Ep #59: How to Get Your Time Back with Vikki Louise

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Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode #59. I'm your host, Kristi Angevine. Today's episode is a discussion about time, and how we experience time. I've a really special guest, who's an expert on all things related to time. Her name is Vikki Louise, and she's known as The Feminist Time Coach.

Basically, Vikki is a reformed hustler, who went from working 80-hour work weeks doing all the things, to now, working 15-hour work weeks while having so much more fun and without sacrificing success. She's an expert coach that does group coaching programs, where she helps her clients unlearn the rules they've adopted about time, so they can achieve more, earn more, and live more.

She's the host of *The Feminist Time, Productivity and Rest* podcast. And there are two quotes of hers, that I absolutely love. And I'm going to give them here as a little teaser of what's to come. One of them is, "Time wasted is nonrefundable and expensive."

The other one is a little longer, and it is, "The biggest lie you've been told is, rest and unplanned time are bad. We have to stop seeing rest as a treat or reward. It's not part of recovery. It doesn't come after. It's integral to our success and our happiness." So, this is just a little preview of what we get into in this episode, and I hope you enjoy.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. 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. And now, here's your host, Physician, and Master Certified Life Coach, Kristi Angevine.

Kristi Angevine: Welcome to the podcast, everybody. I am super excited to have Vikki Louise on the podcast. You've already heard a little bit about her. Some of you already know her and follow her quite well. But for those of you don't know her, I'm just going to have you, Vikki. Just introduce yourself.

Vikki Louise: Yes, thank you so much for having me. I am Vikki Louise, I'm a feminist time coach, specializing in nontoxic productivity and resting more

and learning outdated time management practices that keep us busy and chasing a tail. I am currently living in the UK, back in the UK, after a decade living all over, and a new mom, I think that's also fun to share. I'm excited for this conversation. Thanks for having me.

Kristi: I will say that as I was getting on, I had this thought I was like, I wonder if I'll get to see her baby, it'll be crawling around. Because I know you model for a lot of your clients, what it looks like to work and be productive in a way that feels really in alignment for you and also not hide your real life away, like having those be integrated. So, I was thinking about that when we got on. I was like, I might see this cute little baby.

Vikki: Almost. He's recently started nursery, two days a week, and one of those days is today. So, there we go.

Kristi: Wonderful. Well, one of the things you said, I think you said, did you phrase it toxic productivity mindset? Is that what you said?

Vikki: I said nontoxic productivity.

Kristi: Okay, wonderful. So that makes me wonder, what do you think of when you think of toxic productivity?

Vikki: It's kind of like the hustle culture that we live in, around prioritizing productivity over ourselves and seeing ourselves as something to be removed from productivity, so to speak. Seeing ourselves, by that I mean, our physical health, our mental health, as something to be spent for productivity. A willingness to sacrifice beyond…

The word capable is wrong, we are obviously capable of giving a lot more. But just because we are capable of it, does it mean that we should? Is there even a net positive outcome for us as individuals? Absolutely not. But even our work, our businesses, or corporations that we're working for, I would also agree, absolutely not.

I have a great example of this. My poor best friend, who I happened to chat to last week, he said, “I'm just on my way,” he lives in New York. And so, we were catching up, it was the middle of the day for him, “I'm just on my

way home. I'm actually really sick. I worked 14 hours yesterday." And I was like, "Oh, okay."

How often are we thinking, "I need to work more. I need to give more. I need to be more productive today and get 25,000 things done and respond to every email?" And then afterwards, having this after effect of sickness, or exhaustion or burnout, or so many other things. So, that's what I'm talking about there.

Kristi: Yeah, I have a feeling that so many people right now are listening, and they are just seeing themselves in what you just so perfectly described. Because it's just so common, that, "I'll sleep when I'm dead. If I work harder, if I work more then I will get more done, and then I'll be able to, later on, then I will get my reward of rest," that type of thing. So, so, so common.

I know a little bit about your story. But I'm curious how you went from what sounds like a life of working 80 hours a week and hustling and being the Johnny-on-the-spot or whatever the female equivalent of that is.

