to just listen to myself and do the activity that I feel like doing in that moment, and sometimes it's writing emails or tackling emails that I was putting off for weeks. Listening to myself has been really valuable, and I wish that more employers would allow their staff to be able to do that, because it really helps me to churn out better work.

Speaker 5: 06:22 Yeah, and I would agree with physical exercise. I don't mean like P90X videos or things like that, but I mean just getting up, walking. It could be 10 minutes, getting outside of your head space, getting outside of your work environment. For me, I respond to nature very well, so just going out, breathing in the air, and mediation.

Like I said, I think meditation is really difficult for most people. Just even one minute of just sitting and breathing, though, and thinking about things that you're grateful for, and find one thing that you're grateful for that you have in your life ... I know it sounds really simple, and to some people really lame, but it really helps turn that switch away from the negativity, because again, I'm working on positivity. But it really does start with, "Can you think of something positive for yourself?" And that does do a little mental switch.

Speaker 8: 07:19 Hey. I'm [Sidney 00:07:20]. I'm also a freelancer, and I'm just wondering, what do you do in the slow periods of your

business, and then what are some strategies to prevent that or to embrace it?

Speaker 2: 07:33 From a client standpoint, I have many slow periods. I'm a freelancer that bases ... My income comes from client work, so some months I'll get no inquiries, and I think, "Everything's ending. It's almost over. I'm going to have to find something else to do." And then everyone comes rushing in the next month, and it's totally just out of control. That's how freelance life works, but for me, whenever the slow period comes, it allows me to do all the other things that I've been wanting to do. That's when I start other side projects or other businesses that I had been putting off.

Speaker 1: 07:33 Sounds like more work.

Speaker 2: 08:05 The things I really wanted to be doing the whole time.

Speaker 5: 08:08 It's the same for me. Sometimes I don't get a lot of work, and sometimes I do, and I just choose to shift my focus when I don't get a lot of work.

Speaker 6: 08:19 Personal projects, especially creative things that I'd been wanting to do, and I feel like if you do that and you share it, social media, then there's interest and stuff comes your way from that, so it helps generate more work.

Speaker 2: 08:39 I've noticed that when it comes to freelancers and people who are self-employed or making their own business, the people that don't make it very long are people that really give into that fear of whenever people aren't coming at your door or emailing you for inquiries, and they get so afraid in those moments, and then they just run away. That happened to me, I would say, the first three or four years of freelancing. If that happened to me, and somebody showed any sign of interest in hiring me as a full-time employee, I almost went so many times, and it was so tempting because I was so scared.

But then, eventually, as I did it for longer and longer, I became more confident that it'll just come along eventually, and I can fill this time with other things that I have been wanting to do.

Speaker 9: 09:17 Hi. You guys are all in professions that require creativity, at least from my perspective, at all times, even times when maybe you don't feel creative. What do you do during those times? Maybe you feel creative all the time. I don't know. And then, where do you find your inspiration?

- Speaker 6: 09:40 I feel creative most of the time, not all of the time, but I rarely feel inspired, and I think they're two different things. Thankfully, I don't need to be inspired to do work, because I learned a long time ago that if I ... because I thought to write, you needed to be inspired all the time, and then I'd sit there and I'd be like, "Oh my god, I'm not inspired. I can't write." And then I was like, "Oh, I don't need to be inspired. I can just start writing."
- So I don't feel like inspiration's that important, and I think that I tend to cultivate creativity daily. I tend to try to do different exercises and just try to problem-solve what I'm working on. If it looks difficult, I'll go, "Well, maybe I can think about it this way," or I'll ask someone for their perspective, and then they'll open my eyes up to looking at something a different way, and suddenly I'm like, "Wow, I feel like I'm thinking more creatively."
- Speaker 5: 10:43 Creativity really is a practice. People think, "Oh, artists, they just turn it on. They go and they paint stuff, and they just come up with things." No. I think most artists, creatives, have to practice daily. It becomes a habit. You don't lose weight because you go to the gym once. You do it, it becomes a habit, it becomes a part of your life, just like what we do. I have to make dough every day, and I get better at it every day because it changes. It's a living, breathing thing, and the weather could affect it. How do I adapt? But you make it a habit, and you figure out ways to be more creative and be flexible. You do have to practice and do it all the time.
- Speaker 10: 11:28 I'm wondering, as creative people and business owners, how you all deal with, given the heaviness and a lot of what's happening in the world these days in the news, and things can be really depressing, how you deal with feeling like the creative work that you're doing is important and is making a difference in the world, having a positive impact beyond fulfilling yourself? That's really important too, but how you feel like you're making a larger difference in the world, because that's something I struggle with.
- Speaker 1: 12:01 How do you all feel about that?
- Speaker 5: 12:03 I think it would be a disservice to yourself to say that, "Oh, being creative or doing what I do is not making a difference," because it is. I think we need more creatives. We need more creativity, and not just in the arts but in politics, in legislation, in the way we run businesses. Lack of creativity, I think, is causing a lot of the negativity and, unfortunately, the fear, and people are making decisions based on those fears.

And so, I encourage it. The minute you think, "What I'm doing, and being creative, and there's so much negative stuff happening the world ..." I think you need to turn that around and say, "How can I think creatively? How can I come up with possibilities other than black and white, yes or no?" There are so many different options and colors and spectrums and point of views. There's not enough.

Speaker 6: 13:09 I also think it's important to continue to do good work, whatever you're making or writing or cooking. Do the best you can. Putting good things out there will return in some way. Being a good person.

Speaker 11: 13:30 Hi. My name is Claire. When you are super paralyzed with fear, but you know you have to overcome it, and you really want to overcome it, what is your favorite go-to, short and sweet mantra or affirmation you say to yourself in the mirror to pep yourself up?

Speaker 6: 13:49 "It'll be over before dinner."

Speaker 1: 13:51 I want that on a bumper sticker with a picture of you driving a bus.

My mantra in life is, "Whatever works until it doesn't." I try to give myself flexibility and grace and leeway in everything, because none of us are perfect, and things are going to go wrong. I think when things are feeling really tough, I just think, "How can I get through this right now? What will get me through this for the moment?" I'm not going to worry about if that is a lifelong solution to that fear or that problem. I try to stay present and in the moment and get through it, and whatever works for right now, that's cool. I might have to adjust later. That's cool too.

Speaker 2: 14:33 For me, what I tell myself whenever I feel like not going on anymore is that the world needs me. Thinking that the world needs me to do exactly what I have to offer the world is very empowering to me, to know that people are actually counting on me to make things better for them. That's been such a great thing for me to remind myself of.

Speaker 4: 14:56 I put positive affirmations in my passwords for everything, so I actually can't share my positive affirmations with you guys, but I was just on the phone ... I was talking to my friend, who's a writer in London, yesterday on the phone, and we had a conversation for five hours, which never happens. Usually I

want to get off the phone in 20 minutes, and when he told me that we were talking for like five hours, I was like, "Wow. It felt like we were only talking for 20 minutes." And he told me before we got off the phone, "Be unapologetic," and now I've adopted that. I want to be unapologetic, unless I have to apologize for something. But yeah, that's the new affirmation I have.