

Ep #29: How to Enjoy Every Day with Megan Ladd



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode 29. Today's episode is such a fun conversation with Megan Ladd. Megan's a coach who previously worked in the entertainment industry at Paramount Pictures® and at 20th Century Fox®, before making the leap into personal development and joining the self-help author, Danielle LaPorte's team. She simultaneously began her study in spiritual psychology, and totally fell in love with coaching and went on to start her own practice in 2016.

Megan is known as the "Joy Coach." She teaches high achieving coaches how to get out of their heads, take the pressure off themselves, and create more ease, joy, and presence in their day-to-day lives, inside and outside their businesses. But as you're going to see, you don't have to be a coach or even an entrepreneur, for what we discussed, to apply to your day-to-day lives.

She teaches a concrete exercise that you can do this week, that will help you identify what you believe you should do, versus what you deeply want to do in your life. And, how to start gradually shifting towards less 'shoulds' and more wants. I hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I did.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits and feel as good on the inside as they look on paper. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do so you can learn to create habits that give more than they take. And now, here's your host, physician, and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

Kristi Angevine: All right. Welcome to the podcast, Megan. It is so fun to have you here. Can you, for the people who don't yet know you, give just a little introduction about who you are, what you do, and who you help?

Megan Ladd: Of course. Thank you so much for having me, I'm so excited to be here and connect with you. I feel like we have a very similar life and

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career missions. It's a joy to be here. And, I'll probably be using that word a lot, because I call myself the "Joy Coach."

I am a life coach for coaches who have a tendency to put a lot of pressure on themselves, be very high achieving. And as a former and recovering perfectionist myself, really helping people get out of their heads and spend more time soaking up the joy of their business, the joy of their life, and making the most of their days at work and outside of work.

Kristi: Okay, so this is going to be so perfect, because even though we have a slight difference in the demographic of who we help, and because not everybody who's listening to this right now are entrepreneurs or coaches or business owners, I think every single one of us can use some information and skills about how to create more ease and joy. So, I think it's just going to be a great conversation.

Megan: Yes, I agree. And I, as a former you know, high achiever too, I would say over achiever, I just relate to a lot of what you share, as well. And I think that a lot of people could benefit from getting out of their heads. Which is, you know, key to making the most of our days; so, 100% I would say. Whatever we talk about, I've a feeling will be applicable to non-coaches and non-business owners, too.

Kristi: Okay, when we think about presence and joy and ease, at least when I first heard of those concepts as something that wasn't just me as a kid, you just practice them naturally. I would think that they sound so simple. But my experience is that actually living and experiencing them more than just transiently can sometimes seem really complex and almost out of reach, especially if you spend a lot of time in your head.

I would love to just talk about; with your clients and or even with yourself, could you talk about some of the common barriers, or the common limiting beliefs when it comes to joy, and when it comes to presence?

Megan: Of course, and I love the way that you phrase that too, as like the barriers, because how I think about joy, how I tend to explain it to clients is

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it's almost like the sun that radiates out of you. It is your natural state, like you said, we feel it, we experience it easily as kids.

And, just through the process of growing up, and pursuing certain careers, and going through school, especially if you were a former good student, like myself, a rule follower, you kind of train yourself out of it. And, you learn how to be in the world and how to succeed in this traditional sense.

I like to think of joy as this undercurrent; the sun that's beaming out of you. And then, these different learned behaviors, these different limiting beliefs are like the clouds. Sometimes, if you have a lot of these different patterns, and I'll give some examples in a second, but if you have a lot of these different patterns in place, it can be like a whole marine layer. It can be like; it looks like a cloudy day even though the sun is underneath that.

When I talk about reconnecting to your joy, in that sense of presence and ease of being, it's really about lifting and clearing those clouds, and knowing that it's your inherent state underneath. Sometimes people are like; Man, I haven't felt really present in decades. Or, I can't even remember feeling that way since I was a kid. Is this still something I can even access? To which, I always say, "Yes, of course, it's still there. Let's just get to work clearing the stuff that's clouding it over." So, some examples...

Kristi: That's so beautiful. Thank you for bringing up the cloud and the sun metaphor, because I think so many people can relate to that. And that's such a calm reassurance, that it's not necessarily something that you have to like arduously discover and hope that you have.

It's just it's, you know, it's the sun that's beaming out of you, and it's just obscured by the clouds; the aka 'learned limiting beliefs.' So, for all the high achievers who live in their heads, you too, my friend, have this in you already. Go ahead, what were you going to say before I just jumped in and interrupted you?