Vikki: Me, I was the female equivalent of that.

Kristi: That's exactly it, being Vikki-on-the-spot for every email, every text, everything. How you went from that to somebody who is specifically coaching on time?

Vikki: Yes. I mean, they say teach…We end up helping others in what we needed help with. So, I think that there's definitely a connection there. But if I'm to think back a little bit about my journey, just for people that don't know me, I mean, I've done it all. I've had three jobs at the same time, that meant all I was doing, aside from working, was sleeping.

I've worked in finance, worked 80-hour weeks while getting certifications and qualifications. And I think I didn't have a weekend off for six months at one point. I co-founded a tech startup and did it before any of this work. Really, was working. Everything in my life was sacrificed for this business.

We moved out to Austin, Texas. It was really like events and business and work and meetings and all the things. There's always something to do in this modern day and age. It's brilliant that we have access to so many things, but it also means we literally can always find something "productive". I don't know, I'm doing the hand version of the…

Kristi: She's doing air quotes, for everybody who can't see us now.

Vikki: I really am hyper ambitious, always have been, proud to be. And wanted to have not just financial success, but a big impact in the world. How I been taught about that, was long hours, doing more, cramming. That's why I was getting certifications and qualifications while working. I was always looking to do as much as I could as fast as possible, because I was that 'I'll sleep when I'm dead.'

When we closed that business, I reached a point, I remember the exact moment, I was hiking in Austin with my partner. And I said to him, "I love our mission, and I hate my life. And I feel like I have to sacrifice my life in order to do the work and have the impact that I want to in the world." And I was just crying. And he was like, "We're closing the business." And I was like, "What? Why?"

I can't imagine how hard it was for him, but it was so obvious that I just didn't know how to produce and take care of myself. I've really been taught that it was one or the other. And that's when I went all-in on my coaching business, and achieved my three-year goal in six months. I was like, "Wait, that wasn't the same. Why did I not have to sacrifice?" That was the big question that hit me; it doesn't take time.

That was the foundation of all the work that you see now, that you see I do. And I speak about; things don't take time. That just frees us up from having to work those 80-hour weeks. Even new moms out there.

I mean, I'm having a lot of conversations right now with people, because I'm going into companies about the option being to leave the workforce, because of how we've structured work. When we don't need time, and we

don't need hours, we actually are far more inclusive in terms of what's available for us in the workforce. So, I'm excited about that.

Kristi: I mean, just hearing that story is just so refreshing that you had such a pivotal moment of recognizing all the beautiful things you're doing in your business, but what the cost was, and then how amazing to actually take action on that. Because I do think so many people, they get to a point where they recognize the cost, and they stay at that crossroads of not knowing what to do.

Or just maybe knowing what to do, and then not having resources for how to do it or courage or support in doing it. And I would be remiss if I didn't bring this up right now. Because I'm picturing some of my dear friends. Many of the people who are listening to this are physicians or people in healthcare, and the expectations for keeping their job are show up at this time, leave at this time, get XYZ done, and many of those things.

I'm picturing somebody being like, “Yeah, my medical records, and making those phone calls, and having that long conversation with somebody where I give them the bad news. It doesn't take five minutes; it takes 30 minutes.” Those things take time, Vikki, it takes time.

And so, I'm picturing somebody who, they have the thought, “These things take time.” And they also have circumstances that make it very easy to believe that that thought is also completely a fact. I'm wondering, because I know that you coach lots of people who do come from these types of circumstances.

And I'm wondering how you approach somebody who currently has that dyad of circumstances in which it's very easy to point and be like, “But it literally takes me two hours to drive to work. What do you mean, it doesn't take time? It takes two hours.” They have that and they might tune out when they hear, “Oh, but it's the mindset.”

Vikki: What I speak about is time passes, but time is passive. So, we can even speak about the experience of two people with a two-hour commute.

And one person being like how I used to be, which was “I must listen to all the podcasts and the trainings.”

Versus another person that's like, “You know what? This is my time for myself. There's no pressure on what I do in this time. These two hours I happen to be sat in a car, but it's my two hours. I actually want to listen to the Spice Girls. I actually don't want to listen to anything. I actually want to call my best friend who's in a different time zone, who I don't normally get to speak to. I actually don't know what I want to do.”

