

SHE SAID/SHE SAID PODCAST WITH LAURA COX KAPLAN, Episode 211

EPISODE TITLE: “ How to use ‘getting fired’ as motivation to pursue your dream” Episode 211

GUEST: Andrea Koppel, Part 2, Episode 211

Transcript

SHOW OPEN:

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Building influence is something anyone can learn. It's an investment you can make in yourself and it can hold the keys to achieving your dreams and having the life and impact you want to have. I'm Laura Cox Kaplan. I've learned a lot over three decades about building and sustaining influence and how using it and using it effectively can make a big difference in your life and career. Here on She Said/She Said podcast, we're digging into the different dimensions that help us build and sustain influence. If you thought being an influencer was just for social media, think again. Whether you're starting a business, raising money for a cause, negotiating a promotion, running your household or trying to connect with those who don't share your views, understanding and using the different dimensions of influence will increase your chances of success whatever your goals may be. Listening to She Said/She Said podcast is a smart, efficient investment you can make in you. I'm really glad you're here and I'm excited we're on this journey together.

EPISODE INTRODUCTION:

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Hey Friend, Welcome to SHE SAID/SHE SAID PODCAST.

Have you ever been miserable in a job, but are too afraid to quit? Maybe it's a job you once loved, but outgrew, or maybe your life changed and the job just doesn't fit your priorities anymore.

Sometimes it's the golden handcuffs — the pay is simply too good to walk away— or sometimes it's the title and the trappings that can accompany some jobs, especially when it's a job or career you've worked for for many years.

Any of this sound familiar?

This week— in Episode 211, we're digging into this topic and specifically what happens when your career shifts dramatically — Like when you are fired, as this week's guest was.

This is part 2 of my 2 part conversation with Andrea Koppel — journalist turned tech education entrepreneur.

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In part 1 of our conversation ... you heard Andrea’s perspective on why she thinks that the advice to “ just go with your passion is often all wrong.”

She shares what she does tell college students, as well as others who are much more tenured in life. I think her advice will resonate with you too, wherever you are in your own journey

Also in Part 1, You heard Andrea’s advice for how to really tap into your inner voice and your intuition, and how to fight the fear that might be preventing you from listening to that inner voice...in the first place.

This week, in part 2 of our conversation — we pick up right where we left off and talk about how Andrea was fired — twice from big, high profile jobs — and how that shift forced her to really own up to how much her career wasn’t fitting her life, priorities and passions anymore.

She shares how that experience — while painful — pushed her to embrace an entirely new career, and an entirely new passion and way of adding value to others. We talk about what she learned about herself in the process, how she learned to deal with the fear, and how all of that has impacted how she thinks about influence in her own life today.

BEFORE we jump into the conversation with Andrea, just a couple of additional thoughts about influence:

When you are miserable— in a job or otherwise — it can be especially hard to bring your full self to a project, or to engage fully in your life or work. Mindset matters a great deal — as no situation or job is perfect ... so if you can’t change the situation for any number of reasons — finding aspects of it that you DO enjoy and that DO speak to you is incredibly important.

A key comment of influence is understanding our value and how to deploy it in ways that help also help us connect and create value for others. When we do that, it also tends to create value for ourselves as well.

Influence also means we learn how to understand our fear and what’s driving it, and the best ways to reframe it, or address it.

Friend, I think you’ll find much in the conversation that will resonate with you. And so much great advice and perspective as you think about your own journey.

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And, if you missed part 1 with Andrea - Episode 210, i hope you'll go back and check that out as well.

But for now, here is part two, episode 211 with Andrea Koppel.....

CONVERSATION - EPISODE 211, PART 2 - ANDREA KOPPEL:

Laura Cox Kaplan:

I do want you to talk specifically about failure and setback. So you're pursuing your passion, you're working as a career journalist, a very successful career in journalism that you had, and you were fired ultimately. Not necessarily because of anything that you did or didn't do. I mean, this is the world that you're living in. It's a very cutthroat, very competitive environment, but it happens in other environments too, sometimes for cause. Let's talk about your experience and what happened, how you process that, how you deal with the self doubt that sort of inevitably comes along with it? And how do you translate that into something useful, which you obviously did. Maybe talk us through that.

Andrea Koppel:

Love this question so much. So, in 2007, I was fired by the new president of CNN who just decided I was not his cup of tea. And it is all good. My contract was up. I had been with CNN for 14 years. I had begun as a foreign correspondent in Japan and then China, then was promoted to be the state department correspondent not to be a foreign service officer or civil service officer, but to report on them and on the chief diplomat. I'm just raising that because little bits all merge there.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Right. All the pieces fit together. Yeah.