Megan: Oh, my gosh, no, I love that you feel that, too. Because it is, it is a relief. And I would say... Actually, something in what you just said

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reminded me of a prime example, which is that it needs to be this arduous process. Or, that it's like one of the most common, I would say limiting belief that high achievers tend to have, is that it needs to be hard. And, it needs to require kind of burning yourself out, grinding away.

Especially if you have achieved things in the past, through that method of kind of like nose to the ground, tunnel vision, 'I'll do whatever it takes to achieve this.'

If that's what your brain associates with success, it can be really challenging on your own, to kind of break out of that mentality and even open up to the idea that it could come with more ease. So, it's that mentality of like the hustle and grind. I boil it down to, I use the word "pressure" a lot. It's like putting this unnecessary pressure on ourselves to achieve.

Learning a different way of, it's actually, it feels counterintuitive, but when you start to release that pressure, and even play with it, and I can give an example in a little bit, but just playing with letting that go, a lot of high achievers fear that all the motivation will go away. And they'll just end up like kicking back on the couch, like no motivation to do anything.

But what actually happens, is it creates space for what you want and desire. And truly, an interest in something to pull you forward instead of that pressure. But that can be an easier said than done thing when your brain's like; absolutely not. I've gotten this far by putting a ton of pressure on myself. Like, we're not going to throw out that method. I would say that's like the biggest cloud.

And of course, there's, you know, a lot of, and I know you talk about this, too, a lot of that feeling of; I'm not doing enough. I haven't done enough. That comparison, perhaps to other people in your field; that impostor syndrome. Maybe if you do experience some success, or you're in the spotlight in a new way, or you get a promotion, or you're in front of you know, different people; all these things form the different clouds.

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Kristi: Yeah, I love the idea of just the clouds that are there. Not only is it visually beautiful, but I think it is something that people can really wrap their minds around, in terms of their own experience of that. One of the things that I hear you saying is that, if we think that it needs to be hard, that we need to hustle, we need to go through the grind, that if we don't do that, that we're just going to go belly up, have zero motivation.

And I think one of the fears my clients have, in that vein, is just becoming mediocre and ordinary, and doing poor-quality work, and things being substandard. Because they're not being so hard on themselves, and hustling and grinding. Can you talk to that aspect of things?

Megan: Yeah. That is a really common thing that I encounter, too. It's like, I find that high achievers do have a genuine desire often, to have an extraordinary life. And I love that quote, that you referenced, too, about like; what do you want to do with your one wild and precious life? I love that, as a perspective and a driver.

And, I think about that all the time. Like, I really want to milk this life. And if you have that desire, if you want an extraordinary life, that can be what pulls you forward.

That doesn't disappear when you take the pressure off. If anything, like that's connected to the sun, so when you start taking the pressure off, that's dampening your spirit, that's actually draining your energy, just know that's what's left, is that pull.

Kristi: Oh, that's so great. If somebody's listening to this and that really resonates, and they go to the next step, like; okay, well, so I have this like profound, immense desire for this better life. And to not squander, to not have any deathbed regrets.

Yet, pressure is all I know. You know, overthinking, pressure, hustle, grind has been dramatically advantageous to me up to this point. But I'm exhausted. So, how? What are the 'hows'? And like, in parentheses, is it possible for me? That's what I picture my listeners are thinking to themselves, right now; how do I do this beautiful thing?

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Megan: Yes. First, to answer the second question; yes, it's possible. I would tell anyone who is wondering; is this possible for me? Even if you don't believe it yet because you don't have the lived experience of it yet, you can lean on our belief in it, in the meantime. And, just know that we believe it's possible for you.

And then, once you start to experience it, of course, your brain will kind of get on board. But I would just ask you to take a leap of faith right now. I love having people view it as an experiment that can help get brains on board. And, a very practical exercise I would recommend, you can kind of go through it now, is to just start dipping your toes into the world of taking off that pressure.

The first step is, you can pick an area of your life where you feel a lot of pressure around achieving something or making changes. It could be health or relationships or your work. And let's just say, we're just going to pick health, for the purpose of this example. Let's say that you really want to start taking better care of yourself physically. Pick whatever area comes to mind, right now.

The next step, step two, is you would list out kind of from your default, if your default's pressure, all of the "shoulds" and "supposed tos" that come to mind, when you think of making that change, or moving towards a healthier life.