Really, one is pressurized around the two hours is for traveling to work, and I must use it and every minute counts. And it's a time scarcity mindset. The other, is like an ownership and a connection and an opportunity for presence. So yes, the two-hour drive, during that two-hour drive, time passes, but the time itself is passive.

What do you want to think about that time? And who do you want to be in that time? Instead of, what do you want to get done in that time?

Kristi: Oh, my gosh, the comparison, I think is so powerful, because it's what we think about our time that creates our experience of that passage of time, no matter what sort of set of circumstances we're in, right? So, I have all these little, probably jumbled up and not perfect, but it's the little quotes that I attribute to you, that are my brain. And there's one that was like ‘time is nonrefundable and extremely expensive.’

So, when you were at that moment, and you're like, “Oh my gosh, I'm sacrificing so much in my life.” Was it clear then that you wanted to coach on time? That coaching time was very important, or did it kind of come later?

Vikki: Yeah, it really evolved. I used to have a lot of panic attacks, to no one's surprise, as I'm speaking about how I used to work. I actually started coaching on anxiety and procrastination. Those are the two things, and the relationship between the two of them. And I would say that still shows up in how I coach other people. It's very relevant for time.

But like I said, for me, it was that pivotal moment. And then it really set into time. But what was really funny was, in 2016 I bought this website domain, The 10 Minute Method. I've since sold it, but not for profit, by the way. But I realized it wasn't my thing. I can see how time was always there under the surface, but I didn't really own it. And it really evolved with me.

So, it wasn't that I always knew it was going to be around time. But I keep in my podcasts that used to be called the different name. And then I did this series, Create More Time; it was always showing itself. Because I think time is what life is made of. Like I say, time is the currency of life. It literally is what I love about it. I love so much about it.

Because we wake up every day, we have more time. And so often, so many of my clients and probably people listening are like, "No, no, no. My time is already all accounted for and already all spent." And the next three weeks, three months could just happen. And trying to make a plan, it's like, "I'm available in July. My whole life is accounted for. I don't have enough. There's never enough." And that is what I speak about.

Unfortunately, how we've been taught around time is so backwards. For anyone listening, it's not that you are doing anything wrong, it's that you are doing everything right. But how you've been taught to think about time and to think about your work and to think about your life. My work really is helping people unravel that and unlearn it.

Someone I coached who was like, "I have a job and I have kids and I have a business, and I don't have time for my business. I wish I did. But I don't," you actually don't wish that you did. Because you really value the time that you have with your kids right now. And so, you can either tell yourself that you have to spend time with your kids, and it's taking away from your business.

But you actually don't because some people don't spend time with their kids. Some people get nannies or childcare or don't have kids or whatever it might be. And it's not a matter of… We're not supposed to have time to do all the things. I just want to be very clear about that.

I'm not saying you should be able to do all the things. What I'm saying is own the choices that you've made. And don't take your power away from them. It's okay to be like, “You know what? Right now, my priority is work. Right now, my priority is family. Right now, my priority is my health.” Instead of thinking I should be able to do it all, just own what you are giving your time to right now.

Kristi: As you're saying that, I was like, you know how you're going to jump in and say what you think somebody else is going to say? I was like, “And don't make yourself wrong.” It's so insidious, the way that we tell ourselves things that we think are useful. Like, “Oh, my kids, my job, is taking away from my passion.”

When really, if we can just be really clear and matter of fact about what we're actually choosing, and like what you said, just own it, it can bring so much relief. Because of all the time spent with your kids being like, oh, this is taking away from my business. It's time not actually present with your kids. Right? It’s time that if you wanted to be with your business, it might be five minutes of just daydreaming about something in your business.

Vikki: Yes. And everything, as you know, that I teach around time, it's not about waking up an hour earlier or planning the night before or color-coding your calendar and writing long to-do lists. It's about releasing the ‘shoulds’ and the ‘have tos’ and everything that takes us away from being present in the moment we're in.

