

Rachel: Hello. Today, we are chatting with Laura Yamin, and this is a bit of a different podcast in that Laura is happily employed. She has a regular 9-5 job. And what we talk about in today's show is about just having a 9-5 job that you really love. We open up the interview and she tells me how excited she is about how she has decided she wants to make more money and she's going to make it happen, and she tells me about how that is going to take place. And then, we talk about how she transitioned from a career that she didn't love so much to one that she loves now and how she makes sure that she never overextends her boundaries; so how she says "no" to things and how she makes sure that she just feels really aligned and alive with her career and just keeps doing everything she can to just feel as happy with her career as possible.

Again, it's a totally different flavor than what we normally have, but I think this is great. It was so interesting talking with her because I commented to her after we hung up that every time I asked her a question she was immediately on it, didn't even need to think about it. I mean this is so natural for her. And I think that's just a really exciting topic for people who might feel stuck in their career; they don't like it, but they don't want to be self-employed. I feel like Laura gives a lot of permission around loving what you do even if it is a 9-5, which there's nothing wrong with. So here we go. Enjoy.

Laura, thank you for being here.

Laura: Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here.

Rachel: Me, too. This is going to be such a good topic, I think, for so many people, what we're talking about. I'm sure will go into all kinds of different variations but boundaries in general are something that we've touched a little bit on in past podcast episodes, but there's so much to share about it. And I know you're the go-to girl for it. Before we dig into that, one of the questions I'd love to ask everybody at the beginning is because this podcast is called "A Better Life", and the tag line "If you have a choice, choose a better life", this question is all about taking time to brag and celebrate some of the things that you're proud of in your life right now. So can you just let us know some of the things that you're proud of right now?

Laura: I brag that I'm taking my life up to a new level. So it meant asking for more money and looking for different opportunities because I wanted to move to a better apartment. So my big brag is that I took the steps of

calling recruiters and have other people to do the work for me to find a better position along with what I do; not on the side, but I do my other career. So it's pretty exciting to see that I can combine my own experience as a career advisor into my own life, too.

Rachel: Congratulations.

Laura: Thank you. I'm excited.

Rachel: That's awesome. So you just decided you wanted to make more money, and you just basically called recruiters and said . . . did you say, "This is how much I want to be making"?

Laura: Pretty much. I said this is what I'm looking to be making. This is when I would like to have a job. I have a pretty tight deadline, and I set up appointments. They're ready to be made. It took a couple of emails and a couple of callbacks, and then the appointment was there. I know it's going to be taken care of. I've done it before, but it's pretty exciting to really put into practice not just what I talk about it, but actually putting into practice and taking action around it.

Rachel: So are you still going to be doing the same job that you have now?

Laura: Yeah, I'll probably be doing something similar around it. I may be looking to focus on human resources more. I've been doing a bit of . . . 75% of what I do now is human resource and the other 25% are other duties as a side. So I'm looking to do more human resources, less other duties as a side.

Rachel: Now I'm just fascinated. You're going to do a very similar job. You've just decided, "I'd like to make more at the end. I'm going to call recruiters." How does that work? I mean, does your mind tell you you're crazy or is it just you declare and so it shall be?

Laura: No. My mind will tell me I'm crazy. It is a total stretch. I had a conversation with my therapist about this because I think sometimes that having different voices to be reminded that you're actually on the right track, my intuition and that's something I've learned especially with my career. I had to learn to trust my intuition, and so I had a big dream of moving to Manhattan. I'm living in a really nice apartment but I grew from this apartment. And so I'm ready to live in a different place and that meant that I needed to have a higher salary or higher income coming in.

It was a decision that although it felt like a dream and a stretch, I also had to sit down and take into account how much is going to be really earned. What are the actual actions I need to take?

