

She Said/She Said Podcast With Laura Cox Kaplan
Why Investing In Yourself Is About More Than You! Bonus Episode 221
Guest: Kari Kampakis, Author And Award Winning Mom Blogger

SHOW OPEN:

Laura Cox Kaplan ([00:06](#)):

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 221 OPEN:

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:18](#)):

Hey friend, welcome to this bonus episode of She Said, she Said Podcast. The month of November has been an incredibly busy one for me with lots of great events and lots of great opportunities to talk about what we talk about here at She Said, she Said Podcast. I am truly honored and grateful to be your Sherpa of sorts as we navigate so many topics related to career and personal development, and particularly those practices that help us build and sustain influence in our lives. And I am especially grateful to you because you send such great feedback and perspective on your own journey, and I love hearing from you. I am really, really grateful when you reach out. Increasingly now though, friend, I am doing more in person events, which I love and I especially love having a chance to meet listeners of this podcast in person, and I'm really excited to be doing more of those kinds of events next year.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([02:24](#)):

But there is a flip side that occurs when I double the amount of work that I'm taking on, and that means that I have to take more breaks and more importantly, I have to really plan for those breaks in advance before I hit a wall. And the reason why I'm telling you that is because there's an important message here. When I don't plan well enough in

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advance, I tend to hit that wall pretty hard. <laugh>, and I suspect you probably struggle with this as well, especially if you're building a business with limited resources, and of course always limited time. You're maybe trying to balance your demand, the demands and the joys of motherhood and parenting along with building a business and building a career. It can be a lot. This past week as I was reflecting on all of this and I was starting my holiday prep, I went back and I listened to one of my favorite episodes that is focused on the importance of self care.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([03:30](#)):

But what I especially love about this particular episode is that it brings out some other important dimensions about why that investment in yourself matters so much and why that investment even, and especially when your time is stretched as it often or always is during the holidays, why it can make such a big difference for you and for those that you care about. So as I do my best to take my own advice and take a quick break before jumping into some amazing interviews that we have coming up in December, I'm sharing a bonus OnCore episode with you this week. This episode features a dear guest who I have loved since we were first introduced about three years ago. I have become a devoted follower of her terrific content and books, and she's joined me here on She Said, she Said Podcast twice already. Many of you also know and follow mom, blogger and author, Kari, come pack us.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([04:36](#)):

She is truly fabulous and I always find her clear eye approach to motherhood, both affirming and uplifting, and not to mention just plain helpful. Kari can often present concepts in ways that just cut through the clutter and the noise so that you can really see the real issue. So I'm recycling this conversation with Kari from earlier this year for a couple of reasons, and not just because I love it. The first is because her latest book is called More Than a Mom. It also makes a fabulous holiday gift, and I've included a link to the book in the show notes in the book, and in our conversation, Kari underscores the importance of self care, but she does it in a way that is consistent with how I talk about investing in ourselves and why it matters related to building and sustaining influence here on this podcast.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:34](#)):

How we talk about how that investment can sometimes feel selfish when in reality it's what we must do in order to effectively invest in others, including our children. That is especially true as we do all the things that we need to do to create these magical

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celebrations during the holidays. Kari also shares advice in this episode that I needed to hear again, and I thought you might get some important value from it as well. So give it a listen and let me know how Kari's perspective on self-care strikes you and how you plow through the rough spots, especially around the holidays. So friend here is my encore conversation with the amazing Kari Kaus, welcome back to She Said. She said,

Kari Kampakis ([06:25](#)):

Oh, thanks for having me back. I'm so happy to be here.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([06:28](#)):

Well, I'm so delighted to have you. And I met for the first time back in 2020, right in the middle of C. We were introduced by a wonderful mutual friend of ours. My life has been richer as a result of that, and I know your legions of fans feel the same way. Oh,

Kari Kampakis ([06:47](#)):

Well I feel the same way about your work. I love reading what you're doing and just seeing your videos. It's just you're so uplifting. Thank you. The podcast too, everything and even the people you have on, I love your work.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([06:58](#)):

Thank you very much. Well present company included, and I am so happy to have you back. So this week we're here to talk about a new book. I'm always excited about your books, but this one in particular, because it aligns so beautifully with a topic that we've been talking about here and she said podcast, which is this concept of investing in ourselves. So Kari, tell us about More Than a Mom. That's the title of the new book. Why this book?

Kari Kampakis ([07:29](#)):

That is a great question, and I think that it's not only just the circumstances we're dealing with in our world today, but it's probably has a lot to do with the stage of parenting that I'm in <affirmative>, my oldest daughter's a freshman in college, so I've been doing this about 20 years. And I think the big thing is just you get to be this age. I'm almost 50, I'm celebrating my 50th birthday this summer.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([07:50](#)):

Ah, happy

Kari Kampakis ([07:50](#)):

Birth day. And you know, might relate to this, but my dad put it, well, he's like, the older you get, the more your body dictates what you can and can't do. And I think I'm just looking ahead and I'm thinking, I've got to really start taking care of myself inside and out. I'm like, what is my second act of life going to look like and what am I envisioning for myself? And it always helps me to have kind of a vision I'm working toward and the vision I'm working toward in the next 20, 30, 40 years, God willing, if I'm still here, is just to have to be a healthy grandparent and to be a help to my children when they're at the age that I am. Because I know how overwhelming it is to be a mom in this season of life. And I'm like, I want to always be an asset and a blessing and to be able to support my children, but to be able to do that, I've got to be healthy myself.