Kristi: So, speaking of ‘shoulds’ and ‘have to’, what crossed my mind is the idea that whitespace and unplanned time, are these luxuries? And they are they're bad. They're problems. They're things that you, later on, once you've done all the work, then you can enjoy that.

What I see in my clients is that because of that mindset, when the “later on” actually happens because of what they've been consistently thinking leading up to that, well, they're not actually able to enjoy any of the unplanned time that just happens upon them. Because they always continue to keep doing things. You can't enjoy the whitespace. And they

kind of missed that point that I hear you talk about a lot, that it can actually be integral to what they want to do.

So, can you talk a little bit about this idea, this lie that we've all learned, that whitespace and unplanned time are problems?

Vikki: Yes. Let's talk about what that comes from. We forget that when we are taught around time, calendaring, and structuring our weeks, we are still children. We want children's time to be accounted for, right? You go into school, and no one is giving a 13-year-old, three open periods to do what they want and see what happens. That's not how it goes.

And when we turn 18 and no one sits you down and is like “Hi, now welcome to adulthood where you don't have to have the minutes of your time accounted for. Because you are an adult, and you get to choose.” So, it really is indoctrinated into us from a young age that our time should be filled. Because as kids, our time is filled. So, I think it's important to acknowledge that.

The second thing is, we saw a big shift around the Industrial Revolution. Obviously, around that time, actually, hours did decrease. But we've also seen this shift of, it used to be celebrated that the most successful people had the most leisure time and the most free time. And then, we saw this shift happen where suddenly it was celebrated, and the most successful people are now celebrated for being the busiest.

I think I’ve seen, Gary Vee and Grant Cardone had this video on I work longer than you. No, I work longer than you work. I work 18-hour days. I was like, “Oh my gosh, how sad that that's what we are comparing and celebrating.” So, we have to consider our training, work cultures, the people that we are exposed to, and how society has generally shifted its attitude towards work.

Essentially, we are seeing, unfortunately, as our greatest value to society, as we've been taught, is as a producer and consumer. So, my background is economics. But that's how we're seeing. We're seen as a cog in the factories, right? Our best value is in producing something that can be used

to make money in a capitalist society. And consuming something which can be used to generate money or generate income in the society we live in.

And that's fed at us from every single angle. I'm just explaining all of this in order to say, if you experience this guilt and shame around blank space, it's not by accident, it's by design. I think just knowing that can just alleviate some of the 'well, I should be able to enjoy this free time. Why can't I enjoy rest? Why can't I switch off?'

Which is why a lot of my clients come to me. It's like, "Well, I want to rest but it feels so bad." I'm like, "Yes, it feels bad." And immediately, it's like, "Oh, phew." Because if we expect it to feel amazing and it doesn't, we're never going to do it.

Kristi: Absolutely. It's, of course this feels bad, based on what I've learned, based on just what I've been indoctrinated in. Just like everybody else in this particular society.

Vikki: Yeah, exactly. And here's the best thing; something feeling bad now doesn't mean it will feel bad forever. But going through it, it's like going through the murky shadows, and then you come out the other side. It's like a beautiful sunset, where it can still rain, actually, I should add; it's not about perfection. But allowing it to be uncomfortable and taking care of yourself.

One of the big things that I speak about with my clients is, yes, everyone's speaking about discomfort. I even have a module called Discomfort Opportunity Bubbles, where I teach on this. But also, comfort is a strategy. So, the discomfort of rest can be met with comfort of how you take care of yourself during it, before, and after it.

Typically, we're judging and criticizing ourselves for it. Instead of overly celebrating. I speak about time hacking. Within that, there's different things that we can hack. But one of the things I speak about is success hacking. And that can come in the form of really acknowledging and appreciating the air quotes. Air quotes has been a big theme of today. Air quotes, little

things, and also really taking pause on purpose, intentionally, in thinking about how you are right now.

Every single person, I promise you, you are living into some dream that your past self had. Whether it's the job you have, or the relationship you have, or the marathon that you're running. Or even if it's like, I want to take it away from these big achievements. Even if it's the bedsheets that you wore. We have these white hotel-like bedsheets that I just love that I really wanted, and now I have them.