Andrea Koppel:

All the pieces start fitting together. So I was promoted to be the state department correspondent, which I did for eight years, and then was moved to Capitol Hill to cover Congress. And there's so much there because the truth is, Laura, I had been unhappy three years before John Klein fired me, but I did not have the courage to quit. I would come home and just cry and sob on my husband's shoulder and just say, "I can't do this anymore." And the reason was I had become a mom.

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Laura Cox Kaplan:

Yeah.

Andrea Koppel:

I had a toddler and I wanted to be with my toddler, but I also was pulled because I did enjoy my job and I had golden handcuffs. So I was earning a bunch of money and I didn't know what else I wanted to do. I knew that job didn't work for me anymore, but I was just completely flooded. I was working my ass off as so many of your listeners are right now. You don't have time to step back and think, "Okay, this isn't working, but what else can I do?"

And so I just put my head down and I kept working. So although it didn't feel like it at the time, it was an unbelievable gift because I was afraid. I was afraid to quit because I didn't think there was anything else I could do other than be a journalist. How ironic is that?

Laura Cox Kaplan:

I know. Do you think you ever would have quit if not pushed?

Andrea Koppel:

No, I don't because, my body, I was such a stress puppy. I remember I started therapy about eight months after I was fired. And I remember, gosh, for probably the first couple of months of therapy, of course I would show up late every single time and my therapist would say, "Andrea, why aren't you being good to yourself?" And I'm like, "That is such a bizarre thing to say. What do you mean why am I not being good? I was five minutes late or 10 minutes late. Get over it, buddy." And eventually, the light bulb went off. Well, how do you feel when you're late? You feel back on your heels, you feel guilty, you feel anxious, you don't feel good.

So I was subconsciously putting myself in situations that got my adrenaline up, that made me feel bad, that gave me that jolt of adrenaline that I kept getting so much when I was at CNN because I was doing anywhere from five to 20 live shots a day and having to produce one story, sometimes two stories, a day. And I was so hard on myself, Laura, as I'm sure though many of our listeners are, if I wasn't perfect. If I didn't hit every single live shot out of the ballpark, if I stumbled, if I had an um, if I didn't include something that I wanted to include, a fact, this, that, and the other, I would beat the out of myself. I was eating crap. I wasn't getting enough sleep. I felt like crap about myself, Laura. I may have had a fabulous job where I was earning a ton of money, wearing designer clothes, all the kind of name brand shoes I wanted, cute handbags, blah, blah, blah, but I wasn't happy.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Yeah.

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Andrea Koppel:

So when I was fired, although it was humiliating, it was a gut punch, I felt like crap in the short run, it brought me to where I am today. And I learned that failure is not an F like a grade that you got in school. It's another step in our journey to discovering who we really are. It's a gift and it's been such a gift in my life on two occasions. Because shortly after I got my next job and I met all kinds of people and met them for coffee and lunch and breakfast to pick their brains about what a former CNN correspondent could do in her next act, and I was like, "Oh, I discovered this niche within the PR field." M&R Strategic Services is one of the companies progressive cause oriented public affairs firm, magic worked again, but they only work with foundations and nonprofits and state ballot initiatives.

And I was like, "Oh, that really resonates with my values, service, mission driven, who I am." But I let my ego get the best of me and I was looking specifically for a position where I could have a prestigious title. I was hired as a senior vice president of communications and did not realize myself how important it was that I would've had experience actually managing people, which I hadn't, Laura.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

That's so interesting.

Andrea Koppel:

So, bottom line, not only did I not have experience in PR, but I also had never managed a team before. So that's why I was fired. I mean, they, of course, knew the first part and they knew the second part, but it was just that it wasn't a good fit. That was it.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Right.

Andrea Koppel:

So a year and nine months after I started, I was fired. And that, again, was like, "What the hell? Do I have like a black cloud over my head?" But I have since come to see, again, what an amazing gift that was. Not only that I was fired, because I probably would've been heads down for another several years just doing it, kind of gutting it out, I didn't love it. It was interesting. I was learning, but guess what? Instead of getting a master's in PR, I was paid to learn on the job about public relations. I also learned about how to manage a team.

Then I moved to the American Red Cross because I had to. I needed a job. I had to make that decision. So I took the first job offer I could get, joined two weeks after the Haiti Earthquake. I was hired in December in January. I believe it was January 12th, 2010, there was this massive earthquake in Haiti, and I started January 25th.

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So went into the middle of a storm. It was an incredible experience. I got to see dysfunction within a large nonprofit up close and personal, used that as a stepping stone to a better fit for me, a global humanitarian and development organization, and was there for six years. So it's a journey.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Right.