Kari Kampakis ([08:35](#)):

And so the book before this as was Love Her. Well, and that's about loving your teenage daughter. And one thing I've learned about raising teenagers is that if we're not in a good place, a strong place as parents, then we're not going to be able to love our children. Well, especially in the teenage years because it gets really tricky. It's really hard, it's really, really stressful sometimes you're trying to love them well and they're not loving you well in return. And I just really learned just in my own parenting, that I've got to rely on my faith. I've got to rely on my friendships, on my spouse, the people that build me up, who love me and fill my cup, just really taking care of myself and allowing time for rest and renewal because when I do those things, I can turn around and be a stronger mom for my children. I can be, the more the mom I want to be for them, not be so triggered so easily and so impatient because I'm not going operating from an empty cup. So I guess, I don't know if you relate to that, but that's where I am in parenting and that's when I wanted to write about for other moms.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([09:35](#)):

I love that. I love that. So when you joined me before a couple of years ago, that was episode 116, I think we talked a little bit about your background, how you got where you are, and also the fact that you are the mom of four <laugh>, four daughters, including a daughter who is now in college. So the topic of parenting and parenting girls in particular is something that is both near and dear to your heart and something that a lot about. So for folks listening, if you missed episode one 16, be sure and go back. We're gonna touch on Elements of Kari's story, but we're actually gonna dive deeper into this latest book this time. One of the things that really resonated with me in this book relates to the example that we set for our children, not just in doing the right thing. I

mean, we all know how important that is as parents, but this goes a bit deeper and it's really the example that we set in terms of how we handle things that are happening around us. And the pandemic are great examples of that. Maybe talk a little bit about this particular concept in the book and how you think about that.

Kari Kampakis ([10:54](#)):

Yes. I think I'm just so much more aware now that my daughters have three teenagers and then one preteen, she's 12. And I'm just hyper aware right now that my girls are always going to remember what they witness in my life right now. I feel like they're watching me on an even deeper level than when they were younger. And one thing that really inspired this thought of what are we modeling for our children during covid and just in the season of life is when my mom passed away two years ago, you know, lose a parent and you are just flooded with memories. And it really surprised me that the majority of my memories of her came from my teenage years, my early twenties kind of those years when I was getting married and first having babies. And I think it's because one, your brain's in a different point of development, so you remember more from that season of life than maybe when you were a child.

Kari Kampakis ([11:36](#)):

And then also I was spending more time with her still. And so it just really hit me. I was like, my kids are going to remember this and I want to encourage parents. I think that when we become parents, you think that you have to be this perfect role model and that is so not true. I mean, I've really learned, especially the further I get into parenting, is that we can model a healthy response to things, especially when we're going through adversity or facing a trial. And I'm so aware that the things that I'm going through at this age or that my friends are going through, which is some major league stress, as I call it in a lot of cases, that my girls might be going through this kind of stress or adversity in the future, and I want them to see what a healthy response looks like because you have a choice.

Kari Kampakis ([12:16](#)):

And I think that so many people aren't equipped or they don't have the tools and for me it ultimately goes back to faith and relying on God to get us through those moments. But I just really wanna encourage moms that even if you're a single mom or if you're going through cancer or a financial crisis or whatever you're going through, you still can be an amazing role model for your child by the way that you handle your adversity. And I actually think it's more important than ever for our kids to see that because they're

living in this world where they think they have to be perfect, the world is telling them to be perfect, that they think that one mistake and their life is over and they need to see adults going through loss, going through adversity, grieving, going through these hard things in life, but then coming out on the other side stronger than before.

Kari Kampakis ([12:59](#)):

And I don't think we do them a real disservice when we make them believe that life is perfect and they're not gonna face these curve balls because they will all face these curve balls. And so I try to be hyper aware even as we're going through and just really, I let my kids see me lean on my faith, and I talked about my anxiety, I'm anxious right now, but what I was doing to work through that, which is remembering God's truths and just speaking truth to myself and taking time to rest and to really renew myself so that I can handle the challenges.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([13:29](#)):

I love that. I love this additional dimension as it relates to perfection. We already know that perfection is something that is a terrible thing to do to ourselves, but I think in the context of thinking about our relationships with our children and what they see and how they see us model that, I really, really love that dimension. Another element of the book that resonated so deeply with me is this concept of self care versus selfish care sort. How sometimes self care can feel really selfish and frankly sometimes it is <laugh>. But talk about getting the balance and why self care is such an important component of being a good mom, a good partner, a good friend, et cetera, et cetera.

Kari Kampakis ([14:24](#)):

Yes, I think that's a great question. And I had a counselor friend and she said she really liked that part too. And I think we just live in a world of extremes. And so when it comes to self care, especially, it's such a buzzword these days at self-care, a lot of people just roll their eyes like, oh yeah, that's an excuse to go take vacations and take bubble baths and all that. And I'm like, there is probably are some people you could use self-care as an excuse for anything. Well, my kids are stressing me out, so I'm, I'm gonna leave my family or I'm going to go spend more time with my friends than my family because this is self care. So you know, can definitely take it to an unhealthy extreme or an unhealthy direction. But then, yeah, I think that we live in a world where either one extreme is self care becomes self worship, it's really all about me and it's all about how I feel and maybe we're not being the parent we need to be.

Kari Kampakis ([15:13](#)):

But then there's also that element of self neglect where we're being a martyr and we think our job is just to serve the people around us and our needs don't matter. And there's really got to be a healthy in between and going in the direction of the self neglect. I keep thinking of the story of a friend of mine who is editing a book for this guy who had an amazing come to Jesus moment. He had made some really terrible mistakes and he turned his life around and is doing amazing in ministry now. But he was talking about when he was growing up, his mom would always emphasize to him and his brothers the need to respect women, to be respectful of women. But then when he noticed, he was like, but when it came to her life, she didn't make men respect her <affirmative>. And he saw that disconnect.