So, just acknowledging that you already are living into your past self's dreams, in big and little ways.

Kristi: This reminds me of just that idea that when we are experiencing the world, and we are going at it through the lens of this is what I've created in the past, as opposed to, these are the amazing things that I have right now, and this is what I want.

We can shift our focus on purpose, to see what's already going well. In a way that I think sometimes we have that habit of accounting for all the obstacles, accounting for all the negatives and missing some of the ways that we actually, for some people, we actually do know what to do with whitespace.

If our experience of it is, 95% of the time, we feel like our skin's going to peel off and we need to go do 25 things. We miss the chance to see that oh, actually, it could be different or actually things are going well.

Vikki: Yes, exactly. And even as you say that, it's like the whitespace, I wonder about how the rules of time show up in that whitespace? I call it must be half an hour, it must be an hour. This is one of the things I speak to my clients a lot about. Start with two minutes. A big thing that I find very easy, an easy introduction into this kind of thing, is actually music.

And it's such a good one because it's connecting to ourselves, it's moving our body. Music can put a smile on our face without us trying. So, it could be like, actually, I'm just going to have space for listening to a song that I

love. It can be having spaces for the song I love; outside, inside, standing up, whatever. But just inviting that play into it.

Because I don't want us to make whitespace or having unplanned time, serious and heavy and structured and bringing our work mentality and everything that's heavy on us into this, also isn't the solution. More important than the length of time in the whitespace, I would say, is the invitation to play, the connection to self, the willingness to do it messy, to get it wrong. What if this is your play?

And I think as you said, this is very important. Potentially your listeners that are doctors because I coach doctors, too. And it's the idea that actually my day is really busy. It's back-to-back and there isn't time for this. And it's like, is there two minutes?

Kristi: I think that invitation to start small and something that is inevitably, realistic, you really truly can take two minutes, even if you have to excuse yourself to the bathroom so that the door's locked and you can put your earbuds in and play whatever song you want to play. To bringing in the somatic, bringing into play, bringing in all the things that may not be going easily for you. And you're like, back to back to back, whatever you're doing in your job, right?

Vikki: Even if you're like “No, I don't have two minutes,” I'm going to offer you something even easier. Which is three deep breaths. Just three deep breaths. I really want everyone listening to commit to one thing and not just have this be a podcast that you listen to. And then go back to, yeah, that was nice, in theory. I want to leave you with something actionable.

So, take the action of listening to the song or the three deep breaths, just grounding yourself back into where you are. Because when we are so busy and back-to-back, we're in a high pressured environment, spending our whole day in fight-or-flight, and it's just very hard on the body and on the mind.

And then we can't even think clearly and make decisions from a place of care or ourselves or from the place that we want to be making them from.

We're making them from a reactive state, from a disempowered state, and from a fear state.

Kristi: What comes to my mind right now, is because this is so consistent with what I teach in terms of starting small and being willing to do these micro moments, where you have a micro moment of three deep breaths. Sometimes the objection to that is well, that sounds great and all. Yeah, I can totally do that. Give me a plan, I'll go do it. I'll take my three deep breaths.

And the objection is that, really? Is that going to, just three deep breaths, minimizing the impact that something small can have? Because it's not the massive overhaul. So, I do a lot of talking about no, no. That mindset of it has to be this grandiose thing. That's the very thing that will keep you doing nothing, not finding those times.

Vikki: Yes. And you have to remember, I call it the second brain strategy. Listen, we can know logically that taking some breaths, moving our body, and having this moment is good for us. But there's a part of our brain that's like, why would we do something new? This sounds dangerous. We don't know what's on the other side of this. Maybe we're going to dance, lose ourselves in the music, miss our next appointment, ruin our whole career.

And up on the street, there is a part of your brain that is thinking this, okay? It's not your conscious brain. It's not your intentional brain. I call it okay, woman brains. And so, as rational, and as logical as it seems, there is a part of your brain that doesn't want you to change a single thing in your life.