You know, you might be like; well, I'm supposed to get up at 5am. And, I'm supposed to meditate for an hour. And, I'm supposed to exercise. And, I'm supposed to drink lemon water. Whatever it is, all these things, just list out everything that currently your brain offers you, as a "should" or "supposed to." Knowing that they're perfectly fine, they're probably really valid things. But just get them all out. Kind of let your brain release them, that pressure release.

And then, once you've done that, the third step is, we're just going to play... Now, that we've kind of given pressure the floor, we're going to play with what you actually want to do. Just ask yourself, you know, when it comes to my health, just using that example, put in whatever.

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When it comes to my career, when it comes to my relationships, what are some things that I would want to do? What do I actually feel inspired to do? What feels really good to me? And it might be a much smaller list, you might even be stumped at the beginning, but just sit with it for a second.

And notice... Doesn't have to be from the list above, just kind of play with and start to get familiar with this 'want' energy. Like, what actually feels good to me? What do I want? And then, write that out.

Once you're done, we're going to pick one item to cross off from the "shoulds" list and one item to circle from the "wants" list, and just picture it as a swap. You don't have to do the rest of the "shoulds" list, it's just crossing that one out is just indicative of making a swap. Just pick something that you're going to let go of, for now.

Let's just say it's the drinking a cup of warm lemon water. You're like; you know what, I'm just going to let myself release that, for now. And from this "wants" list, maybe you came up with; I want to end my day with just a walk around the block. Or, I want to unwind from work. I want to walk the dog with my partner. And, that just feels really good and nourishing to you. So, you would circle what feels good to you.

And just tell yourself, "This is me trying on this experiment. Swapping a "should." Practicing releasing that pressure, and practicing leaning into something that I just feel pulled to do. And I'm just going to do it as an experiment."

So, we're not putting pressure on the experiment or making the change. Not putting pressure on releasing the pressure. And, try it on. Follow through.

And then, the final step is, I want you to collect evidence for how good it feels, and how well it works out, and how the world doesn't fall apart, right? When you don't do all the things on the "shoulds" list. And this is an important final step, because we want to start to build trust in following those desires and releasing the pressure.

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And it's just one micro step, but every time you do it... Let's say you try it for a week, and you go on an evening walk to unwind after work, every day for a week. Every time you do that walk, I want you to practice reinforcing in your mind, how nourishing it feels, how good it feels, and how safe it is to have made that swap. That's just a really simple practice to start just playing with letting go of that pressure.

Kristi: So, Megan, I absolutely adore that exercise, because it's so tangible, so simple. And, there's a lot of depth to it, too. I can totally see it. And I love that you gave the caveat of like; don't put pressure on releasing pressure.

My listeners are experts at sort of being hard on themselves. Using personal development tools against themselves, if maybe it doesn't go as perfectly as they think it should the first time. After they've practiced it for 10 seconds. You know, I may be speaking about myself here. I love that you went through that.

And, I just want to highlight for anyone listening that, that final piece, I think is so beautiful. That piece of sort of basking and savoring on purpose, by collecting evidence for how good it feels. I'm at a conference right now. And, there are workouts every morning of this conference, that we're really...

It comes to my mind right now because they were this combination of sort of circuit exercises, mixed with mindset, you know, coaching work. Related to emotions, or body image, or things like that. And, one of the things that you know, the person guiding the workout said, was basically like this final piece: Take a moment to feel how good you're feeling right now.

And enjoy that, so that you are collecting evidence for how good it feels to move your body. So that you don't do this exercise superficially, you actually appreciate how good it is, so that it can make it easier to continue, for what you just talked about. Looking at and doing an inventory of "shoulds" versus "wants." I love that, thank you.

Megan: And I love your example, too. I so feel that even with exercise, it's like reinforcing, like; that's the good part, right? We want to soak it up,

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because it's like, that's what you drag yourself out of bed for right? It's not, you don't feel that motivation, at first, per se, but it's like, ah, why not soak up those endorphins, or whatever it is? It's a beautiful example.

Kristi: I will tell all of our listeners, one of the things that I am, right at this moment, amused by is that when Megan and I are recording this, I'm in Florida at this conference that I referenced. And, the Wi-Fi is a little bit sketchy. So, to preserve the integrity of the audio, we've turned off the video, just so that we're speaking. But as we're speaking, Megan doesn't know this, but I have this huge grin on my face.

Like there's a beach outside, which is you know, as my listeners may know, like, I'm not really the biggest beach, sand person. It's gorgeous out there. But I'm just closing my eyes and I'm listening to Megan speak, and the things that you're saying, Megan, I just have this huge grin on my face. It's just, I just love how you're talking about this.