Kari Kampakis ([15:53](#)):

And I think that that's sometimes what can happen to us as women is like we're valuing other people and other people's lives above our own. And as we've talked about, you really can't pour out of an empty cup. We've really got to restore ourselves. And I don't know, I believe that when I was a young mom and even five years ago, I'd say, I'm not sure I would've written this message five years ago because really, yeah, I mean I just remember when people were talking about self care as a mom. When I was a new mom, a nap made everything better. Just having <affirmative> a day to myself made everything better. I was rejuvenated and I felt like that was all it took.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:25](#)):

Well then your children back then, your children were smaller and the problems were proportionate to their size,

Kari Kampakis ([16:32](#)):

Right? Yes. And as you know, the older your kids get little kids, little problems, big kids, big problems

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:38](#)):

Precisely.

Kari Kampakis ([16:39](#)):

And so it just becomes more emotionally draining, it becomes more mentally draining. A lot of their problems are not quickly solved. And so you're like, okay, how can I try to

have some semblance of peace and joy and hope even in the midst of a trial when I don't know how this will end up or where this trial is going? And it's really hard. And I think as our kids get older, we realize how much inner strength we need as women. And it amazes me. I mean, I think women do have so much inner strength and so much potential to become really strong. And so I think that component of our life becomes really important as our kids grow up. Because I just think about myself. I not only wanna be strong for the things that I'll go through. I want to be strong for the things that I know my daughters are going to go through and I want to, you know, can't do that overnight. Those are things that we have to gradually cultivate that inner strength so that we can be that loving support to them. And

Laura Cox Kaplan ([17:29](#)):

The emotional piece takes so much energy, it takes so much more energy than I think when we're first having children and we're young moms, it's hard to appreciate the energy that's required of the emotional demand. Even when your children are really thriving and doing great, there's still normal kids and they're gonna have challenges and disagreements and problems and all those sorts of things to navigate. And I find that the amount of mental and emotional energy that takes is still sometimes kind of stunning to me.

Kari Kampakis ([18:03](#)):

Yes, I agree. And I think too that women are just intuitive and that it is such a gift. But I think that sometimes I'm like my husband and I have these conversations, these if I die jokes and I'm like, if I die, you worry about this one. She might look good on the outside, but she bottles things up. <laugh>, sometimes we just earn two, sometimes we know something's not right with our child if we sense these things that I don't think our husbands always do, and it's a gift, but it can also make us worry even more. And I think that when our kids are struggling, we don't necessarily get over it as quickly as maybe a man would. And a story to illustrate that is our friend and I were talking and she's like, my husband and I were both really worried about our teenage son and we had this conversation and we agreed that this needed attention and all of this.

Kari Kampakis ([18:50](#)):

And she's like, two minutes later he's whistling around the house, he's moved on from that conversation <laugh>, I was still worrying about the conversation and I'm like, I totally relate. That's how I am too. You're still thinking about it. So I just think that as women and it is out of love, we love our kids so much and it's the mama bear. We're

just, we want them to have a healthy life. We want them to thrive. And so we're constantly asking ourselves, what can I do to help them? How can I help them through this? And it's such a gift. And I think any child that has a mother that is so lucky, I wish every child had a mom like that. But for us on the other end, we really have to equip ourselves and just like I said, build that inner strength so that we're able to be that mother to them.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([19:35](#)):

You and I are both working moms. Most of the women I would say who are listening are probably working moms or potentially working moms, or they're in the midst of some kind of career pivot. When you have all of those demands and a family or maybe you're planning a family, you've got a lot on your plate that you're trying to balance. So let's talk a little bit about getting that balance. It's hard enough to prioritize work and family life, but then when you also are trying to prioritize your self care and spending that time that you need to refuel emotionally and sometimes physically as well. Maybe talk about what your advice is for getting that balance and how you talk about

Kari Kampakis ([20:21](#)):

It in the book. Yes, that is a great question. I think that I'm really big into seasons and one thing I talk about in the book is just I didn't know. And sometimes we don't know. We go into start working and we don't know what work's going to demand of us and we have to kinda learn the hard way. But when my first book came out, I just accepted every speaking invitation. I, I was traveling, but I'm an introvert by nature and I know this about myself now. And so I can't do things back to back. I need time, time to recharge and decompress at home. At the same time, I was writing another book, I'd agreed to another book, and so I was just mean was running ragged. I was trying to be a mom to four little girls and do these speaking events and write a book.

Kari Kampakis ([20:59](#)):

And I finally asked an author friend of mine, I was like, how do you do it all? And she goes, well, I break it up into seasons and if I'm, if I'm in a writing season, I'm not speaking and if I'm in a speaking season, I'm not writing. And I was like, oh, I never considered doing that. But that was really life changing to me because I'm like, that way I know that my book's coming out now, so I'm not planning on writing anything. I'm actually going to take a break from writing and just do podcasts and speaking events for a while. And then when I feel like it's time to write again, I'll probably back down on the speaking. So I think for mom's and other jobs, I have a friend who's an accountant, and

so tax season is terrible for her, but then she doesn't plan in anything in those three months afterward.

Kari Kampakis ([21:41](#)):

And so she also has to kind of equip herself during that season. Maybe her husband has to pick up the slack at home and she has friends help her out more. And so it's never a perfect balance, I don't think. But I think it just to not feel guilty about cutting back on things and looking at it as a season. And like I said, after this book launch is usually about six weeks. I mean, I'm taking the summer off and I'm giving myself that grace where I might not have done that five years ago. But I think as moms just anything that we can cut back on and especially if we know it's going to be a busy season or there might be times that I think that sometimes when everything's going well, you can juggle it all, but you throw in a glitch or a crisis and all of a sudden we feel so overwhelmed.