So one of the actions is not only I can supplement my income by doing other projects and other ideas, there was one part that, having a steady paycheck that comes at a higher level if I make the decision that I want to earn more money, I can actually do that. It is attainable. It does not mean that I'm stuck in this paycheck, in this job because that's the only job that's available. There is an abundance out there. Being very clear I would like to earn \$10,000 more. I'd like to still keep the same hours. The options are open. It's then having others do the work for you. That's the big part.

Rachel: I love it. So you've done this before, you said.

Laura: Yeah, I did it. The current position that I had, it took about three weeks to find. So it was a very simple tug-o-war at the time. I was trying to do multiple projects; I was freelancing and I was ready to just get back down to my roots. And I received an email from a recruiter saying, "Hey, will you be interested in this position?" At that time I was like, "Maybe I'll look at it." I looked for other jobs at the same time. So I did it in some ways similar to dating. I was defense dating in the job market.

I applied for this job. I showed up. I took all the tests, and took all the interviews, but I also kept applying for other jobs as I knew I needed to do keep this abundance even though I knew this was the job I wanted. Within three weeks I went from just an email, getting an offer, and then being flown to DC for training. So it was a pretty short period, but it proved that it is possible. If you're clear about what you want, and clear about what the type of experience you'd like to have and you're willing to take the action, it can happen.

Rachel: I love it. Have you done this with other areas of your life, too?

Laura: Yeah, I've done it, I think, pretty much in all areas of my life with the exception of dating, funny enough. It's the one area where somehow I still find resistance around it, but my health, my weight has been one of those areas where I had to learn to really get clear about my goals and get clear of all my intention, and then be willing to be uncomfortable by taking the actions around it.

Rachel: What did that look like?

Laura: Well, at the time I was actually struggling with an eating disorder. So for me that meant getting help. That actually took me to that place where getting help meant that I had to attend lots of meetings, trying to identify new ways to eat, learning how to cook, learning how to work with nutritionists to identify what exactly works for me, and learning how to trust my intuition. It's a lot of intuitive action and then trusting that what's familiar it has to be done differently. Uncomfortable is actually a good sign.

Rachel: Yeah. I love your process. I love that you figure out what needs to change, or what you want to up level and then it's just what are the practical actions or steps that we can take, and then you take them.

Laura: Yeah. There are times for visualization. There are times where people would be like, "I'll do a vision board, I'll do an affirmation." Those are really helpful, but the reality is that you also have to move your feet in the direction you want to go. You still have to take the actions, whether it's applying for jobs, whether it's showing up and saying, "I'm going to do this," but it feels uncomfortable, all those actions do add up.

Rachel: I love it. Okay, so today we're going to be talking about boundaries; such a good topic.

Laura: Yeah, it is.

Rachel: So can you tell me some ways boundaries have helped you in your life?

Laura: Growing up, I was a "yes" person. I was always a good girl saying always "yes" to everything and being nice. It was hard for me to say "no". For a long time I really did not have any boundaries. I was overworked and as a result, I was overworked, I had no time for myself. I had no energy. I was always giving, giving, giving to a point of debt. I had to learn the hard way that boundaries not only had to be friends of mine, they needed to become my BFF.

Boundaries itself, the way I can describe it is similar to a lampshade. When you have a light and it doesn't have a lampshade, it's pretty broad. It's diffused; it's not really clear, but if you put a lampshade on it, you see the light very clearly. This is where the light is coming in and so somehow boundaries are just that. They're just a lampshade; they allow

us to really concentrate, so we can give our best work to others without hurting ourselves.

Rachel: So you broke up for a second. You said they allow us to really, and then it broke up.

Laura: The boundaries allow us to really provide the best energy for ourselves, to others, without giving ourselves too much, without losing ourselves in the relationship or in the opportunity. Boundaries are pretty much concentrates what we can get for it.

Rachel: Do you have any examples that sprout to mind when I ask you what was one of the toughest boundaries that you've had to set?

Laura: I think the work life is a big place where boundaries are typically . . . especially now, the life after recession. Boundaries tend to be all over the place. We're working 24/7. We're always connected. We're always trying to find things, and be of service. We have to set boundaries and sometimes it's about setting up saying "no" to things, actions because you don't have the time or asking . . .

