

5 WAYS TO TO CREATE YOUR OWN LUCK - EP 186

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Hey friend, Welcome to she said/she said podcast Episode 186!

This week as I sat down to think about this episode, I was thinking about LUCK. I've always been a believer in luck -- Maybe it's my Irish roots and heritage. Perhaps the reason why i'm such a believer in luck is because I actually think we have more ability to impact our luck as it were than we are often led to believe.

Luck is defined as: "A force that brings good fortune or adversity ..." luck can obviously be good or bad afterall.

We've all heard stories about someone just being in the right place at the right time Or even the wrong place at the wrong time. Those circumstantial events that create an opportunity -- good or bad.

But here's the thing ... under those exact same right place right time circumstances ... would the same lucky break be conveyed to anyone who found themselves right there ... right at that moment?

Last week, in episode 185, I sat down with founder and jewelry designer Mignonne Gavigan whose innovative, beaded, scarf necklace was both a product of her creative mindset, but perhaps more importantly -- it was a product of her openness to see opportunity and to be ready for it when it came around.

Mignonne, who actually goes by Maggie, shares such great perspective in our conversation on leveraging opportunity and turning that opportunity into a lucky break. But Maggie's lucky break likely happened because she was prepared and ready for it. As she tells us in the conversation, She had been working across the fashion industry in different [sectors -- in shoes and in handbags, and for different design houses]. All of those experiences helped open her perspective to possibility... and opportunities she might not otherwise have known were possible.

I really loved that.

Is luck about what happens to us, or how we react to what happens to us?

Last week, my family celebrated our son Ben's long overdue Bar Mitzvah. For those who aren't familiar, the Bar Mitzvah is the wonderful coming of age ceremony in the Jewish faith. As my turn came to walk up to the Bima (or pulpit as we called it at the First Baptist Church of Rising Star) . I was tasked with giving Ben some motherly advice. As I reflected on what to say, I thought about how differently my life had turned out from what I might have imagined when I was Ben's age.

In fact, I could never have imagined myself standing there in that spot celebrating my first born's bar mitzvah, but GOD had other plans. And I am grateful every single day that he did, and that he helped me be open to and ready for opportunities that presented themselves.

Things like: Being seated next to my future husband at a dinner party one night.... Taking a meeting with an exec at PwC when I wasn't looking for a job Returning a phone call from a corporate board chairman that turned into a corporate board opportunity And those are just a few things that popped into my head.

As I shared some advice with my son Ben for creating opportunity in his own life, and for helping him realize his unique potential -- the advice I shared boiled down to a handful [5] of tips that can help us create our own luck... while also helping us build and sustain influence in our lives. These are tips that have served me well, and that I've watched countless others employ in their careers, in business, in politics and in life.

I thought I'd share 5 specific tips with you today that really are the keys to creating your own luck:

1. It's important to put the best YOU forward --- to do this, requires getting really clear on who you are, and those things that you do well, and where you often add value. It's those qualities that others often comment on, and those traits that often differentiate you.

These may also be those skills that you've practiced and developed, essentially your preparation. Things that you've fine tuned in yourself.

THERE'S A BONUS TO THIS ONE ... Having a good sense of who you are, what you know, what you can do, and what you can contribute, can help you show up with more confidence -- whatever the circumstances may be. And Confidence -- and how we show up --- helps create opportunity.

Again, it's how we show up.and that relates to my second tip.

2. When you show up ... show up with an open mind -- we often talk about mindset and the importance of looking at challenges with a "growth mindset" to quote Stanford Professor Carol Dweck. Essentially we're looking at what we can learn from the situation -- good or bad -- that we find ourselves in.

I've always thought there is a direct connection between "luck" and mindset. How open was the person to the opportunity that presented itself? Often the greatest stories I hear about "lucky breaks" happen when the person is least expecting it, but when she is prepared to take advantage of the opportunity or challenge when it presents itself.

Much like the story Maggie shared in Episode 185.