Kari Kampakis ([22:19](#)):

And so just giving ourselves the grace and also not being scared to ask for help and not being scared to cancel some things if we need to. I've had seasons where I had to do that, had to cancel on some things because I was worried about a child or doing more doctor appointments for something we're looking into. And I found that people, most people are so understanding even you don't have to give 'em all the details of what's going on, but if you just say, I need more time for my family, or my child needs more attention for me right now, that most people are very understanding, especially if they are a mom or a parent themselves. And so just really just doing what's best for our family and knowing that can't never a perfect balance, but I think the more we can create some margin in our schedules, it just allows room for things to go wrong if they need do or for our child to need us and us to be able to be available for them.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([23:06](#)):

I love that it's all about making that space, but even more importantly, being disciplined as it relates to that space. And as you're talking about this, one of the things that I find particularly challenging and I suspect you do as well, is that you, if you're not careful, even when you have said, okay, here's what we're gonna do. Here's the season that we're in, we're not gonna do these other things. You can very easily get sucked in. Maybe your publisher says, oh, but it's just one. It's just one speaking engagement, or it's just one podcast. Or maybe you should post a bit more on social media so that people know who you are and you get your name out there. And of the lure of that, of continuing to build and build and build and build and know that it's gonna help you sell

more books, that it's gonna help your message reach more people that can be very intoxicating. How do you resist the pull of getting pulled into a different season when you've decided, okay, here's the season that I'm

Kari Kampakis ([24:10](#)):

In? Yeah. Oh, that is such a great point too. And I don't know about you, but I have found that when I'm having a really good day or I'm having a really productive week and I feel like I've got all this extra time that I'm like, I need to do something with it to be very, oh

Laura Cox Kaplan ([24:21](#)):

Yeah.

Kari Kampakis ([24:22](#)):

Because I'm sometimes those of the week somebody ask makes a request that I'd said I wasn't going to take. And I'm like, oh yeah, I can do this. And so I backtrack on my plans. But that's a great question for me, I think that this is really where prayer comes into play for every yes that we give to somebody, we're saying no to something else. So sometimes, especially I think sometimes as moms, we just have a gut feeling. I just feel like I'm supposed to make time for this. I don't know why, but I feel like it doesn't make sense, but I just feel like God's calling me to make time for this. But then we also have those moments where you feel, I don't know why. I just have a funny feeling. I feel like this is not something that's meant for me, it's meant for somebody else.

Kari Kampakis ([25:02](#)):

And I really had a good lesson on this a few years ago that I had a friend, she was a local friend, she asked me to come and speak at her event she was doing for moms. It was not going to be a hard event. And I think she expected me to say yes. And I was like, I just got this feeling that I wasn't supposed to do it. And I felt bad because she was my friend and I was like, I'm so sorry, but I just don't think I can fit it into my schedule. She checked back with me a few weeks later, just kind of really, please, it really won't be, won't be that big of a commitment. And I was like, no, I really don't feel like I'm supposed to be doing this. So anyway, it was a few weeks after that that I had a dear friend that lost her husband and a plane accident and it was terrible.

Kari Kampakis ([25:43](#)):

And of course that's the kind of thing, you just drop everything and you were there for your friend. And a few days later I was dropping off my kids at school and I'm pulling out

of our school parking lot and I see a sign in a yard from my other friend's event. And I realized that her event was on that same Saturday as the funeral, and it was the same time as a funeral. And it hit me, if I had said yes to her event, I would've had to cancel on her because obviously I'm going to go to the funeral. And so it's just a reminder to me that maybe that's why God put that funny feeling in me that maybe that's why I just felt like this is not something I'm supposed to take because only he knows the future, only he knows where I'm supposed to be that day. And so I think that really when we can take that time to get quiet and pray about something before we accept a request and just really think it through, and sometimes we don't have perfect clarity, but a lot of times we do have some kind of instinct pulling us one way or the other. I think it's really important for us to do that as women and know that we've got limited time and energy and to make sure that we're investing it in the things that God wants us to do.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([26:44](#)):

Yeah, I love that. I really love that you talk about in the book the importance of knowing yourself and understanding the kind of person and worker that you are a big multitasker, you are a, I know that is something that will resonate with lots of the people listening. It certainly resonates with me. I get a lot of fulfillment out of productivity. It's a blessing and a curse as you <laugh> I know would probably acknowledge because you talk about that in the book, maybe talk about your advice and suggestions for how to know yourself, how to understand these things about yourself and why that matters so much. Yeah. Why does it matter that you and I both get tremendous fulfillment from productivity and how can that be a risk both for us as well as listeners?

Kari Kampakis ([27:42](#)):

Yes. I feel like for me, I'm exactly like where I'm type A. I love to be productive. I love to look back at my day and feel like I just checked off all the marks. And I used to really pride myself on being a great multitasker. And if somebody complimented me on that, I thought it was a good thing. And then a few years ago, I was at the gym and I was talking to a friend who's brother, a psychologist, and we were talking about multitasking. And she goes, it's really interesting. If you go look at all the research, it actually shows that you're less efficient when you're multitasking, that you don't get as much done multitasking. And so after that, I kind of just paid attention to it. And I realized with myself that when your kids are little, I think that you have to multitask.

Kari Kampakis ([28:19](#)):

I mean, you've three kids are juggling and phone calls and commitments and trying to keep your children alive and okay, where's the baby? And like your mind is constantly going in different directions. And so I think sometimes we moms just stay in that mode. But what I've realized as I've gotten older is multitasking makes me forgetful. I mean, sometimes I've signed a check and I'm like, what did I do with it? Or I've threw it in the trash, or it's just things that are, you're putting the keys in the refrigerator and I'm, cause I'm doing too much at once. And so for me, I've just had to allow myself the grace, just breathe and slow down and do one thing at a time. And so instead of checking every email or responding to every email as it comes through, I might say, you know what?