Andrea Koppel:

It's a journey and your fails are opportunities for you to grow. There is a beautiful quote that one of my guests, Dov Baron, gave. And I'll tell you what the episode number is because his interview was magic. And he quotes and I'll try to remember who it was, but he says, "The treasure you seek lies in the cave in which you fear to enter."

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Beautiful. Wow.

Andrea Koppel:

So I was afraid to quit CNN that moved me. I then was forced to move into the cave in which I feared to enter. Yet again, fired from M&R, moved, moved, and it's brought me to where I am right now. I could never in a million years, Laura, have imagined that I would be an education technology entrepreneur, but that is exactly who I am.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Yeah. I mean, amazing. Okay. There's one thing that I want to have you touch on. Many things actually, but one thing in particular that I was thinking about... and we'll include, in the show notes, a link to that episode that you referenced too. So you can send that to me after the fact and I'll include it in the notes.

Andrea Koppel:

It's Episode 270, How to Turn Pain into Your Higher Purpose with Dov Baron. It is a magical, magical episode, my friends. I cannot recommend it enough. And if I can make a plug for another episode.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Sure.

Andrea Koppel:

Transcript

Because yet again, the moral to this story is about how your pain and moving through your pain leads to your purpose. This interview with Steve Kotler, K-O-T-L-E-R, Episode 859 is another one of those. And in it, Steve talks about how getting Lyme disease, which had him bedridden for three years, almost bankrupted him, was the greatest gift that he had gotten.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Okay. I'm going to include references to both of those episodes in the show notes. So in case you guys were not taking notes, they'll be there. All you have to do is pull the show notes and you'll find those links to those episodes that Andrea mentioned.

Andrea, let's talk about... and I believe I saw something. You do a great job of promoting what you're working on and your current passion on LinkedIn. I encourage everyone to follow Andrea Koppel on LinkedIn. It really is a terrific feed and you're very dedicated to it. You post at least daily, if not more so, and it's really great content. But one of the things that I saw recently was around whether you should share your dream for your vision or sort of what you're doing with the outside world. Do you put it out there for people to react to or how do you promote it when you're building it?

Talk about your experience and what your advice is around that, especially for a lot of people that may be listening. I know we're going to have listeners who have college students that are going to be interested in your content. From that perspective, we've got women who are pivoting and reinventing and thinking about building businesses. We've just done this incredible series with female founders and entrepreneurs who have been building businesses. There's a lot of different dimensions to this, but what about that specific question about how do you and do you talk about the business you're building before it's built?

Andrea Koppel:

So, in a nutshell, unless it's going to cause you to get fired, I say, put it out there.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

But even that may be okay. We've already established that getting fired is not the end of the world.

Andrea Koppel:

Totally. Everybody has a different reason that they may need to stay in their job, right?

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Different pain points. Yeah.

Andrea Koppel:

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Maybe they're the sole provider and it's just not an option. So I want to be respectful of our listeners' personal situation, but my philosophy is, it is scary to put yourself out there, but it's also forcing yourself to be accountable and it's breathing life into your dream. So when I started Time4Coffee, I, of course, would post about people I interviewed occasionally. I did not start posting every day on LinkedIn until early October, 2020.

Andrea Koppel:

So two years after I started Time4Coffee, I started a commitment, a daily practice of posting every single day, seven days a week. And my posts have evolved just as I have evolved. I'm constantly reading. I love to learn. I learn from my guests. I learn preparing for interviews for my guests, with my guests. I learn because I have an eclectic range of interests and that's just who I am; very, very curious.

I try to share what I have learned, some of what I have learned, with my readers as a way to empower them and inspire them. That's why I share my fails. That's why I share the good, bad, and ugly. And dropped my mask because it's exhausting, Laura.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Right.

Andrea Koppel:

It's exhausting to keep up a charade about having the perfect life. And you may think that that person you're reading about on LinkedIn, who just got that incredible job promotion or that new job, is crushing it in life. I promise you, they have either just or currently or will have some crap that they're dealing with that they are not talking about. We all have that. We are all human beings and let's just show our young people that we did not somehow or another have a Midus touch, where from the minute we graduated, life just effortlessly unfolded in front of us. And that's part of the problem.

Andrea Koppel:

We don't talk about it at home with our kids. We don't talk about it when we're out to dinner with our friends or at a party or in the workplace.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Mm-hmm.