There's a lot of, in my mind, lots of; oh, I love that. That's so great. Which I think you can hear; it will probably come out as my refrain when we're talking.

On that note, there's, well, no, hold on, before we go on; was there anything else about that exercise that you wanted to share? Before I kind of pivot to another question.

Megan: Just to recap, you know, because I kind of was a little bit drawn out. But just if I were to give people a little summary, if they want to take notes, it's basically: Step one, pick an area of your life where you're feeling that pressure.

Step two, list out the “shoulds” and the “supposed tos.” Step three, list out the wants, and what you feel pulled to do in this area. Step four, pick one of the steps from the “wants” list, circle it, and cross out a “should;” swap the should for a want. And then, the final step, is collecting that evidence. Just to have all the steps kind of condensed.

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And then, you know, I do have like a more in-depth version of this process. I create a whole workbook for planning out a weekend full of guilt-free time off; that is a five-step process.

If anyone wants that, that workbook, it's for free on my website. It's like, if you are rocking and rolling with this, and you want to take it deeper, and I always love nerding out with a good workbook myself. So, if anyone's listening in, and they're into that kind of thing, I have that as kind of a way to take that process deeper, too.

Kristi: That is great. And we will, for everybody who likes to go to the show notes, we'll have that included there. You can just easily click on that and be able to navigate your way to Megan's beautiful worksheet. And, I love that you gave a summary again. If I could smile any harder, that's one of my favorite things. So, thank you for that.

There's a phrase that I've heard, and I think I've read that it's attributed to you, and it says, "This is how you create a life that feels even better than vacation." I'd like to hear you sort of address that. And in particular, can we start with talking about guilt, for a minute? Would you talk about guilt, as it relates to things like actually taking time off, and then when you take some time for self-care, actually enjoying having fun and being present with that time.

As opposed to, what I see often, is people will take some time off, but during that time, they will either be forecasting to the future, all the things that they wish they would do. Or, they'll be ruminating about the things that they haven't yet done. And they'll blink, and they won't have actually been present in that space. So, guilt, plus they've got lack of presence. What can you say about that?

Megan: The first thing that comes to mind, is that it can be helpful to know in this way, feeling guilt tied into these things, is a learned emotion. It's like, as a kid you don't experience, you might feel guilt for you know, doing something wrong, or realizing like you strayed from your moral compass in some way.

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But if you observe kids, they don't feel guilt in this way. This is where it's more like learned from that kind of obsession with productivity, like mentality, that I would say is pretty prominent in our culture. It's like a learned way of being, which I find to be a relief, because if it's learned, it can be unlearned.

Just knowing this is just something that your brain has become familiar with, but it's not your natural state. Similar to the sun and clouds metaphor, it's like just know you can unweave this. And what you're feeling is just based on how you're thinking about it, it's not actually the truth. You haven't actually done anything wrong.

I think that's an important distinction, off the bat. And then, the next thing I would say, this can be really helpful for, I'm kind of a recovering and former workaholic. And I just, I do really enjoy the satisfaction of a good day's work, but, you know, needed to learn how to create this healthy separation.

So, something that can be helpful, if you relate to that, is broadening your description of your job, to look at your life holistically. And this can be looking through the lens of; what is my job, not just in my specific career function, but as a human, as a partner, or a parent, or just whoever you are outside any label or specific form of identity? Just what do I want my life experience to be, as a whole?

And, I like to view part of your job as a human, is to be here and soak up every ounce of this life. Sometimes I even view life as like one big amusement park. And, one of the rides is your career. But there's so many other rides that you're meant to go on. And there's so much more that you can experience and enjoy.

Broadening this description of like; what is my job, if my actual job is to also enjoy myself? Viewing it through that lens can give people some permission initially, to unplug on vacation, for instance. Because it kind of meets your brain where it is, right? It's like; oh, this is also part of my job. My job is not just sitting at my computer, or working in this traditional sense.

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Kristi: Oh. That's so great. What I noticed, is that guilt can be either really overt, and it can, you know, where it comes out very, very loudly, or like, oh, I couldn't do that, or I shouldn't do that. But it can also be sneaky and quiet. And very much, at least in the world of physicians and clinical world, it can be very much encouraged by the culture of the industry.

Where, you know, for physicians and nurses, and even in the clinical world, patients always come first. And if they don't, it's sort of an all-or-none, like, if that weren't true, and weren't something that you lived by, then you wouldn't care at all about your patients.