Kari Kampakis ([29:02](#)):

I need to write for an hour. I'm going to focus for an hour on this document, and then I'll go check all my emails at one time and I will respond to them at one time that, or even text messages, I was like, it does not, just because somebody's texting me right now doesn't mean it needs an immediate response. And that's hard for my personality because my instinct is to be Johnny on the spot. But it really has brought me more peace and it's kind of helped my stress levels come down a little bit just to give myself that grace. And another example, I have a friend that she has four kids too, and she's like, I used to put my laundry, put my laundry basket and put my laptop on top of my laundry basket as I put up laundry and listen to podcast as the, so she was like, but sometimes I would miss things in the podcast because she's distracted and doing two different things.

Kari Kampakis ([29:47](#)):

So she's like, now I put up the laundry and then I sit down on the couch and watch the podcast and I get so much more out of it. And so it sounds like such a little thing, but I think that for moms that can really be life changing for us, that sometimes we feel like, I don't even know what I think, I can't remember anything. And it's because we're trying to juggle too much mentally. And sometimes if we just slow down and just allow ourselves to do one thing at a time that we really can be more effective and not be doing things like I was throwing checks away or forgetting the things that we don't need to be,

Laura Cox Kaplan ([30:18](#)):

Yeah, I actually don't know if you think this is true, but I actually think it gets harder as we get older. I think our ability to multitask is maybe not as sharp. I think I was frankly

better at multitasking when my kids were really small and biologically I needed to be, just to your point, because they're into everything and you've got a lot of moving parts now. Again, it's sort of a different way of using my brain and a different mental energy that's required. It really does require a much deeper degree of focus. <affirmative>, I would love your tips for how, while I recognize and I work hard to find that space and that piece as I'm sitting down to think about a podcast or preparing for a guest like this morning, but sometimes that runaway wheel in my head is very, it's very hard for me to calm that down. So maybe talk about what you do as a fellow multitasker to put the brakes on and channel that mental energy in the right direction.

Kari Kampakis ([31:27](#)):

Yeah. Oh, you were asking such great questions. So true. And I always say, I was like, I think I have undiagnosed a d d, like my brain <laugh> everywhere. And I know a lot of moms are like that, but I'm just jumping from one idea to another. Even when I speak, I typically do notes because I'm like, I will get off track. I will get on these tangents. And so I know that about myself and I know that sometimes I think I can accomplish more in a day or a week than I, that I might actually be physically healthy. And so for me, I think it really starts with looking at those big goals, those primary goals, and maybe shrinking those down a little bit for me and this season of life. And so again, I think it just takes knowing yourself. I mean, I look back and when I was writing my second book, that was six years ago.

Kari Kampakis ([32:11](#)):

I mean, I remember looking at my watch that was tracking my sleep and there were some nights I was getting four hours of sleep. And it was just for me to be able to meet the deadlines and be a mom and be available and doing everything I needed to do, I was really sacrificing some things. And so after that I just decided, I was like, I can't do that. I'm not in a seasonal of life maybe when my kids are grown and they're outta the house, but I just, I'm not ever going to be an author that releases a new book every year. For me, it's too taxing. And so I just had to make peace with that. And even between my second and third book, I mean, I didn't have a book, I forget, let's see, from 2016 to 2020, I mean, I really took a big break in there.

Kari Kampakis ([32:49](#)):

But it's funny, I was like this, during this time I really want to fill up, I really want to read more books. I really want to just be on the receiving end. And what I realized is I felt called to let write the third book was that all those books I thought I was reading for

myself or for fun ended up being my research for the third book. So it really did all weave in together and play in together. And so like I said, I know this is not the message most people get from the world because the world is telling us go big or go home and maybe there's certain seasons of life. I think we have the grace over us to be able to do those things and that's great. But then there are also seasons where maybe if we feel our minds going everywhere, that to really just get quiet again and just pray and say, okay, God, what is it you want me to be doing right now?

Kari Kampakis ([33:33](#)):

I have my notes on my phone. I don't know if you do this, but I have all my ideas on that. So I I, I wanna write a play, I wanna write a children's book. I want to write about, there's a hundred article ideas. I mean, I have no shortage of ideas, it's just the time to do them. But for me, it's kind of given me away that if I have a random idea about this children's book I wanna write or this play I wanna write, I'll go put it in my little notes section. And that way I know it's there, it won't be forgotten. And when I'm ready to do that project, it might be five years from now, but when I'm ready, it'll be there. But in the time being, I can keep focusing on what I'm doing right now.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([34:09](#)):

How often do you go back and reread your notes to think about, just sort of dream about, okay, when might you make time for that, the children's book or the play or some of these other things?

Kari Kampakis ([34:22](#)):

Not much lately, just because when I signed for Love Her, well, I signed for two books. So as soon as the first one came out, we started talking about the next one and I was just focused on writing that. But that is why I'm kind of excited about after this book launch that I'll have a little space there. I was like, I'm not committing to anything for a while and I want to just go and maybe do something creative and just allow space to may even try something new that I haven't done before.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([34:44](#)):

Yeah, I love that. I absolutely love that. So we talked about the last time you and I met, we talked about your career trajectory. And it's an interesting one because I have been doing a series of conversations with the Southern Coterie, which you may know based in Sea Island, Georgia. They're an amazing network of creative entrepreneurs and founders. I think you may be friends with Whitney Wise Long potentially. I know she's a

big, big fan of yours and she is amazing also from Alabama originally. But we've been talking about different elements of career and business pivots and growing and evolving in our careers. You started out in communications and public relations as I recall, but before you launched your business, you actually got your mba. And I'd love for you to talk about maybe the value that had in creating a very different business for yourself. Because while we talk about the writing and it comes from divine inspiration, including from your children, but at the same time, this is a business that you're running too. You have a blog, you have a book, it's paying the bills. Let's talk about the value of having that MBA and that business experience and expertise under your belt as well as the writing experience.

