

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 248 INTRO

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:21](#)):

Hey friend, welcome to She Said/She Said Podcast. I'm really glad you're here. Do you ever feel like you're sinking deeper and deeper into career quicksand? You know, you're doing everything that you know how to do, but it's not working. And in the process, you're growing more and more frustrated and maybe even getting more and more stuck. It is not a great feeling, obviously, but so many of us at different points in our lives and careers have felt this. So this week I'm welcoming a new friend who navigated corporate waters with great success and at a very young age, and she's gonna share her perspective on a few things that we often overlook as it relates to growing our careers. And she's gonna help us figure out how the best ways are to navigate career quicksand if and when you find yourself in those really tricky situations.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([02:21](#)):

So my guest is Reagan Cannon. Over a 20 year period, she led some of the most innovative teams at both Amazon and at and t. And more recently she began coaching others on some of the career tips that she learned, often through mistakes that she made. She's also conducted some interesting independent research and we talk through some of those findings. But here are a few specific things that you'll learn in this episode that I think you will really, really appreciate. What is career quicksand? How we show up in our relationships and why that is critical? How learning to push back and offer a point of view is essential for helping to navigate quicksand. And also by the way, for building influence, why taking the mess, quote unquote out of the message can be really essential in navigating conversations and building relationships. And also the importance of understanding your identity and how you define that, especially as you

consider or think about or navigate a career pivot. There is so much packed in this episode, friend. I think you're gonna love it. Most of all. Please be sure to share your feedback with me. And if you have a minute, I would love a nice review. You can leave me five stars if you're so inclined, and just send me a few words on what resonated with you from this episode. For now though, here is my conversation with the fabulous Reagan Cannon.

EPISODE 248

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Reagan, welcome to She Said, she said.

Reagan Cannon ([03:57](#)):

Thank you Laura. It's great to be here today.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([04:00](#)):

Well, I'm so happy to have you and I am really excited to talk about this topic. This idea of career quicksand is one that you've written about and that you speak about. What is that and why was this a topic that was important to you to tackle?

Reagan Cannon ([04:18](#)):

What I found is that all of us want to advance in our career. We find ourselves at a point, I found myself at this point, you are doing what you feel like are all the right things, all this motion movement activity, and you're not advancing. And particularly for women, this really intrigued me. I'm like, why are women so often hitting a ceiling? Right? Women in the workplace, 2022 shared that while 50% of women are now filling frontline management positions, about 48%, almost half, right? Only one in four are still in the C-suite. And I was how, like, how is that possible? Like how are we losing all these women along the way? Somewhere along the way, women are getting stuck in career quicksand. They are getting, hitting this wall, this, you know, and they're not getting out of it. And so that problem really intrigued me, kicked off a whole research project for me last year to figure out the real reason women are not getting promoted.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:25](#)):

Yeah, it's so interesting because I think sometimes people can boil it down to external factors, you know, exclusively that there is this glass ceiling that people hit. And while that may be true, your research has found it's much more complicated than that. And I think anybody who's, any woman who's listening to this podcast would certainly know that yes, there can be those barriers, but in reality there are also oftentimes things that maybe we overlook or don't understand as well, or don't do as well as we could. Let's talk about some of those things that we as individuals can do to try to break through

this. And some of the things that you've found both in your own personal career as well as in the research that you've done that work really well.

Reagan Cannon ([06:11](#)):

Yeah, so what I found was that it's not performance because women tend to be high performing. It's not education. A lot of times women have more education than their male counterparts. What I found was how women show up in their relationships at work. That was a big differentiator, how we manage those relationships, how we interact with others. And that was sort of annoying to me, Laura, if I'm honest, cuz it feels like that should be home court advantage for women. Women are amazing <laugh> at building relationships, maintaining and sustaining relationships. There are these society driven beliefs that show up and have us act differently than men and take away some of that confidence. Integrate, have us have these beliefs that are sort of insidious, that have worked their way in. And the way we interact with our boss, our peers, and our team is different.

Reagan Cannon ([07:14](#)):

And in some ways it's great. Like there are some things in my research I asked, you know, what do women bring to the table? And a lot of times it was this collaboration and empathy and other things that they are absolutely known for women are we're, we're, we're kind of famous for. And then I said, how much does that count in the promotional process? And they said, yeah, they don't get enough credit for those things in the promotional process. And so there are things that we're naturally great at in relationships, but there are some very specific things that we are doing that I believe hold us back. So should we dive

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

Let's talk about those <laugh>? Yes, yes, yes. Let's talk about those. This is so fascinating.