So, if you were to not want to pick up an extra shift to cover for a colleague, because you wanted to go to your kid's soccer game, or you wanted to keep that date with your partner. Then, that doesn't just mean; Oh, you're taking time to follow through on a previous commitment. That means that you were actually don't care about your entire job. You don't care about any of the rest of the amusement park, you only care about the one, or else. Yeah, I love how you talked about that.

Megan: Oh, and I have a good solve, for this too. Because I am very familiar with those kinds of inner voices and like the inner critic, almost to being like; well, if you really cared about your patients, then you would pick up the extra shift.

One of the easiest ways to start detaching from that, it can be very hard wired within yourself, it can be hardwired within an office or an industry, as you're saying, or even a just a certain section of an industry, right? It's, notice the tone of those voices in your head.

Let's just use the example of what you just shared. It was like; well, like if you really cared then you would take on an extra shift. Like, how would you define that tone, if you were just describing the tone of voice to someone?

Kristi: Yeah, it makes me... Like, I know that people, they would feel, or I would feel, a sense of obligation. So, I think the tone would be almost reprimanding.

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Megan: Yes. Okay. And then, what do you imagine, if you were speaking from a loving place, a self-honoring and loving place, what do you imagine that voice would say?

Kristi: The voice that says, like, “You don't actually care about your patients, if you don't do this?” What it would say if it was coming from a loving place?

Megan: Yeah, or almost if a loving voice was like meeting it in conversation. So, we almost have the reprimanding voice being like; you don't really care about your patients.

If we were just totally switching gears, going to a different tone, and coming from a place of love, almost like what would the actual truth be, if it were based in love about this situation?

Kristi: Oh, gosh, yeah. I could picture it as soon as you asked in that way, I can hear almost a chorus of really individual answers that everybody would have.

But I think for me, what it would sound like is something like; oh, my goodness, I wish I could be in two places at once. That would be amazing. But since that's not the reality we live in, and I know that I completely love my patients and would do anything for my colleagues.

Unfortunately, you know, I stick with, you know, my previous priority. It would be something that like, takes into account the complexity of the situation. Yeah, but at the same time, maintain that original, sort of firm but loving boundary.

Megan: Yes. Oh, I love what you came up with. And, addressing that complexity too. Like, you're not just completely steamrolling that part of you that wants to serve and be there for more patients. But could you feel, even as you were saying it, it's such a different energy behind it?

Kristi: Totally. And I think the thing, as I was saying it, the thing that I noticed, that I would imagine some people listening, are very comfortable with is, sometimes it's just this adversarial voice of like, the one voice that

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says, “Well, if you don't care about your patients, you know, like, if you don't do this, that means you just don't care. Or, if you don't do this, that means nobody's going to see you as a team player. And you're going to be completely rejected by all.”

Like, there's that side, and then to counter what feels kind of like a bullish, critical voice. Sometimes it'll be like; well, screw you. My kid, you know, matters, and my life matters. You can't treat me like...”

And, that can be exhausting that sort of ping-pong, back and forth, that I don't feel like... Even saying that I get a little tense. That I don't feel when there's that loving, you know, sort of calm, compassionate, very centered voice.

Megan: Yes. And you're hitting on something really important too, which is moving away from working from that state of pressure, isn't about steamrolling the pressure, like we said before. It's not putting pressure on yourself to let go of the pressure. In fact, you'll be much more effective if it's like a gentle releasing, like an acknowledgement.

And even in allowing, that's why in that exercise, we listed out the ‘shoulds’ first. Just like, give it a forum and then just meeting it with love. And this example you provided, where you're not like; well, screw that, you know, I'm going to honor my kid.

It was just a much calmer, grounded loving energy, where when you approach pressure in that way, that energy is so much stronger than it, right? It's like the quiet, calm, confident voice. It doesn't need to butt heads with it. It can just envelop it.

Kristi: Yeah, that makes me think of this image of two kids arguing, or two adults arguing over something silly, but very passionately. And then, like the third party comes in is like; hey, everybody. Like, why so much tension? I see where you're coming from. I also see where you're coming from. And we don't have to do this the same old way.

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And I think that is such a disarming, and like helps dissipate the pressure against the pressure. So, it's not just like, white-knuckled willpower fight. Because from white-knuckled willpower, it's like the antithesis of joinees.

Megan: Exactly. It's like, if we're letting go of approaching things with like white-knuckling willpower, we don't want to do that with white-knuckling willpower. It just creates that internal ping-pong, like you said. It could go on forever, right? And, you would just go in circles.