Rachel: Oh. Laura, you broke up again. I'm sorry. I don't know why it's happening. You said, "Or asking."

Laura: I'll start from the beginning.

Rachel: Okay.

Laura: A good place to set boundaries is at work. Right now, life after the 2008 recession is pretty much very different from what it was before. Work is 24/7, we're always connected. We're always looking at our e-mails, answering emails at all times and constantly saying "yes" to opportunities or projects because there's not enough people. Sometimes that's what our head tells us. There's not enough people. I'm the only person who can do it. When we set boundaries, we actually set ourselves up in order to make the best work forward and so that means saying "no" or asking is this a priority, a task, that needs to get done, or is this something that can wait.

At times, it means not checking your email after 5:00, having yourself a night off, having your weekends back to actually be able to replenish and reset your energies in order to then go back to your work life, in a place of refreshing your productivity.

Rachel: I was going to ask you what you were probably just about to say. I was going to ask you more details about it, so please continue. I'll ask when you're done.

Laura: Yeah. Really setting up the boundary of whenever our time comes in especially with social media and emails, we tend to be connected all the time. One place that we can set boundaries is setting up time limits of how much time you need to spend on social media or setting up times where you're not checking your work email. Even if you're checking . . . you're expected to check your work email at night being able to set, "I'm going to check it from 7 to 8, and I'm going to be done at 8:00, and then I can spend time replenishing, spending time with family, getting sleep, and then I'll recheck it first thing in the morning." Really creating a boundary with the interaction that it doesn't have to be diffused throughout the whole day, it can actually be done within a concentrated amount of time.

Rachel: I can see when you set boundaries for yourself for example. What about if it's like a work situation and people are expecting you to do more than you want to do, how do you handle that?

Laura: That's a tough conversation, but it can be done. It is an opportunity to -- one -- if you're always a "yes" person just take a step back and say, "Can I think about it?" It's the first place. You can create that breather room. Then identifying if you have the time available, if you have the energy available, and then being able to be willing to say you may not have the time available to do this because you have other projects to do. Being able to say that you have other projects to do, you want to support the other person, here are other options that they can get this done, but having first to take a step back before saying "yes" is the key to setting some boundaries. Being able to say, "Let me think about it. Let me look at my schedule," then you can offer that "No" if you don't feel comfortable saying, "No, I cannot do it."

Rachel: What happens if you're just on autopilot say, "Yes," and then you really want to say, "No." How do you handle that?

Laura: How do you backtrack?

Rachel: Yeah.

Laura: I am a "yes" person, so automatically my response is always going to be "yes". I had to go back and say, "Let me go back to see what it is that I'm available," and then saying, "I quickly realize that I have all these other projects to do, and so I'm unable to support you in this project. Here are other options I can share with you." Perhaps another person who can support in the project or here are ways that it can be broken down so it can be done. But just being honest and being clear and just keeping it simple. It does not have to be really complicated. It doesn't have to be, "I can't do this. This is so horrible," commiserating in the negativity. You cannot just be saying, "I just don't have the time and I'm trying to work on these other projects, too. Therefore I cannot do what I agreed upon."

Rachel: Have you or anyone you know ever said that and then had negative repercussions?

Laura: Yes. I had a boss who'd be like, "That's what we need to do." I have to basically have a conversation a little bit further of, "Here's where I am right now. Here's what I have on my plate. What can I be taking off my plate to get this done because I don't have enough time? How can I get support to help me get all the other projects done in order for me to provide the best attention for this project?" They're realistic. Once you start to say, "Here's quantifying the time that you're doing, the projects you're working on, and what can be taken off or what is not a priority that can wait?" Then you can create a working plan moving forward. But I think it's about having the opportunity to communicate where you are and where you want to go.

Rachel: That makes sense. How do you know for you what healthy boundaries are? How do you know how much time you should be working on certain things?