Kari Kampakis ([36:11](#)):

Yes, another great question. And yeah, I think that it really just goes to show that nothing goes to waste anything. And I'm even telling my children this, whatever they major in college or whatever job you get, it all builds and you all learn. You learn things from those every experience that will help you in the future. But I've always been very creative, definitely more right brain. My husband is the opposite. He's more left brain. And so we make a good match. And long story short, after we got married, I was freelance writing in Huntsville and his dad had offered to send him back to get his mba. And so this is how the MBA came about. So anyway, so I'm just one of those get it done girls. And so Harry didn't really act on it, but I'm like, your dad is offering to send you back.

Kari Kampakis ([36:52](#)):

You need to do this. So I called the director of the Alabama MBA program. He made an appointment to come up to Huntsville. And I think in my heart I'd always kind of thought about getting an mba, but I was like, I just don't know. I don't know if I ever could really do it, but I, I'd thought about it before kind of a bucket list type item. But anyway, he came and the director was talking to us about the program. I was just asking lots of questions and at the end he was like, I think both of you should do this program. I'm like, what? I'm like, I was a communications major, I haven't even taken a finance class. I know nothing about business. And he's like, I think both of you should do it. We just had our first husband and wife team graduate last year, and Harry, after he left was like, okay, I will do it if you'll do it with me.

Kari Kampakis ([37:35](#)):

And I'm like, Harry, I can't do this mean, this is so not my wheelhouse. And he's like, I'll help you. So anyway, we did this weekend program year and a half. It was a great experience, but it was so hard. I mean, I wanted to quit so many times early on and I really was about to quit after this one class. I mean, I just left in tears. I was like, I can't understand this stuff. But the one thing I kept imagining was Harry graduating a year and a half later and me being so jealous sitting in the audience watching him graduate with all of our MBA friends. So I stuck with it. I think it definitely helped me, but for me, it just helped me think more logically, helped me just looking at things from a business aspect and my husband that comes very natural to him, but it did not come naturally to me.

Kari Kampakis ([38:18](#)):

And so I did launch a business after that. I sold children's prints for a while. And I think just the marketing, knowing the marketing and not being scared of that part, and how I probably have seen it come into play the most in the business I have now is just understanding the business part of it, but really understanding the part that comes after the creativity that writing a book is creative and it's fun, but so many writers hate the marketing part. Oh, I hate that part. And I really love that part. To me, that part is easier than sometimes the actual process of writing. But you've got I everything is a business and so it really has come into play. Not that I go and crunch numbers now, but just knowing what's worth my time and energy, just kind of knowing, I really remember learning in a marketing class about grassroots effort. And I felt that really has come into play in my business that it's a lot of just grassroots word of mouth that sometimes we don't have this great business plan, but it's just like the mom network or it's the Bible studies here. And so just understanding those things I do think helps you just have that business mindedness can help you in any business that you're doing, even if you're not actually using those skills.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([39:27](#)):

To that point too, I mean what you said really resonates with me because this idea of a grassroots movement where when you understand how to market a product and you also understand the importance of connecting directly with your potential customer, in your case, your potential reader, it's really sort where that magic ultimately happens. Maybe what advice do you have for other entrepreneurs who are maybe engaged in their entrepreneurial journey or who are contemplating it? Maybe fellow moms who are thinking about something similar maybe what advice do you have for getting started and starting a creative business you've done?

Kari Kampakis ([40:14](#)):

Yes. I think that the one thing is to think what are you passionate about? But also what breaks your heart too. And I think this is a good question that they use this in writing, but I think it can apply to a business too. But an editor once told me that they tell writers to ask themselves, what's the pain? What is the pain that people are feeling? So for me it's like what's the pain in a mother's heart when she's going to bed at night? What's keeping her up at night or waking her up in the middle of the night and whatever it is right to that or speak to that. And I think that we live in a world where, you know, feel like you to be flashy and shiny and just as amazing online influencer, and you can get a lot of followers like that.

Kari Kampakis ([40:53](#)):

But I personally, the people that feel more real and more down to earth and that are really speaking to those real life issues that you might talk about ever coffee with your friends. And so I feel like for me, those are the kind of moms that I attract. The ones that are I'd a marketing person, and she's amazing that we were just having a conversation about six months ago and she was like, you need to be doing reels, these Instagram reels. And I'm like, I watch 'em. And I tell my husband, I was like, this is just not me. I would feel like an idiot doing this. It was just not me. And so I'm not gonna do that, but I know that it works for some people and I know that's what a lot of moms like, but that's just not my personality and that's not true to who I am.

Kari Kampakis ([41:33](#)):

And so I think it's just really important to just think about who's your audience. One thing I'm always asking myself is how can I help people? What can I do to help other people? And I feel like the gift that I can provide is just simply that I've been doing it for 20 years. So a lot of the moms that are following me now are behind me, and they're just looking for advice and guidance and stories or just assurance that they will get through this hard season they're in. But I also think I'm just so fortunate that I've had, I had great parents, my husband had great parents. I meet so many awesome counselors. I meet awesome moms at all these speaking events I go to, I have just been poured into by wealth of different resources and people who are just really wise parents, wise people, they've helped me grow so much in my faith and just my understanding and just the work that I'm doing, I really see myself as just a conduit.

Kari Kampakis ([42:21](#)):

How can I take all the stuff that everybody's given me and just pass it on to others? Or even with the faith component, I was like, I spend my life looking at Bible verses thinking about which one's going to go in my book. And just a lot of people don't have that. They don't know where to start. And so how can I take these gifts that I've been given that have helped me so much in my life or my faith journey or my parenting and share it with others? And I think when you really look at it at that point, and don't worry about the followers or the likes, and that's hard to get over. And I realize now, I wrote three fiction novels before I ever got published and I realized I needed that rejection because it just prepares you for rejection as a writer that sometimes you write an article and you spend days or a week write, working on it, and it gets no traction or a podcast or whatever, and it doesn't get the response you hoped it would.