Actually, going back to something that you said earlier, where it was; what do you recommend for approaching this, if it is so like insidious in a culture? Or, it is so widespread to apply that pressure or feel guilty for really taking time off?

And one thing that has helped me and people I've worked with, that I would recommend, is almost owning the fact that this way of being is kind of counterculture. It is you operating and choosing to operate differently than most the world operates right now.

And if you love your reason for that, if you feel like you really deeply desire more presence around your family, or whatever it is that's calling you forward, making peace with the fact that; you know what? People in my industry or people in my office, or even some of my clients might not understand this. And, am I willing to be okay with that? Is that something I can live with? Right?

Kristi: Yeah. Just being able to label that this is countercultural, I think, also, basically provides some validation, for the difficulty that one might experience. Especially, if they don't perhaps have a really large culture of like-minded thinkers around them, or like-minded people in their sphere.

Megan: Yes. And going back to the, you know, creating a life that feels better than vacation. I'll never forget the first time I dropped that phrase at a networking event where, you know, you go around and you say who you are, and what you believe in, or what you do for a living. And, I felt like everyone's face went blank, and it was just crickets in the room. And I was like; oh, no, this didn't... I did not read the room.

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But I think the truth is, I didn't read the room, because I was just excited to share this perspective. And, it did fall flat in the space that I was in. It is kind of revolutionary. It's like the way that most of us are taught and wired and expect to be in the world, is you have your paid vacation, or you go on a trip or two every year. And, that's your time to really unplug and relax and enjoy yourself.

It does kind of flip that on its head to think about; what if there was a way to experience that same kind of enjoyment on a daily basis? So that, of course, you still want to go on trips, who doesn't love a good trip, or you're traveling. But it's not just reserved, that feeling isn't reserved for a couple of weeks out of each year of your life.

Kristi: That's so good. And the thing that this brings me to now is that, for me, I've noticed, over the years, that the work that I love to do most, and the clients that I have a tendency to enjoy working with. Or, you know, the issue, not the clients per se, like the issues that my clients struggle with the most are oftentimes, the ones that parallel the issues that I've experienced myself. I'm curious for you, given the work that you do, what brought you personally to doing this work?

Megan: Oh, my gosh, I feel like my whole personal transformation journey, it's just, I was very much like a high achiever and experienced, you know, got a lot of things that I wanted through that mentality, and even really like perfectionist tendencies. I got into my dream school for college, and I got scholarships, and then I got my dream job at Paramount Pictures out of college.

And, I remember, even early into that role, you know, my first day at the office, I think it was like, I went home at 11pm. And I was like; oh, these are going to be my hours now. And I remember wondering, like, I feel like I've worked my whole life up until this moment.

And, I did have one of those moments of like; is this it? Am I just going to like wake up and like clock-in long days, and that's it? And, I also was starting to realize that I wasn't sure this was the job for me, or the career track for me.

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I kind of had like a quarter life crisis if you will. And, I also happened to meet my first coach right within that timeframe. And there was this internal moment where I just felt like; this is what I've always wanted to do. This is what I wanted to do, that I didn't know existed.

My parents were therapists, and that always felt like an almost fit, but I just didn't know coaching existed. And I met this coach, and I've watched how she totally transformed the room, and got people to open up. I told my oldest friend the next day on Gchat®, you know, I was like, I think I want to be a coach.

And then, I experienced all of that internal pressure, where my gut was like; this is it. And meanwhile, my mind was like; wait, what? You just started this job. You've been working towards this. You did all these internships. You studied, you know, communication and marketing and advertising. What will your parents think? Or, what will your friends think? What even is coaching? Where does one become a coach?

Cue like the internal pressure up the wazoo. And it took me a little while. I started dipping my toes in, but it honestly took me a of couple years to even make the leap into personal development. Because of that internal pressure and the 'what will people think,' and who am I to do this? My ego getting really loud and kind of dampening the call of my soul at that time.

It was a process for me. And I started getting really into personal development and learning how to trust my intuition. And, as I've strengthened that muscle over time, what I found, and this is where I'm really a big proponent of collecting evidence. Like, you can dip your toe and you know, you don't have to change your life overnight. You can build up this trust, in trusting your intuition, trusting what you want.

I started to collect that evidence where, when I would lean in and I would do these things, even going to a workshop, or letting myself learn more about coaching, I would experience that burst of energy, and it felt like this reinforcement; you're on the right path.

