

## **“Seven ways to harness your fear... using the power of story” - Episode 217**

### **SHOW OPEN**

Laura Cox Kaplan ([00:07](#)):

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, 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 217**

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:19](#)):

Hey, friend, welcome to She Said. She said, If someone were to ask you what are you most afraid of, what would you say? Our fears tend to be bucketed around some pretty common themes, fear of regret, fear of judgment, fear of missing out, fear of losing control, fear that the path we are considering might actually be worse than the one that we're on. Whatever it is, we all know the feeling. It's that uncomfortable heart racing, sweating, palms response to an experience or an idea. We can even generate this emotional feeling just by thinking about those things that frighten us. Remembering a time when we felt judged or when we made a huge mistake that haunts us to this day. While what triggers your individual fear or mine may be different, what tends to align our fears relates to one of the key dimensions that actually helps us build and sustain influence.

([02:29](#)):

Can you guess what it is? It's story and specifically the stories we tell ourselves about those things that scare us or that provoke fear. On this Halloween Eve, I thought it was a great opportunity to actually break this down a bit and to share a few thoughts about the connection between influence, fear, and story and what we can do to edit and reframe some of our most unproductive and often terrifying or fear-inducing thoughts, the ones that can hold us back and that often represent our biggest obstacles to success and to moving forward. If you joined me a few weeks ago in episode 215, I talked about how there are three primary dimensions needed to build and sustain influence. I talked about how those pieces fit together and about the power

of the stories that we craft and tell ourselves. Now, that's especially true of those stories that run in a continuous loop inside of our heads.

[\(03:43\)](#):

If you missed episode 215, I hope you'll go back and listen. I've included a helpful link in the show notes for this episode where you can find it. Story is an incredibly powerful tool. It's how we make sense of the world and make sense of our own journeys. But when we allow old worn out narratives that don't serve us well anymore to continue, then it's time to revisit them and maybe do a bit of editing. That's especially true of those stories that create a limiting view in our own minds of what we're capable of or of the thing or things that might be standing in the way of our ability to recognize what distinguishes our unique set of talents and experiences. Not to mention all that we've learned by trying and failing feeling. I love this quote by Marcus Aureus related to mindset and perspective that I think is so helpful in this context.

[\(04:47\)](#):

He said, and I quote, You have power over your mind, not outside events. Realize this and you will find strength. Isn't that beautiful? Here's the thing about fear. If we let it, it will absolutely hold us back. Making us essentially a prisoner in our own mind in Shakespeare's hamlet act to scene to Hamlet says, There's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. Hamlet, of course, delivers this quote as he considered his imprisonment by Denmark and the King, but perhaps most importantly, his own perspective or mind. Shakespeare is making the point about the power of perspective, mindset and story. In many ways, Hamlet's mindset was his biggest obstacle. Perspective and mindset are what actually fuel our fear. It's like throwing a lit match into a puddle of gasoline because this is a common challenge for most of us, and I'm guessing if you're still listening to this episode, you probably agree.

[\(05:57\)](#):

So I have seven ways that I've discovered through my conversations with guests on this podcast, through my own story and through research that I think can help us deal with fear by shifting our mindset and reframing or editing our story. My first tip, dismiss the idea of failure and maybe stop using the word failure at all. You already know that you learn more from your failures than from your successes. So if that's true, how can failure be considered failure? And if saying that word conjures up some horrible story in your mind, then stop calling it failure. Instead, recast the experience as a time when maybe something did go horribly wrong, but focus on what you learned or maybe how you responded in the face of that challenge, focus on what you did after the fact to put the pieces back together. I'm gonna give you a great example of this that I really love.

Laura Cox Kaplan [\(07:06\)](#):

Professional storyteller and author Kendra Hall who joined me in episode 203, and she's been a listener favorite. She shared great perspective on this topic. Now, despite Kendra's chosen career as a professional speaker and storyteller, she admits that she still feels fear. It often grips her just before a speech, but she's found a tool that works for her and that might also work for you. Kendra tells herself stories not about those times when everything went almost perfectly, but instead she recounts those times when things went terribly wrong, but when she managed to get them back on track. Now, in one story that she tells in her terrific book, which is called *Choose Your Story, Change Your Life*, she was on stage set to give a really big keynote and the power went out. Her PowerPoint deck went dead, her microphone went dead, the lights all but went out.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([08:10](#)):

The only thing that she had was the preparation that she had put into her presentation, which was already planted firmly in her brain. So in that moment, she asked the audience if she should keep going. They said yes, and she did, and she nailed that speech in spite of all the obstacles that had been put in her path. This story became one that Kendra retells herself in those moments of stage fright and self-doubt. When she's getting ready to give another speech keynote, this is how she regularly tackles the invisible barrier between her fear and what she knows to be true, because fear, as you already know, is just a feeling until we give it a story and a narrative that helps to make it true. As you think about your own story, think about how the experience and what you learned from a particular situation that maybe went horribly wrong, how that gives you a unique perspective.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([09:15](#)):

What do you know now that you wouldn't have known if the experience had gone as planned? Consider deleting the word failure from your vocabulary. When it enters your head, replace it with a revised narrative about what you learn from the experience. The more you practice reframing, the better able you'll be to bounce back when things don't work out. I'm not suggesting that you avoid responsibility, but instead own it in a way that makes it more valuable for you by using what you've learned. My second tip, remind yourself that the challenge and doing something difficult in something that potentially scares you is really very beneficial. There's a great quote that I'm sure you've heard that's attributed to former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Often this quote is expressed in shorthand, but I actually think the entire quote is pretty powerful. Mrs. Roosevelt is quoted as saying, You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face, you're able to say to yourself, I have lived through this horror.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:30](#)):