Laura: It's a flexible process, but I think when you start setting boundaries, it's going to be very hard boundaries and it's going to feel very rigid. As you do it over time, it starts to get much more flexible where you start to understand what you need, what you don't need. But I think when you're starting to set boundaries, it's just as simple as saying, "You start with email." I think that's usually the first place where the boundaries are all over the place. If you set times where you're checking your emails, and you don't need to put an auto-responder saying, "I'm only checking my e-mail three times a day." You just set it up for yourself and say, "I'll only check it in the morning at this time and then I'm going to use these other two blocks of hours to do other things."

You start to really create a sense of "This is possible. I can trust myself to follow those boundaries". Not only is setting the boundaries a big part, it's also maintaining them is the biggest lesson. Honoring that process allows you to then set more boundaries that feel, "Okay. I'm learning how to say "no" more and more."

The other part is saying "no" at least five times a day. Learning to get used to saying "no" as a muscle, it starts to get easier when you have the big "Aha", things that you really need to say no, but you automatically say yes. As you say "no" more often it will become easier to say "no" to the . . .

Rachel: Laura, you broke up again. Learning to say no will get easier, and then it broke up.

Laura: Learning to say "no" more and more, I think that's a big part. Saying "no" to different things. Saying "no" at least five times a day can get you to start building that muscle. When the big things happen in your life and the big "yes" that you automatically say "yes" but you should say "no". You feel comfortable saying, "I know I can trust myself. I can say no to those opportunities." I'm going to trust myself to say, "Let me think about it before I say yes." I can trust myself that I don't have to automatically my response always has to be yes. My response has been at times saying "no". And it is okay, it's safe to say "no".

Rachel: I love that idea of just making the "no" a muscle. That way, there's not as much pressure in a high stakes situation. I know that you're super good at work life boundaries and just really in general with work, making sure that you feel comfortable. Something else you're really good at is making sure that you're in alignment with whatever it is you're doing, and if you're not, quitting the job, the clients, the projects, and I'd love to dig into that, too. How do you quit things that are no longer in alignment especially when you've got to make money?

Laura: I think the first thing is to reconnect with what are your values. What is important for you? A good example at the beginning of the show, I share how I'm looking for different jobs because I needed more money. There are values that I was looking for. I looked for a space. I looked for a place that provided me a set of hours, a set of specific things that I can be creative. Really getting clear of what exactly it is that I want and what it is exactly that I value, then allows me to then say yes or no. It becomes like the barometer. Does it fit to the needs that I want or the values or the feelings that I want to create in my life? If it doesn't, then it

becomes painful enough that you're willing to say, "I need to get out of this job," or, "I need to fire this client." If you start listening in to your body, and start tuning into, "Does it feel expensive? Does it feel constrictive?" Once you start identifying those feelings, you can then identify when it's time to walk away from it or when it's time to stick it through like a good call try.

Rachel: I get for people who are good at listening into their body, can feel expensive or it's constricting, for people who feel kind of numb or would rather be numb then have to go through that. Do you have any advice for that?

Laura: Tuning into your feelings. I know numbness. I went through numbness. I'm well aware of it. I think tuning in to how you feel in general, are you normally feeling angry at times or feeling like you just don't want to deal with it because there are different types of numbness. There is the type of I just don't even want to deal with it at all. Then it's just a sure sign that it's time to . . . maybe it's an opportunity to shift things a little bit. It doesn't mean that you're going to go automatically from the numbness burnout overextended job to the dream job. You may need to have somewhere in between. You may need to have a bridge job or a bridge opportunity, but to get to that place, that's where you want to go. It's like how can I get to feel a little bit better?

Chasing the happy feeling as opposed to chasing another job that's going to be dragging every morning or another client that's going to feel abusive, as to really chasing more . . . does it sound a little bit more sane, does it feel a little bit healthier? Can I feel a little bit happier? Start to feel more that positive feeling and let them chase that positive feeling as opposed to just staying in that place that stuck.