And it's like you couldn't be unhappy. But are you alive? Because my one job is actually to keep you alive. And it looks like you're alive to me. So, you just want to be aware that it's going to offer these obstacles and that you are not the believer of those obstacles. You are not the creator of those obstacles.

There's a part of your brain that's like, what should we try next? Oh, I know that's telling that it's not long enough. I know. Let's tell her that we'll do it

later. Well, not now. We'll do it later. Because she really likes this idea. So, we'll start tomorrow.

But how many times have you said to yourself, we'll start tomorrow, and then not done something? That's just the part of your brain that wants to keep you safe. That's like, how do we just create a bit of a gap, so she doesn't change anything? Because she's changing things. We don't know what's going to happen.

I think it's just understanding that there's a part of your brain that wants you to keep doing what you're doing, even if you are stressed and pressured and not sleeping well, and not enjoying life and not feeling good. Because it only cares about living. That's it's job.

Kristi: Right. You can acknowledge that, then you can anticipate, of course, that part of my brain is going to offer me all this catastrophic thinking and this like, it's not going to matter anyways, we can do it later, one more phone call won't hurt. Absolutely, of course it's going to offer those things. Now, I can plan and be really deliberate. As one of my coaches said, as the owner-operator of my brain, I can be very deliberate about what I'm going to choose to offer back to that part in the moment, so that I can do this my way. Or I can do it on my own terms. Even if it feels super uncomfortable because of its unfamiliarity.

Vikki: Yes, exactly. And I think that the best way to approach these things, as always, is like an experiment. You might be right, might not have any impact. Are we willing to try it? Like, what's the worst that happens if we try it? And not putting that pressure on it, like, 3 deep breaths are going to feel amazing. I'm going to change my whole life with 3 deep breaths.

No, you're probably not going to change your whole life from 3 deep breaths, one time. But do you want to test it? You want to play with it. For you is it like, oh, I want to get to five deep breaths? Or to 10 deep breaths? I want to get to two songs.

Whatever it might be like, invite play and experimenting. Because that part of you is going to offer that we did it wrong. Perfection is going to offer

these obstacles. And you just want to meet it where it's at, and not make it wrong. Just be like, okay, maybe it will work. Instead of, no, this will work, trust me.

And then, as I told you, just invite that play. I think that's a big theme that's come up today, is taking away the seriousness from the side of things and inviting some fun into it, really.

Kristi: I know that many of my listeners have just either unfamiliarity with play and fun. There are these fleeting little moments here and there, but it's not something that they are used to cultivating on purpose. I just want to emphasize for anybody who's thinking, “Okay, I don't know about this whole play thing. It sounds a little bit frivolous. It sounds accessible to other people, but not to me.” It's just a practice. It's just something that although unfamiliar, it's extremely powerful. And it's just a practice, it's something that all of us can learn.

Vikki: Yes, and even what you said earlier. When was the last time you had fun? Think about it. Really just think about it and go back there. Don't judge how long ago it was, whenever it was, fine. And even if you can't think about the last time, but you can think of a really prominent time, just go there, and sit in that place for a little bit. Notice what happens in your body and your face and you're accidentally smiling; just experience it. Because like you said earlier, I think it's like we are already actually more capable of these things than our brain really wants us to realize.

Kristi: There's one thing that was on my mind before we got on here that I wanted to ask you about, because I hear a lot of comments about this. And I've heard your take, and I find it quite interesting. And I think it's amazing for people to hear, as well. I want to talk about consistency. And when it comes to, particularly on a podcast, where we're talking about habits, a lot of people conflate habits with consistent, almost uniform behavior. And they can place consistency on this little bit of a pedestal.

And then if they don't meet what their definition of consistency is, they flog themselves, they have shame, and then they double down on willpower, or

they use coaching against themselves. I would love to hear you share your take on consistency.

Vikki: Yes, I think there's a few things that you even said that I just want to hold up so people can acknowledge it. Which is, that interpretation of consistency, that's the whole point. That's really what I speak to. If you tell me you're consistent with your podcast, I don't know anything. I don't know whether you release it every day, every week. I don't know if every episode is the same amount of time. I don't know if it's always with a guest or not with a guest. Like, it's telling me nothing.