I can take the next thing that comes along. You must do the thing that you think you cannot do. The point, of course, is the benefit that comes from doing something hard of mustering the courage and of going ahead and doing that thing that scares you. My third tip is to honestly and

fully assess what you've learned from past experiences. Now, I use the word honestly because many of us tend to be pretty hard on ourselves, so if that sounds like you, you might actually need to get some help with this one. The goal here is to sort through fact versus fiction as it relates to our fear. Sometimes we are literally too close to our experiences to recognize all the different value that has come from them in some cases cause they feel so much like failure or in other cases because you're simply too close to them to see their value.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([11:34](#)):

If you find that you're having trouble being objective and fair with yourself, this is where you need an objective third party. Maybe it's a trusted friend, it's an ally or even a coach who you hire who can help you sort through those past experiences and really mind them for value points that you might be missing. Learning to do this honestly with yourself can be incredibly valuable for not only distilling the value from situations that don't work out, but also for building your confidence about what you've learned. There is major value in doing that work and in getting comfortable developing this as a regular practice. But again, don't be afraid to get help. This can be incredibly difficult to learn to do, and sometimes we need to have, like I said, that coach or that objective third party to help us do this. My fourth tip, even before you try that difficult or scary thing that you may be contemplating, I'm talking especially about those times when maybe you're having trouble making a decision or moving forward in those moments, ask yourself, What might I learn?

Laura Cox Kaplan ([12:52](#)):

Let that question hang there and orient your thinking every single time. Again, the more you practice this, the easier and more automatic it becomes and the easier it is to take that difficult or risky next step. My fifth tip relates to another of my favorite stories from this podcast about how to face down your fear. It's to plan for what you'll do when whatever that difficult or scary thing is doesn't work out. Serial entrepreneur and former CEO of StubHubs, Sue Kinder Singh Cassidy, who is also the founder of an organization called the Board List, actually shared this tip with me in episode 202. Sue Kender also talks about this practice in her terrific book, which is called Choose Possibility. Here's How it Works. Think about what you will do when whatever grand idea or project or risk doesn't work the first time or maybe the second time or even the third time.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([14:00](#)):

What's your plan of action for recalibrating and trying again, when you actually plan for failure or setback and for what your next steps will be. When that thing or those things or that project doesn't work out, it takes some of the initial sting out of the failure and it has the added benefit of making you feel just a little more in control than you might otherwise. If you struggle with control issues, this can be super, super helpful. I've included a link to that terrific episode with Sue Kinder. Again, it's episode 202, and I've also included a link to her book Choose Possibility. If you miss the episode, I hope you'll go back and check it out, and her book is a really great one

to add to your list. Tip number six relates to feedback. Now, feedback can also be very fear-inducing for many of us and generally and intellectually, we can probably all agree that feedback is very valuable, but when it's negative, it can also feel a lot like failure.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([15:10](#)):

So perspective is incredibly important here. Feedback even when it's negative or constructive, is not failure, and most importantly, most importantly here, I'm gonna underscore this, it isn't an assessment of your value as a person. It's data, period. That data gives us an opportunity to objectively engage our curiosity in a way that helps us grow and learn and potentially improve. This matters a great deal. In the context of the story that you tell yourself about feedback. Far too often, those of us who are a little too hard on ourselves will tend to miss the forest for the trees, so to speak. In other words, if 90% of the feedback that you're getting is positive and 10% of the feedback you're getting is negative, don't misunderstand or ignore the story that the data is actually telling you. You're doing great and you've got some great data to work with.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:19](#)):

Consider it for what it really is and what it really isn't. Listen to it, learn from it, and move on. And finally, my seventh tip, Be careful not to give your fear too much power. When we focus too much on our fear and we fixate on what we're afraid of, it's like giving fear the pen to write your story. Instead, a better way is to actually take back the pen, Recognize that feeling and the discomfort that comes with it. Remind yourself in those moments that it is just that a feeling and it's likely a sign that you're pushing yourself towards something that is potentially incredible. Spend a few minutes to reflect on what's really driving your fear and then use the previous six steps that I've outlined to think about how to work on getting a better understanding of your fear and to put it into context.

## **EPISODE CLOSE**

Laura Cox Kaplan ([17:26](#)):

Friend, it's really important to remember that the feeling of fear is what enables us to create a different story and to use all that we've learned in the process. But when you turn your power over to fear, it will absolutely keep you stuck. While there may be nothing to fear but fear itself, I hope you found some value in these seven tips to help you recognize and recalibrate your own fear and to use the feeling to drive you closer to what's important to you. While at the same time investing in yourself by creating and editing your personal story to better support you along the way. In the process, you'll build more influence and you'll likely be happier as well. I'd love to know what you thought of this episode and the focus on fear story and influence. So when you have a minute, please send me a message on Instagram or LinkedIn. You'll find me at Laura Cox Kaplan. You also can reach me via the contact link on my website at she said, she said podcast.com. And there on the website you'll also find the full and complete show notes with

links to the episodes and the books that I mentioned in this episode, which is episode 217. You will also find a full free downloadable transcript of this episode as well.

And Friend, if you're enjoying, She Said, She Said Podcast. I would be really grateful if you would consider leaving a review on iTunes or wherever you're listening to this podcast. Those reviews actually provide me with great feedback and help me improve the content in a way that hopefully will add more value to you. So each week as you're investing in yourself by listening to this, I can do a better job for you. So please be sure to leave me a review. I'd be really, really grateful. I'll talk to you again next week. Until then, you take care and have a wonderful, happy and safe. Halloween.

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