Reagan Cannon ([07:55](#)):

Okay. So with our boss, our instinct is for women, our instinct is to be compliant. We, we think, okay, the way we're gonna get noticed is if we're agree, if we, if they give us a task and we execute on it as quickly as possible, you know, we have this mindset that it's really about delivery. And if I deliver well, like they'll notice and like I'll get promoted. And what I, and, and, and

Laura Cox Kaplan ([08:25](#)):

Maybe that whole, that whole idea of wanting to be liked, right? That, that almost genetic what feels like sometimes a genetic disposition for people to like us.

Reagan Cannon ([08:35](#)):

Absolutely. We are very focused as women on being liked when we really need to be focused on being respected. And, and while you like people you respect, they're not always congruent. And part of the way you build that respect is you bring your auth, your authentic and thoughts to the table, even when they're in disagreement, because women often have a different perspective and insight. We're always reticent to share it for a variety of reasons. And with our boss, if all we do is agree with our boss and all we do is say, oh, you're right, you're right. Right? And we never push back. We never bring strategic thoughts. We never sort of challenge the status quo. We're seen as tactical, not strategic, which is great, Laura, to get us to like a certain point in leadership, like entry level, maybe even mid-level. But you cannot break into the C-suite.

Reagan Cannon ([09:31](#)):

You can't break into VP plus level leadership. This executive level leadership, if all you do is regurgitate everyone else's thinking, or if you lean into this academic style of let me just share all the things I know and dump on you, so you think I'm really smart. You have to bring original thought to the table that you need that. And we think, no, no, no, Reagan, you don't know my boss. You don't know my boss. They want, they just want me to agree with them. But I would ask you, look at the men that are getting promoted around you. Um, some of them are yes men, but a lot of them are bringing thoughts and original thought to the table. And and I experienced this. I had hit a ceiling and I thought, oh my gosh, I'm gonna, I'm interviewing for this chief of staff job. It's this really aggressive leader. He's gonna want me just to say yes. Yes, yes, yes. And I was, I don't know if I was feeling annoyed or bold that day, but I finally just said, you know, I'm gonna share my point of view. I'm not gonna be a yes woman. I'm gonna push back on you. I'm gonna tell you what I really think. And he said, brilliant, that's what I need. And he promoted me twice in 18 months.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:42](#)):

Wow.

Reagan Cannon ([10:42](#)):

So there is, even the most aggressive leaders want you to have this collaborative, iterative thought partnership versus just doing what they say. And so I think that's the first mistake that women make in getting promoted.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:56](#)):

Yeah, I love that perspective. I'd love for you to dig a little deeper into that and also share some perspective on how to do that. Right? It's not just a matter of pushing back. There's a time and a place and a way to do it. Give us your thoughts and perspective on how do you learn how to push back in a way so that it will be received in the way that

you're talking about, in terms of building that relationship and building that capital, and frankly using my favorite word influence. Right? You're building influence in that process as well.

Reagan Cannon ([11:29](#)):

Yeah. So I think the first is, um, a friend of mine, uh, said this phrase, and I think it's it's brilliant, is take the mess out of the message <laugh>. So what happens is <laugh>

Laura Cox Kaplan ([11:42](#)):

Love that

Reagan Cannon ([11:43](#)):

We become personally invested in our point of view. And it becomes, it tips into emotional instead of data driven, right? And so that's okay to bring passion to the table, that's okay to bring a strong point of view. Those things are, are great. What happens is we often, um, we're so nervous about being rejected that sometimes we like double down and we bring, we don't bring the really logical, coherent data and thoughts to the table. And so that's the first step I'd say, is make sure you're not bringing mess with the message. Um, bring some real data driven points. Take the time, um, to go find the right data points to substantiate your point of view or compliment your strong gut feeling or opinion. I think that's first. The second is women, we feel oftentimes, I was coaching a woman recently and she said, Reagan, I, I wanna bring up a strong point of view, but I'm afraid that they're gonna come back at me with some questions and I won't be able to answer them.