So, for me, I do have a little bit of issue with seeing online everywhere, that if you want to do something you have to be consistent, because it's like you're not telling me anything. What does that mean? Like really, each to their own.

That's the first big point I think that we have to make: How you define consistency is how you define consistency. And what I would say with a lot of high achieving successful people is we over define it, right? It's like we make it very strict and very contained and very rigorous. And, you know, that kind of thing.

The second thing I'll say, and this really came through when someone had me coach in their community actually. And because they actually had been teaching consistency, and I didn't know before they brought me in. We saw the difference between, “Well I pushed through this week, even though I'm sick.” And me being like, “Why? Like, really, why?” “Well, because other people will think I'm reliable if I show up regularly.” I'm like, “No. No, other people will think you're reliable if you are reliable.”

You don't have to push through, show up sick, sacrifice yourself. I personally don't want to, I thought about this actually, when I worked in an office. I even think about COVID, I'm just going to say it. Because I had this a-ha recently, how fast it spread because of the culture we have around pushing through and showing up sick. I used to sit in an office, and someone would come in sick. And I'd be like, well, you just really screwing everyone over.

Ep #59: How to Get Your Time Back with Vikki Louise

Why do we live in this work culture of show up sick and then wonder why everyone gets sick around the same time, it's so obvious. And you know, I wonder if COVID would have spread so much if we had cultures of if you feel sick, you should rest and recover and take care of yourself.

How I even taught about consistency is, consistency is a thought, right? You get to decide you are consistent without having to do anything; it's not an action. And I speak for myself about actively being inconsistent because I obviously go the other way, just to kind of balance that seesaw.

I have taken months off my business when I was pregnant. I have recorded my podcast, even though it's, you know, got 600,000 downloads got a very active audience. I will not record it when I'm ill, when I'm sick. I used to record it weeks in advance, so that I could always meet it, and always be there. And now, I just record it how I want to or when I feel called to.

Sometimes that means that there's one every week or two every week, but often it means that there's not. But it doesn't matter. Because when they're there, they're good. And I think people… Do you care about someone putting something in front of you every day or every week? Or do you care about someone putting something in front of you, that's going to help you.

That's what I think we have to remember, it's not about consistency, it's about quality, it's about connection, it's about impact. And impact doesn't come from being consistent. It comes from what I think is being persistent and allowing yourself to drop the ball, to be human, to decide to not do something and come back to it.

I think the issue when we are pushing consistency, is it's not human at all, to be able to do the same thing with an equal time-space, and just absolutely not; human life happens to us all. And when we've pushed consistency so much, I wonder how many people have dropped things, because they weren't able to be consistent.

That's why I really encourage you to focus on persistency. Am I willing to pick that up again, am I willing to let everyone know that I dropped this? And to come back?

Kristi: I think it really touches so much on… Obviously, I love that consistency is a thought, it's not an action. And it's so easy to bring in so much self-judgment. Consistency, whatever that means, is good. And other people will see that as beneficial, valuable, as reliable. And then if I'm not meeting this thing that is maybe just totally amorphous, I haven't actually defined it, but I'm not doing it, then I'm bad. And I've made myself wrong. And so, then I should be more consistent, and like this hamster wheel just gets developed.

Vikki: And exactly as you're saying, just to touch on this, they aren't created by you not being consistent; they exist, they are there. And your brain is looking for evidence or for a reason to bring them up. So, if you think for example, that you are not reliable, if that's not been created by you not being consistent, that's the thought that you already have.

I remember coaching someone and I thought they weren't professional. And they're like, “Well, I have to be consistent in order to be professional.” Then that foot is going to show up in you not responding to email straightaway, or it's going to show up… The issue isn't consistency, it's what you make it mean.

And guess what? Whatever you are making it mean, that you aren't consistent in the traditional definition, is already just a self-judgment that you have. So why don't we, instead of trying to solve for the consistency, explore what the story is behind it that's making you feel so bad?

Because it's like our brain offers these distraction problems. I think time is a big distraction problem. I must solve for being on time. I must solve for being organized, and whatever, versus what's behind it. Which are our judgments of ourselves, typically, as a human.