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And then eventually, I worked up the courage to switch industries. And then, start the spiritual psychology program, that really was the foundation of my coaching. Where I really got confirmation that I'm absolutely obsessed with it, because I could sit and coach people for hours, and I would gain energy.

I just built that that trust over time, where it was kind of like my overachiever, inner critic coming head-to-head with what I knew deep down, was right for me. And just practicing releasing that pressure and leaning more into what I wanted. And the more I did that, it just brought me a lot of joy.

And, I ended up doing what I felt like I'm here to do. I applied that to the area of relationships, and I ended up meeting my husband. My own personal transformation. Every area of my life following that process. I really do believe in like, the better it gets, the better it gets.

And it feels very counterintuitive to the way that I, you know, operated a lot of my life. But it has opened up more joy for me. And, I want everyone to experience that.

Kristi: Oh, my gosh, I really appreciate that phrase that you said, you know, 'this was what I wanted to do, but I didn't know it existed.' Yeah, my experience with discovering coaching was the exact... That put the words exactly how I felt about it, as well.

And the other thing I appreciated about what you just shared, is it's almost as if you're sort of sharing that there's a kinder and gentler way. Although counterintuitive, to soothe that inner critic and that inner sort of like hyper vigilant, highly driven part of ourselves, that's in our minds.

That isn't just battling against it, but it's, you know, giving it evidence it's going to be okay, and you know, almost like; see? We're going to be doing this thing that we really love that other people might not understand. And that's ok.

Megan: Yes. Because if you think about it, too, like if you're in a place where your brain is really focused on what other people think, and then you

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just try to go to the other end of the spectrum and change your life overnight, you would probably freak yourself out so much, that you would end up just backtracking. Right?

It's like we want to meet ourselves where we are. And then, once you start to collect that evidence, then it's taking it beyond just logically understanding that; I'll be okay. It's safe to do this. It's like you actually feel that burst of energy inside, or that feeling of being really aligned, or on target with something that's right for you.

And that is something that just viscerally, once you experience, that's really motivating. You want more of that.

Kristi: This is such a great segue to, there are two things that are on your website, that I wanted to share with the listeners here. Whether they go see them themselves or just want to hear this. One was a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and one was something that came from one of your clients. So, would you be okay if I share this?

Megan: Of course.

Kristi: The Ralph Waldo Emerson quote was the one that says, "What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside you." And I think that you so nicely described in your own words, that idea of how joy, ease, and presence are the sun. And, they can be obscured by the clouds, but they're already there. It's not something that you have to hope that is possible for you.

And the other quote that's related is, there was a client of yours, who was talking about how she learned to do her work in a way that was much more energizing instead of draining. And she said, "Learning how to work from a place of rest and ease, allowed me to tune into my intuition. Which created so much growth and so many new ideas in my business. I have been working from a place of inspiration and showing up consistently in my business because it's now," and I love this part. "It's highly aligned with not only what I want to do, but how I want to do it."

So, on that note, is there anything else that you would like to add?

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Megan: Let's just say, if this is about like growing a business, if there is a suggested strategy and your mind thinks it makes so much sense, but when you try it on... And when I say try it on, I basically just mean like you consider it, you think about it. If everything in you screams 'no,' or if it feels heavy, or it just feels like 'ugh,' or I mean, especially if it feels icky, that's your internal guidance system, telling you like this is a no for you.

But if you try something on, and this is where when you start to quiet that pressure and work how this client kind of is describing, there will always be things... Especially if you're doing something you love, if it's the work you're passionate about, there will be things that you want to do. That initial thing of like; oh, man, maybe if I let go of this 'should,' like there will be nothing to replace it.

This is where I would, again, reassure you something will always replace it, because your business, just in this example, your business is your playground, of course, there's going to be things you want to do. Once you start creating space for those, it's like the biggest breath of fresh air. It's a sigh of relief, but also a breath of fresh air because it's like a burst of energy comes in.

And when you feel, I describe it as, you know, I use the word "aligned." But when you feel, your whole system feels on board with doing something, that is your path forward. That's basically your system giving you the green light and saying, yes, proceed this way.

And when you start to tune into your body signals, it really is like you have all of the answers inside of you. In terms of like, if no, it's a no; if it's a green light, proceed in this direction. And, that is very energizing, life-giving, fulfilling way to move through your work.

Kristi: Yeah, and I will add, because just saying these things, I'm simultaneously nodding and smiling and imagining some of my dearest colleagues, listeners, clients, who will sometimes hear things like this, that deeply resonate. But then, they will think, "Well, I don't know how to tune in. I don't know how to feel that," because they might live in their heads and have a kind of a nice disconnect from their bodies.