Andrea Koppel:

So I am just putting it out there. Yes, I saw a therapist for 14 years. Yes, I have struggled with depression and anxiety. Yes, I have been fired twice in my forties, no less. Yes, I have

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experienced profound pain in my life for things that I can't even share here because it would hurt others in my life whom I love deeply. And yet I am still incredibly joyful and immensely grateful for having experienced every single thing, Laura. It makes me cry. I am so grateful.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

It's beautiful. Really, really beautiful.

Andrea Koppel:

So that's why I do what I do. When you drop into your heart, magic happens. It really does. And I am unbelievably happy in my life and blessed. And if you can love yourself to feel your feelings, so many people don't feel because it's painful, but the truth is that's where your purpose is.

Andrea Koppel:

I used to give away my power to others to tell me I'm amazing, to tell me I'm special, to tell me they love me. But the most important person in our life is the person we wake up inside of every single day, the person we go to sleep inside of every single night. And if you really want to find your passion and your purpose, get out of your head, drop into your heart, and love yourself and listen to yourself because our intuition is nature's way of leading us to our dharma. And when you set your intention, when you get really clear about what you want with specificity, it's going to rock your world because it's going to start to happen. I promise you, you stay heads down, stay true to who you are, live out what your intuition is telling you. You watch because it's going to happen.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

I really love that. Andrea. how do you think about the influence of the work that you're doing? Maybe the influence that you've had over the course of your career, what does that look like for you?

Andrea Koppel:

So I think I have influence that is the IRL, in real life, where I touch people, whether it's my son, husband, friends, family, who I come into contact with in the flesh, so to speak. And then there is the influence that I have through the Time4Coffee podcasts, through the College to Career Academy, through LinkedIn. And I would say the message is the same one I've been sharing here with you today. I have an 18 year old son now. He's finishing his junior year in high school and my message to him, even though he doesn't want to hear it, is just that he is a freaking awesome guy.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Yeah.

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Andrea Koppel:

And just to listen to himself to trust his gut and that I am here to support him in that and, PS, to eat more vegetables and cut down on the sugar. I just try to model what's working for me.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Yeah.

Andrea Koppel:

And I want to empower the people that I love, the people who I know that I love, the people who I don't know that I love because truly, Laura, I think one of the reasons why I started crying is that I really do have so much love inside that I want to share. And that love is really right now focused on empowering college students because I feel like they've been an overlooked demographic. People who are in the career coaching space have been focused really mostly on mid-career executive level and power to them. There's more money there, right?

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Mm-hmm.

Andrea Koppel:

I felt like this was an underserved demographic, college students, and I personally felt called to help them, first, through the Time4Coffee podcast and, then as my own journey evolved, with one-on-one coaching over Zoom and now through my digital products. That is really where I'm trying to focus my talents, gifts, and energies because these young people... and by the way, Gen Z, they're over 70 million. They make up 40% of consumers today. They are suffering from incredible anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation. They are suffering and I want to show them that the world is their oyster. And that is quoting one of my students who took my course this spring at the University of Maryland. I mean, does that not melt your heart?

Laura Cox Kaplan:

It's amazing. Yeah. That's really amazing. I have loved this conversation. I'm going to include links in the show notes, as I said before, to your website, to your LinkedIn page, to your podcast. Anything else that you want to share.

Andrea Koppel:

This course is also available to any person who is interested for their college student. I only recommend this is for juniors, seniors, recent grads. So it's not appropriate for a freshman or a sophomore, or, God forbid, somebody in high school. Five hours, seven lessons. You can DM me on LinkedIn and purchase the course directly from me and then I send it to your grad. And they

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have lifetime access to it and it's money back guarantee if they do not find at least three job functions and/or industries that they'd be psyched to explore. It also includes one, 60-minute live career coaching over Zoom with me, where I teach them how to use LinkedIn and their alumni network to actually then uncover people in those jobs and industries.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

All right, you guys. So you'll find links to all of those things, including her LinkedIn where you can direct message her for a link to the course so you have that. Andrea, thank you so much. This was such a pleasure. I really loved it.

Andrea Koppel:

Me too, Laura. It has been such a beautiful way to spend my day. Thank you.

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Oh, you're so welcome. Thank you.

EPISODE CLOSE:

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Friend, thanks so much for joining us today. You'll find the links we discussed in the show notes for THIS episode — EPISODE 211.

The best place to find the show notes is on my website at She Said/She Said Podcast .com . There you will also find a full, free transcript of the episode, along with a link where you can contact me and send me your feedback on the episode or where you can share your own story with me. I'd really love to hear.

You'll also find a link where you can contact me directly or you can always message me on social media at instgram , facebook, linkedin or twitter. You'll find me at Laura Cox Kaplan.

I hope you found this little investment in yourself worthwhile and I look forward to talking with you again next week. Until then, you take care.

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