Kristi: I find a lot of people who are drawn towards something that says “habits”. They're drawn to that because they're looking at all the behaviors in their life that they don't like. All the behaviors that they wish they had. And they're like, oh, if I could solve for those, that will fix it. But it's like, no. Three or four or 10 layers down is actually thoughts about yourself or thoughts about the world or rules that you may have inherited.

You may not have like actually thought about them, but they are given to you and what you see are the behaviors. But underneath it is actually something that once you fix that, the behaviors just all fall into place.

Vikki: Yeah. I love that.

Kristi: So, I would like to hear, sort of be like merchants of hope, to tell other people who are listening about how there's so much possibility and so many things that can be unlearned. I would love if you have any sort of thoughts about time that really serve you well, that maybe people can borrow from you.

Vikki: Yes. And I think we touched on this a bit earlier around, there is plenty of time. Every day I wake up with more time. I think so often, we're thinking there's not enough time. And time is scarce. And I think of it also, like, what's the relationship that you want to cultivate with time, if time was a person? Because I'm sure a lot of people listening, like past Vikki, and a lot of my clients, have this relationship with time where there's not enough. And they're putting time down. And it’s a negative relationship.

And if time was a person… If you think about your best friend, what would be different if you thought about time like you thought about your best friend? There's always enough, it’s always there for you. There's plenty of it. It doesn't need to be there in front of you. It’s always available for you.

I love how I think time is like a neutral playing field. In that, like I say, every day we wake up and the clock’s reset. We get those hours back to do with what we want. So, if yesterday we didn't like something about how we used our time, we get to literally play with it today.

It's like being in the casino and losing all your money. And then going back the next day, the chips have all been refilled. So, me and time are on the same team. A big one that stuck with me when I thought of it, that I love thinking about, is like when I look forward, I’m moving with time. Or when I look backwards, I'm moving against time. Because I really think about the friction we create as we're looking backwards.

Another big one that I speak about a lot is my dad taught me how to play tennis. I love playing tennis. And it's like, where you look at. I just remember him teaching me to serve and being like, “Stop looking at the net. You look at the net and you're hitting the net. Instead, look at where you want to go.”

And it's again, that seems like stop looking back, you're going to keep creating the same cycles. And we think about habits. It really doesn't matter what you did yesterday, like what you did or didn't do yesterday. In terms of your habits has nothing to do with what you can do today. It literally is irrelevant.

Instead of looking at what I didn't do this yesterday, think about, I'm going to do this today. I want to do this today. So, work with time to look at where you want to go, instead of where you've been.

Kristi: So great. As a mountain biker, we use that same idea. Don't look at where you don't want to go, don't look at the tree, don't look at the rock. Look at where you want to go. And that is so, so great. It's an analogy for thoughts about time, that's about habits. Alright, so we could probably talk for about a whole weekend, is what my thought is right now.

But if people want, as they’re listening to this, and they find themselves intrigued, and they want to sort of deconstruct, unlearn, some of the rules that they have about time. Maybe they want to learn about some of their time wasting habits they’ve got, how can they find you?

Vikki: Yes, I mean, exactly. As you said, the first place I would go is VikkiLouise.com/guide. I would download the guide for stop wasting time. It's the four biggest time wasters; none of which you've been told about. It's like the opposite of what you've been told. And I swear, these account for like 80% of time wasted. Because it's not watching Netflix, by the way.

So, I would go there and start there. You can also connect with me on Instagram @feministtimecoach. And you can listen to my podcast, *The Feminist Time, Productivity and Rest* podcast. And I will say, someone recently said to me, “Oh, I noticed that you hadn’t done one all of January.”

But they just found the podcast. And it's great for me because I've got plenty to catch up on. So, it won't bother you that I'm inconsistent because you've got plenty to catch up on.

Kristi: That's so good. Well, I had such a beautiful conversation with you. This is so fun. It was great to hear this. I know it's going to be so helpful for so many people. So, thank you so much.

Vikki: Thank you for having me. And thanks everyone, for listening.

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 HabitsOnPurpose.com, you'll find it right there.

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