

Spring Cleaning Your Goals and Your Network - Laura Cox Kaplan, She Said/She Said Podcast [Episode 147]

Ready to add a big dose of positivity and empowered perspective to your day? You've come to the right place. Welcome to She Said/She Said Podcast. I'm Laura Cox Kaplan. Here, we tackle everything from impostor syndrome and confidence building to the best advice on how to lead yourself through life pivots, including the ones that knock you flat. For the past three years, I've talked to hundreds of experts about their stories. Here, you'll find their actionable advice and lessons as well as my own tools that you can put to use in your own life. Stick around. I think you'll find this investment in you well worth it.

Hey friend, Happy Spring! Flowers are blooming. Here in DC, the cherry blossoms and dogwoods are bursting with gorgeous pink and white color. I can hear the birds tweeting outside my window. I even had a couple of cardinals -- my favorite -- who've taken residence in my backyard.

Many of us are getting vaccinated and feeling more comfortable about seeing and spending time with friends and loved ones. It's the perfect time to think about refreshing and renewing....and that includes areas beyond just traditional spring cleaning. I'm not going to talk to you today about closet clean out ... I honestly stink at that. Instead, we're going to talk about a different approach to spring cleaning. Spring cleaning your goals, and your network!

If you are like me and you set personal and professional development goals at the New Year, April is the perfect time to pull them out for a quick, end of the first quarter assessment. Sound a little corporate? Well, it is. Quarterly Reviews of -- whether corporate or personal -- can be incredibly effective in managing progress toward annual goals.

Thinking about personal development in this way is the real secret to staying on track with the things that you have committed to yourself that you want to accomplish. In my experience, goals are really difficult to achieve when you don't take them out and review them -- or keep them somewhere where you can see them on a daily or weekly basis. We're all incredibly busy... so setting aside time at the quarter to dust off your goals and remind yourself of what you said was important at the start of the year can provide that time you need to

evaluate where you are and how you're doing. what progress you're making and areas that can be tweaked.

One tip that I find particularly helpful is to challenge yourself to do what your boss typically does --- review and assess -- as honestly as possible -- three things: 1. what you're doing well, 2. what needs improvement/or areas where you haven't made as much progress, 3. What you've learned. This works best when you write answers to those questions down. As part of this Also Write down 2-3 mini goals that you can focus on between now and the next quarter to recalibrate and/or show some progress.

The third part of that self assessment -- where you write down what you learned over the quarter -- including and especially in areas where you fell short -- is especially important. I'm a big believer in making sure that even setbacks and failures are calibrated in positive terms. So a really helpful way to think about this is to ask yourself: "what have I learned?"

And, if you are someone who tends to be tough on yourself, this can help you look at your performance a bit more objectively....and more positively.

When you look over what you wrote and where you are having trouble, take note if it relates to lack of time. Time management is a challenge for many of us. A great exercise to help you get more clarity and control over this is to start tracking your time by the hour, or half hour if you can. Write it down or log it in your phone every hour or half hour of your day. Do this for a week maybe two -- or maybe a month [it will depend upon how regular your schedule is], Color code this into buckets. take a look at where you are spending your time. What does it tell you? And specifically, what does it tell you about where you are spending your time in proportion to your priorities and goals? Most people find some surprises when they do this, even if they are pretty organized.

One other area that I think is helpful to add to your quarterly review list... but that's often overlooked.... is your personal network.

We all recognize the value of building and maintaining a strong network of people who can provide us with feedback, support, perspective and to whom we can turn to for advice. However, those networks can become a bit stale if you're not regularly thinking about how you can continue to refresh the talent in your

network. I'm not suggesting you stop calling your long time mentor, but instead think about as an additive exercise. Think about what additional perspective might be helpful but might currently be missing from your network. What topic is important to you, but that you don't have someone advising you on? And then who might fit the bill, and how you might use your existing network to connect with that person. This exercise enables you to think strategically about where you are getting advice and whether it's broad enough for what you need as you grow and evolve in your career. Let me underscore that... Growth and evolution is the name of the game ... But you need to make sure you're network, your team , your personal board of advisers, your tribe -- whatever you call it -- is also keeping up with you.

Another important element of this is to think about diversity of perspective and point of view. I talk about a lot on this podcast because I think it's often overlooked and the value is not always well understood. Learning to build bridges with those who think differently than we do can be a real differentiator for you. Those are often the relationships in my own network that really challenge me and make me think.

I'm especially grateful for the she said/she said podcast network, including YOU and the incredible guests that I talk to and share with you each week. their perspective and yours often broadens my own, and many of my guests are women who have become part of my own network. It's become something of a constant refresh for me ... and I love that.

When you think about your own network, think about creative ways for building out those relationships. You don't necessarily need to start a podcast to do this, but think creatively about the ways you can make sure you're getting the best and most creative perspective. It will pay you big dividends in the long run.

Good luck as you tackle the second quarter ... and please let me know what you thought of this advice. I'm constantly working to fine tune the topics we discuss and most of all I want them to be valuable to you. So please let me know.

Friends, also, have a favor. If you are enjoying She Said/She Said Podcast, I would love to hear from you. If you're listening on iTunes, be sure to click the review button, give us five stars, and a few

comments. And also, send me some feedback directly. You can reach me on Instagram via direct message @lauracoxkaplan, as well as @shesaidshesaidpodcast, and you can also contact us via the contact link on the website at shesaidshesaidpodcast.com. Most of all, I am grateful that you've chosen to spend some time with us today. I hope you found this little investment in you well worth it. Until next time, take care.

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