Kari Kampakis ([43:09](#)):

And then sometimes you write something and it resonates and you don't know why, but just it hits moms in the heart and it does get that traction. But it's really tempting to want to just do only those things that are going to get a lot of likes or get a lot of traction. And I don't think that's the way to go because there have been many things I've written or posted that I'm like, I know that this is not going to get a lot of likes or attention, but I just like, this is what God's calling me to do. And I'm just very a big believer if we just stay obedient to what he's calling us to do, then he's gonna lead us to that plan that he has for us and that path that ultimately is going to be so rich and meaningful and fulfilling and bring the right people in. I'd rather have a hundred of the right people than 10,000 of the wrong people following me. And that's been so great about my faith journey is like there are more moms out there that think like me and that care about faith in their home like I do than I even thought. And that's so neat is when you connect with those like-minded people and they just encourage you and what you're doing too.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([44:09](#)):

I absolutely love that. It reminds me to, you also write about the importance of creating a network of people that help support you as you're on this journey. Maybe talk a little bit about that piece of it because it's multidimensional. I mean, we talk about building and oftentimes growing and evolving our networks as we grow and evolve. And at times it can be, there's an element as you grow as a person, sometimes you have to expand into areas where you need an expertise that doesn't currently exist with your network. Or it may be a matter of educating your network who have only the best intentions for you, but you're being called to do something else and you may have to

take them along with you on the journey. Maybe talk about navigating maybe the importance of networking, creating your network, but also how you evolve it and how you continue to grow

Kari Kampakis ([45:13](#)):

It. Oh, that's a great question too. It's so true. It's funny in the season that I'm in, I mean, I think we all have our best friends. You know, have maybe your best friends from high school and your best friends from college and your best friends from your early days as a mom and your best friends from work, just different places. We all have that network and it's really tempting to just stick with our best friends, those people that have always been our people, our tribe. And I think it's very important to maintain those connections. But I have found that as I grow up and as my kids grow up, I've got to expand my network and it has brought so much wealth and wisdom into my life. And so I think there's this idea that moms and women today, we think that all of our whole tribe is going to come from one area of life.

Kari Kampakis ([45:56](#)):

Like, okay, I don't have a group of school mom friends, or I don't have a group of mom friends in the same age range, which we definitely need that, but I think the best tribes are when you're being fed into at different people. And it's really, I mean, just really look for who do I connect with? I are just, sometimes there's some people that you just have a two minute conversation with them and you just feel connected. And this has happened to me when I was picking up a cake at a bakery. I became friends with a girl who's the owner, and we had lunch and I'm like, I just like her and I like her way of looking at life. She's got a lot of wisdom. Same thing happened with, we had a woman down the street that nannies for some girls, and my daughter has babysat over there, so my daughter's met them.

Kari Kampakis ([46:37](#)):

And when my daughter was going to Auburn, she brought over a cake and pizza and did this party for my daughter with these little girls. I mean just the sweetest soul ever. And so we got to be friends and we've been encouraging each other and going to lunch. And so it's out of my normal network, but I'm just, it just makes your life so much richer to do that. And so I just feel like those are the people that inspire me now. It's just the older I get, the more I realize how important it has people to share your values. And sometimes those people will look like you and sometimes they won't look like you. Sometimes they'll be your age, sometimes they'll be 20 years older. My husband has a

funny story that he used to host this men's bible study on our porch, and the guys are his age dads and one day they were leaving and there was this older gentleman walking down the street and he's like, what are y'all doing there?

Kari Kampakis ([47:26](#)):

And one of the guys told him, and then the guy told him, I said, you should come one morning. So the next Friday morning he showed up <laugh> with the Bible study. I was like, Harry, who is that man on our porch <laugh>? Well, I'll tell you that story. So anyway, but it is so funny. Now, he's been going for about a year. He shows up every Friday. And I mean, Harry always has a story about him. He's the most interesting person, and just the stories that he shares and the wisdom that he's given to these guys. But it's just such an example of just being open to your network. Or like you said, sometimes I have found when my child is going through a trial or say you've got a health issue or something that's going on with your trial, being open to what God might do in that new chapter of your life that your friends can't help you.

Kari Kampakis ([48:10](#)):

When my daughter broke her finger, she needed hand therapy and it was this whole ordeal, but we're still friends with that hand therapist. We'd go see her twice a week and she and I are friends on Facebook. And it just led to so many blessings and that I think that's just how life is. It's just no matter where God is taking us and what's happening, even if it's somewhere, a place we don't wanna be, even if it's a cancer treatment or something. And I just always ask ourselves like, okay, I'm here, so maybe who am I supposed to meet? Who maybe am I supposed to influence? Who am I meant to encourage today that just really thinking wherever we are, that we can make those friends, we can expand our network. And like I said, it just makes life so much more interesting and meaningful.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([48:51](#)):

It absolutely does, but it also requires that investment of time. I mean, it can just happen, but it can only happen as you just said, when you're open to it and when you allow the space to do that, when you're not so scheduled and multitasking to such a degree that you're not allowing the time for that. I mean, I really feel like I went through a big part of my life, sort of pedaled to the metal nose to the grindstone and not really allowing for that opportunity to really grow much more organically, if you will. And so I feel like that those are, again, maybe it's a matter of seasons, maybe it's a matter of when you're <laugh> in a different season, that there's more of an opportunity. But it is

also as you write in the book, a form of self care, which I thought was such an interesting way to think about

Kari Kampakis ([49:43](#)):

That. Yes. Oh, I think it's one of the biggest forms of self care because again, I think when we are feeling more like ourselves or learning new things about ourselves or growing as people in a positive direction, it makes us a stronger person and a better role model for our children. And I thought about this, and I think what we're working against is just especially here in America, is just the pace that we consider normal. And this always stuck with me, but I shared in the book, but my husband's Greek Orthodox, and so we have the priest here in Birmingham at that church. He worked in Greece for 10 years, and we did a family trip to Greece five years ago. My kids have not stopped talking about it since we're talking about going back this summer, God willing. But it's just amazing to see a different lifestyle and a different way that people live.