Rachel: That makes sense. Gradually increase your capacity to feel good.

Laura: Yeah.

Rachel: Perfect. For people who may be listening and say this doesn't seem practical because I have kids or I can't bounce from career to career, what would you say to them?

Laura: I think that we're in a different landscape than we were 10 years ago. I think the recession hit us in a different space. Bouncing from career to career, it may not be a career move from one to the other, but

it can just be a lateral move from a job. It doesn't have to be as big as I'm changing careers every five minutes. It can just be, it's time for me to leave the job because this is no longer serving me. I need to grow, learn new skills. I'm ready to really be of service in different ways. I'm ready to be engaged in different areas in my life. That's a different approach to looking at it from . . . job searching doesn't have to be a drag. Job searching can actually be something that you can look forward to.

It is a process. It's not always like one day it shows up, but if you keep moving towards I'm ready for a change and I'm willing to take a little bit of uncomfortable action there could be bite-sized actions whether it's calling a recruiter or updating your resume -- as simple as that. Then you can start feeling building the confidence and the momentum to do that lateral change because it's time to move. It's time to walk away. Don't wait to get fired from a job. Don't wait until that happens to do the switch or do the thing you've always longed to do.

Rachel: Oh, I think it broke up again. That was good anyway. Okay, that's great. That makes sense. One of the things I know you're good at is you've mentioned that you can make quitting a fun and empowering task. Updating the resume, talking with recruiters, making that fun, is that just a mindset shift for you like this is going to be fun or do you have practices around that?

Laura: There is a mindset shift. Obviously to really think about it that this is not a drag, this is not something that someone's making you do; it's something you're choosing to do. But then the other part is keep it light as a game. I look at job searching not as something that I hate doing, but I look at something, "Okay, how many jobs can I apply this day? How many opportunities can I see the specific salary that I'm looking for? Can I make sure that my resume has the right keywords that match what the other jobs are looking for?" Really keeping it in a more playful space as opposed to feeling like it's another job I have to do. I hate doing this. How can I show myself? How can I demonstrate that I'm excelling at these strengths? I have done all these different things and I've saved my company x amount of money. How can I showcase that? How can I feel good about bragging more and more?

Rachel: That's great and that all makes sense. People listening might think if you have a regular position, why are you on a podcast? Why are you on a podcast? I know you have a good answer for this.

Laura: What do you mean, why I'm on a podcast?

Rachel: Usually people are on podcasts to promote careers that are usually self-employed. If they're working with regular companies, those companies don't ask them to go on podcasts.

Laura: To be honest, there are more people out there. There are more jobs out there. I think there's a stigma about having a 9-5 job that it's something you need to avoid, you need to not do, but the reality is that 9-5 jobs provide you stability, security that you . . . a steady paycheck, benefits and other opportunities that self-employment can offer but there's a deeper . . . you're walking upstream there. I've done both and I can tell you that I have to really look into my own personal values and I understood my values. I do need to have stability more than I needed to have the independence and freedom to choose my time.

I do enjoy going to work and having a place to set things that I get to do and I get to finish every day. That's something that self-employment is a path, but it's not the end-all, be-all. It's one of many other paths. Even though I have a job and a regular 9-5, I also get to employ my passions and my skills by really helping . . . through this process, too. You don't have to do it alone. You can actually be supported in this process.

Rachel: Yes. What I love about your answer is that, you have created like a career path for yourself that you love so much, that you really are willing to do it in your spare time for fun, too.

Laura: Yeah. I really enjoy what I do, and I enjoy the fact that it is a possibility. I didn't think 10 years ago if you asked me that it was a possibility to go for a job that I enjoy doing and to also have another hustle, another job that I also enjoy doing. That would not be possible because I was working too many long hours, and I was unhappy. Now, being in the place where I am happy, where I am at and I'm content and I have enough time and energy to do both activities, it's pretty awesome. The fact that I can actually have hobbies and passion along with my jobs, and there are not things that I drag on or things that I ignore that I hate doing. There are things that I'm actually enjoying doing, and that I'm passionate about the process.