But the most important aspect is OPENNESS to possibility, even one that might not be obvious at first.

Every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow. That doesn't mean every encounter or challenge will result in sunshine and roses, but it does mean if you know yourself and are looking for opportunity everywhere ... you're more likely to emerge from whatever the challenge is stronger, better, and more ready for the next opportunity.

When I looked up the origin of "Irish luck" -- it actually has a great deal to do with an optimistic spirit.....one that helps us bounce back faster in the face of adversity. It also tends to be embedded with a deep sense of gratitude. It's essentially embracing a "growth mindset." asking yourself, "what can I learn from this situation?"

3. Know your values, and which lines you absolutely will not cross? When you're open and seeking opportunities everywhere Sometimes the opportunities we get aren't necessarily the ones we should pursue.

It can be confusing to know the difference.

But at its most simplistic it's a matter of checking that opportunity against your own values, and against what matters most to you.

I think about this a great deal in my life as a mom. certain risks -- career or otherwise -- I might have been more willing to take if I were single and didn't have precious people counting on me every day. That's not to say that I can't take risks, but there are some pretty clear lines that I won't cross especially because of my children.

There may be other top priorities on your values list.

Whatever those things are for YOU, it can be super helpful to write them down. To get them out of your head so that you can actually see them on paper.

I think this is an especially helpful practice when you have to make a decision, but find yourself at a crossroads. Which path aligns with your values -- and what's most important to you -- and is the opportunity something that is likely to help you keep learning and growing in the ways that are most important to you?

4. This really falls into the bucket of a daily habit that I think can improve your life and the lives of those around you.

Make a commitment to yourself to do one thing that makes life just a little better than the one before. It doesn't have to be something huge Maybe it's just setting aside time to listen to your favorite podcast [i hope it's this one] or to read something that helps you refuel your brain and your soul.

Maybe it's making just a little space every single day to reflect and be grateful. Or maybe it's studying to learn a skill. Or committing 15 extra minutes to decluttering Or to devote time to mentoring someone else or to sharing an "at a girl" with someone on your Instagram -- as I talked about in Episode 184.

Whatever it is. Can you make that little commitment to make each day just a little better than the one before. Can you improve yourself and your little corner of the world with a small action here or there?

Finally, 5: Don't let your GRAND PLAN block your view of opportunity.

Plans and goals are great. But not if they limit your ability to see opportunities that might not align precisely with the plan. This one is tricky because only you really know whether an opportunity aligns with your values. Again, Having real clarity on them becomes essential to making the right decision. Should you take that risk with your business? Should you take that risk that requires you to quit your job and pursue something completely different? Should you get married? Should you have a baby? How do all of these things align?

How does the choice or decision help you bring your own unique brand of God given magic to the world? How does it shape your ability to bring value to others?

That at the end of the day, my friend, is the point. How can you create those opportunities for yourself that enable you to bring your best self forward.... And in a way that creates more value for the world.

On that note -- I wish you all the luck you can create for yourself, and that you can inspire in others. You get what you give afterall..... And that can be an important part of building and sustaining your own influence to get what you want out of your life.

I'll hope you'll be back with me next week when my guest will be the fabulous Molly Fienning, co-founder of Babiators, and more recently -- after a career evolution -- as CEO of Charleston-based Red Clay Hot Sauce.

My conversation with Molly continues our collaboration series with The Southern Coterie. I've included a link to the Southern C in the show notes for this episode, so that you can learn a bit more about that fabulous organization.

As always friend, I hope you found this little investment of your time worthwhile and I'd love to hear your thoughts on the topic of LUCK , influence, creating opportunity, or anything else that's on your mind. You'll find me on instagram @LauraCoxKaplan or you can reach me via the contact link on our website at she said/she said podcast .com

And, if this episode resonated with you, I'd be really really grateful if you could leave a review on itunes, spotify or wherever you listen to podcasts.

Take care and Have a great week! I'll see you again soon....

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