Kari Kampakis ([50:29](#)):

And I always became enamored. I heard about this island called Aria over there where they have an abnormal number of people that live to be past a hundred, and they don't have all the diseases and cancers, they just don't have a lot of the issues that we have. And so it's a blue zone of the world, and it's very interesting if you go study the Blue Zones, but they're the healthiest regions of the world where people live to a hundred. They don't have a lot of the issues we have here. But what his priest said kind of went to what I was reading about the Blue zones and just the European lifestyle in a lot of places was he said, I was like, what's the biggest difference between working in America versus working in Greece or just between the two countries? And he goes, it's very interesting, but I think it's the pace.

Kari Kampakis ([51:08](#)):

And so he said, if I saw a friend in Greece that I hadn't seen in years, we would drop everything and go have coffee for three hours. And he goes, if I saw an old friend here in America, we would exchange numbers and we would talk about going to coffee, and that might or might not happen. And I just kept thinking about that after he left our house. I was like, we can't drop everything because we're too packed. We have too much scheduled in every day. And we don't leave time for those little interactions or those conversations or the just drop everything to go have coffee. And it happened again the other night. I actually just did a podcast with a Greek orthodox priest out in San

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Francisco, and when we were talking about the podcast, he's over this I Village, which is a summer camp in Greece for the youth all around the world.

Kari Kampakis ([51:52](#)):

And he was like, gosh, I've just been so busy lately. He goes, I don't know how in Greece I can go have coffee with a friend and not even be on a timeframe and still get everything done that day, and I can't do it here. And I was like, I think it's the pace and the expectation of what we tried to accomplish every day. So I don't know. I think those little things have just really just turned my mindset to, maybe I've had it wrong all these years, maybe my productive nature, my type A personality, which actually matches the personality of America. I think it's a type three Enneagram. And so when you have that personality yourself too, it can be a good thing and it can make you look like an achiever or make you accomplish a lot, but maybe that's not always so good for our health or our wellbeing.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([52:32](#)):

Yeah. Kari, one of the other things you talk about in the book that really resonated with me is this idea of we have to grow up and learn to mother ourselves. And I know you talk about this from a very personal standpoint. Maybe talk about what you mean by that and how you write about that in the book.

Kari Kampakis ([52:55](#)):

Yes. I mentioned earlier that I lost my mom two years ago, and I'm kind of ahead of some of my friends because I was the fourth child in my family. So my mom had me when she was almost 40. So I think sometimes some of the things I've been through, some of my friends haven't been through yet, but it's coming unfortunately. But what I realized is my mom was really sick in the last four years of her life. And so when you're dealing with your own health crisis or issues, you don't have time to go mother. You can't mother people like you used to. And I look back back and I'm like, man, it used to drive me nuts. And my mom would nag me if I had a cold. She'd tell me, go see a doctor or go do this. And then once she couldn't do it anymore, I was like, man, I miss that.

Kari Kampakis ([53:35](#)):

And I realized that as we lose our parents and as we lose that generation that raised us, that generation that looked out for our wellbeing, we're looking out for our kids right now. There's nobody telling us go to the doctor. I mean, my husband does, but it's not the same as your mother, just nobody, your dad is not saying, okay, you have oil in

your car, you know, need to get an oil change. It's just those little things that can kind of drive you nuts when you're growing up, but you look back and you're like, you really miss it once. You don't have those people in your life. And so I realized the importance of mothering myself, and really I'm like, if I don't do it, who's going to do it for me? And so if I cancel a doctor's appointment, nobody's holding me accountable for that.

Kari Kampakis ([54:15](#)):

And I was mentioning to somebody the other day that the whole irony of me writing this book is that I'm still struggling with so many of these concepts. If I have a doctor's appointment for my child, I would never cancel it. But I've had this wellness appointment, which she's helping me with my vitamins and my hormones and some things that are off. It's very important, and I know that, but I've canceled it twice because I'm like, oh, I don't have time right now. And I'm like, I'm totally a hypocrite based on what I'm writing, but I know I need to do this. But I'm like, I can cancel and there's no ramifications. Nobody's nagging me to go reschedule. And so it's really important for us to mother ourselves internally and externally too, because we're losing that generation.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([54:53](#)):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. That whole idea of self-management, it's really that sort of bigger picture of learning to manage ourselves. And as we talk about on this podcast, we're focused on building and sustaining influence in our lives. A big piece of building influence is actually learning to manage yourself. Learning emotional control, learning to be disciplined. I mean, all those sorts of things that we all know at a big picture level, but sometimes sort of breaking it down in a granular way I think is so important. And that's a really, really powerful message that you just delivered. Kari, I am really grateful to have you here. I'm grateful for your work and really enjoyed the conversation today.

Kari Kampakis ([55:31](#)):

Oh, thank you, Laura. I loved it too, and I've been looking forward to this all week.

EPISODE CLOSE:

Laura Cox Kaplan ([55:45](#)):

Friend. Thanks so much for joining me today. I'd love to hear your feedback on this or any of our, she said, said podcast episodes. You can reach me on Instagram, LinkedIn, or

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