Rachel: Actually brings up a good point. Can you let us know a little bit about when you were in a position that you didn't like and how you ended up where you are now? How did you just make those tough switches?

Laura: I spent my first 10 years in a career that at the time was a fun job on paper. I was working at a college. I was an assistant director of some activities. It was a lot of events, no day was the same and a lot of opportunities to really be of service and be an impact to college students. For some reason, the long hours started to catch up with me. I was always saying "yes" to things and then not being compensated at the same amount that I was spending my time. I was working 80+ hours to 100+ hours. I was working seven days a week. Some days were 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. I felt lost and I felt numb. I let my burnout go too far. It was not that I hated my job; I was apathetic for my job.

On 2013, I had what I call an awakening, where I realized that I needed to walk away. I was not going to get fired from this job so I needed to actually fire myself from the job. I set the time and the date. It was my first time to quit. I never quit in my life. I was always one of those people who stuck it through. Taking that first action was huge. I spent a year quitting different projects. I had to learn that lesson over and over until I felt comfortable enough to know that I can trust myself to make the decisions that I wanted.

I spent about a year trying self-employment, trying to identify working from home, working at different temp jobs, trying to identify what feels right, what doesn't feel right until I landed into the position that I'm currently in, which I'm happy. I want more. It's an opportunity to really understand that I'm putting in a very different place. The place that I was two years ago was numb. I was burnt out, I was ready to be done, to where I am today where I'm looking forward to quitting from a place that I'm content. It was a great experience but I'm ready for more.

Rachel: Do people ask you when you're applying to new jobs? Do they ask you about your work history and stuff and how do you explain that?

Laura: Yeah. I had to explain because I'd had about 10 years' worth of university experience and I was doing switch to corporate life. I had to explain what skills and strengths that I gained from that experience. I was very comfortable sharing not just about my experience from where I was. I didn't share the burnout and the toxic. I was very honest in saying, "Here are the skills, the transferable skills that I was able to gain. Here's how I can implement to this current job." A lot of times I focused not just about the past but focus on how my path can serve my present and my future. I usually tell that to employers or prospective employers that these are the skills I was able to gain. This is what I'm looking for.

Here's how I can serve your company. Here are the skills that are important that I can provide to you.

Rachel: That makes a lot of sense. I feel like you've brought up a lot of good points around . . . that self-employment doesn't have to be the path. I know it's something that's really . . . it's so celebrated and everything today. I think there's a lot of people who really do better with straight stability. I love how you've made that okay. And also just the practical things that you've shared about not only having a stable job but not making that be in sacrifice to feeling alive and impassioned because there are jobs that you can have that do make you feel alive and excited even if they are not you being the boss.

Laura: Yeah. I think also setting the boundaries because I have boundaries set at this current job, then I'm able to use the time outside of my job to work with clients, to do podcasts, to do my own podcast, to really do other projects that are in alignment to spend time with friends. My life is no longer consumed by one job. It's right sized into different opportunities how I spend my time. It allows me to . . . and be the best self I can be.

Rachel: This has been really a different type of podcast, and I love it. It's different than the usual shows that we have. I think that's really good, just give a new perspective for people and a lot of the shows that I do are with 100% self-employed people. I'm glad for this change of pace and your empowering attitude around it.

Laura: I'm glad.

Rachel: Yeah. Me, too. Can you let people know where they can go and find out more about you?

Laura: Yeah. They can visit my website at laurayamin.com. I have a podcast also. It's called "[Not Safe for Work](#)," and I share about experiences with other career-minded people. People who have actually straight up jobs to people who are self-employed and they share their story of how they took back control of their career.

Rachel: I love it. Thank you so much for being here. This has been great.

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I really appreciate you.

With love,
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