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Because it's been a great way to survive their, whatever their training or their job was for a long time. I just want to point out that this, if you have something to add, of course, please do. This type of tuning in, listening to your intuition and feeling in, it's normal, if you haven't practiced it, or you aren't used to doing this. It's normal for it to feel unfamiliar, like a foreign language.

And then, the other thing that crosses my mind, particularly being you know, in this beautiful environment at this conference, it's a conference all focused on wellness and physicians. And I want to emphasize, that there's also nothing wrong with you if what your current situation is and your current vocation, your current job situation, if, when you are doing it, it's an energy drain, and it's a resounding no.

Those signals aren't signs that there's something wrong with you. That like you can't cut it; you can't hack it. That if you were better, you'd be able to. Those are just your personal signals. And it doesn't say so much about you, as much as it might say about the match between what you're doing and you.

Megan: Yes, yeah. And I, you know, I think it takes courage, too. So, just acknowledging it can take courage to look at things, through that way. If you have a tendency to be hard on yourself, sometimes it's actually, it feels easier and safer to go the route of making it about you and being hard on yourself.

If that's what you're used to doing, then to pull back and look at the picture and consider something like making a career change or, you know, any kind of change, it does take courage to look at things in that way. Because once you see it, it's hard to unsee, right?

Once I realized that climbing up the corporate ladder, in the entertainment industry, wasn't my path, that was a tough pill to swallow. In some ways, I wanted it to be my path. And, I saw other people around me wanting it and being really interested in it. And, I just couldn't get myself there. But once I saw that, it was like; shoot, what am I going to do? I have to figure out how I'm going to reorient my life.

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Also, again, giving yourself grace with that process. But knowing and acknowledging to yourself that it does take courage to trust those internal cues, and even be willing to look at them.

Kristi: Yeah. I think that's just such a profound message. Basically, in whatever you're doing with your life, it doesn't really mean... People listening, don't have to be in your field or my field for that to really ring true. As we wrap up here, I want to just sort of echo back some of the points that I thought were really amazing. So, somebody who's listening to this while they're exercising, can just keep in mind.

Number one, I think everybody should go back and do the 'shoulds and wants' exercise. And keep in mind, that really beautiful idea that you had, that it's just an experiment. And when you can remind yourself that, and when you're trying any new thing that that can sort of take some of the pressure off.

I also really adored then, that you emphasize the point that if something is learned, it can be unlearned. And, that it can be so important to just notice the tone with which we speak to ourselves.

And then also, I love that you said that people can, you know, sort of lean on your and my belief in them. And, that things are possible. They can, I think it's wonderful to borrow other people's thoughts about us, when they're ones that really lift us up.

And as you do this, you can embrace the, you know, outside the box nature of all of this; it is counterintuitive. It is countercultural, and that's okay. And that's when you can tap into courage.

Which brings me to the fact that doing this work in isolation can be so much harder than doing this work in community, or with you know, in conjunction with a coach. So, on that note, can you share with people, if they'd like to learn more about what you do, share with people how they can find you, who you work with, and like, what you have coming up next?

Megan: Of course. And I agree, it's definitely one of those things, that even if you're a personal development junkie, or the most self-aware person in

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the world, it can feel like arguing with your own brain sometimes, when you're trying to navigate through this stuff. So, having someone outside of you guide you through, can be a saving grace. This is why, you know, I actually coach coaches specifically, who tend to be very self-aware, but you know, outside of their brains, I can help guide them through this process.

So, I work one-on-one with coaches, and I have a small group coaching program that has more of that community aspect, called the *Joyful CEO*. And people can find me on Instagram; I'm @MegLadd. And, my website is Megan-Ladd.com.

Kristi: Well, thank you so much for that. And, we will have all of that linked in the show notes, for people who just like to go there and be able to click, to make it easy. And Megan, I so enjoyed this conversation. Thank you so much for being here today.

Megan: Oh my gosh, me too. Thank you for having me.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your patterns, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list which you can find linked in the show notes. Or, if you go to www.HabitsOnPurpose.com you'll find it right there.

If you're serious about taking this work deeper and going from an intellectual understanding to off the page implementation, I offer coaching in two flavors: individual deep-dive coaching with the somatic and cognitive approach, and a small group coaching program. The small group is currently for women physicians only, and comes with CME credits. You can be the first to learn more about both, the individual or group coaching options, by getting on the email list.

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