Reagan Cannon ([12:52](#)):

And I said, okay. Um, or, you know, some points and I won't be able to refute them. And I think we feel a sense that we have to make statements when really the right way to push back is often to ask intelligent questions. Mm. And so rather than feeling like you have to show up and say the perfect thing or respond to the perfect thing, really focus in on listening and asking thoughtful questions. I, you know, when people are interviewing, they'll, they'll ask me for career advice and I I tell them, Hey, you know, pe I'm always impressed with people who ask great questions, not make great statements. And so show up and be prepared to ask questions. Bring that elephant out of, you know, that's sitting in the room, bring it out and talk about it, not as a statement, but as a question. And bring that inquiry up. And a lot of times I would, when I really ask the right question, I get told, that's a great point. I'm like, I didn't make a point. Ask the question. <laugh>.

Speaker 3 ([13:50](#)):

<laugh>.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([13:52](#)):

I like that.

Reagan Cannon ([13:54](#)):

A thoughtful, I was listening, I was in the room not thinking, oh my gosh, what are they thinking about me? But I'm thinking, what do I think about this? And really being present and mindful in the moment. Then I can ask a really thoughtful question and participate in a way that it does show how strategic my thinking is and can even mm-hmm. <affirmative> push back or bring a different perspective without it feeling aggressive and unnatural to me.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([14:18](#)):

Yeah. I love that. And I, there's so many dimensions to that that I think makes so much sense. One thing sort of pops into my head as I heard you talking about that is this, you know, we oftentimes hear women given the advice to just speak up more, right? To, to, to just jump in and weigh into conversations. And I'm always like, but, but wait, <laugh>, like, it really is important to have something to say and to have thought about and planned for that in advance. And what you're talking about really is that planning process, right? You're, you're planning for what you might say or the questions that you might ask and how those things might have the ability to move that conversation forward. Right?

Reagan Cannon ([14:56](#)):

Exactly. You don't always have to have a statement to your point, Laura, you can have a great question and that actually mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, you know, the neuroscience says, uh, Dr. David Rock put, put out a book called *Your Brain at Work*. And he talked about how the brain is always looking for status. The brain is always, it's like hunting aggressively for status. That's one of the five things the brain looks for. And so when you ask someone a question, one of the things you do is not only make a, you know, a great point of view or bring something thoughtful, you are telling that person, I value your point of view. I wanna hear from you. So you are raising their status. And so the neuroscience says, not only do questions, not only are questions a great way for you, uh, to ask something thoughtful to your, I love the words you said, advance the conversation. You are tapping into that status and that neuroscience that says the brain fires up and you actually make that person who's presenting feel more elevated because you are saying, I wanna learn from you. I wanna your insight through a question. So that's why questions are so powerful. They're, they're, they not only tap into, Hey, you learned something and you can make a great point of view, but you raised that person's status in the process.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:17](#)):

Yeah. I, I love that idea of status. I don't think I've ever heard it phrased quite that way. And I'm gonna check out this book, your Brain at Work. And who was the author again? Reagan?

Reagan Cannon ([16:26](#)):

Dr. David Rock.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:29](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Okay, we're gonna, we'll put that in the show notes as well. Um, let's talk through some of the other elements. You mentioned that there were several, um, that tend to, you know, either become roadblocks or we allow them to be roadblocks. Let's talk through a few others.

Reagan Cannon ([16:44](#)):

So the, one of the big ones is how we manage our peers. We often think about up, okay, there's my boss. We think, okay, I gotta lead my team. But our peers are very important in influencing our career, our success. And I think women tend to under index how to manage our peers. One of the biggest mistakes I found in my research is we worry a lot about looking competent in front of our peers. We're like, I call it a competence complex. We are obsessed mm-hmm. <affirmative> with making sure we know everything. I cannot tell you how many women, I have talked to <laugh> last week. I just talked to a brilliant woman and she said, well, in order to to go advance this nonprofit that I'm working on, I need to go get a master's degree in sort of social, uh, influence and issue.

Reagan Cannon ([17:36](#)):

I'm like, wait a minute. You're already running the nonprofit. Yes, <laugh>, you're having a lot of success. Yes, but I need a master's degree in order to have the credibility. I'm like, I'm fairly certain you are the only one raising your hand to invest this much time, energy, and personal effort into this topic. You're already the expert. Why would you need a master's degree? But we, I see you laughing cuz it's true, right? We feel like we totally have all the letters behind our name and all the things we over-index on competence. And so instead of relying on what we, on what we know, we need to learn, lean into our ability to learn. And we, uh, often undersell ourselves and we don't wanna ask our peers for help, cuz we don't wanna look stupid. We don't wanna bring something up in a meeting because we're afraid we don't know every single thing about it. So we can't, we're not competent or I I don't have as many years of experience. I, I'll interview men and women. Laura, I interviewed a man. He's like, I, I'll ask him, you know, how would you do this? Or what's your experience? They say, well, I don't have that experience, but I do have this experience. Women will say, yeah, I don't know anything about that. I probably wouldn't be the right person. It's like, they're so quick <laugh>,

Laura Cox Kaplan ([18:48](#)):

Right?

Reagan Cannon ([18:50](#)):

So I'm like, okay, I guess you're not the right person. I mean, you are the one who told me you're not the right person. Right? So I think we out of this, um, like a self-consciousness, we over index on competence. And what we really need to do is think about consultation. We need to think about how do I compliment the knowledge I already have my ability to learn and bring in when needed. I can pull in a subject matter expert and have them compliment what I already know. I don't actually have to know it all myself. And if we operate with a li less, um, insecurity about competence, um, we would have a lot more confidence in what we already know.

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

Yeah. Okay. That's so incredibly fascinating and I'm thinking about as you're talking about that, I was thinking about how it relates to this idea of perfection, right? And how perfection stops us from taking those risks and asking those questions and really leaning in from the standpoint of learning it truly holds us back. And that's kind of a dimension what you just described as a dimension of perfection, which was why I was laughing. And I wish that we had a live audience here where I could see a show of hands. I can almost guess right <laugh>, it certainly resonates with me and I think it probably resonates with a lot of people who are listening.

Reagan Cannon ([20:11](#)):

Absolutely. We do. We feel like if we don't know something, it's this devastation because we're supposed to be perfect. You know, men get promoted and they think finally they recognized how brilliant I am. Women get promoted <laugh>, right? They recognize my, it's amazing.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([20:30](#)):

<laugh>

Reagan Cannon ([20:30](#)):

Women get promoted and they think, well now I need to prove that I belong here. And we think, to your point, proving that I belong here means I know everything and I'm perfect and I never make mistakes and I never ask for help, because if I do, I'm gonna expose that I'm a fraud and I don't belong here. And that mental thrash and energy shows up in the way that we interact and build relationships with our peers. And what I thought was super interesting, when I was at Amazon, I was in a highly technical area of the business and my background is not naturally tech, um, you know, software development, data science, et cetera. And here I was leading a team of 150 people that

were product, uh, technical data science. And I remember, I, I looked to one of my peers who was the same level as me, and he had a deep domain expertise on software development.

Reagan Cannon ([21:23](#)):

And I thought, you know, this is a perfect way for me to compliment my knowledge. And so I started doing what anyone would do. I started bringing scotch to work and every Friday we'd meet, uh, for 30 minutes and we would just talk about topics over scotch. We called it Scotch 30, you know, not four 30, but Scott 30. So we'd meet on Friday and I would just ask him questions, you know, how should I set up my team and what are the challenges that, uh, people in the tech domain have? And what do I need to know about what the challenges are gonna be around product development? And I would just ask him questions. Now, I had no idea, Laura, that in the interview process, he had been on my interview panel and he had actually voted against me being hired. No kidding. He had, he did not think I would be a fit at the company.

Reagan Cannon ([22:12](#)):

He could tell I was bright, but he was a little bit nervous around my lack of knowledge in this area. I didn't know that. And in the interim, I started asking him for help. I started asking him questions. I started getting his point of view. And he later told me, you know, we became good friends. He later told me, you know, Reagan, you turned my entire perspective around about you. When I realized how hungry you were to learn how hard you were working to understand how the great questions you asked over our Scotch 30 conversations. I grew a tremendous amount of respect for you. And as a peer, I am, I am always energized working with you because I know that if you don't know the answer, you'll always ask a great question to learn. And he actually, you know, he said, you know that you know a lot about operations.

Reagan Cannon ([23:04](#)):

I don't, and I've never put in the level of effort and energy to learn operations like you are learning about tech and I have so much respect for you. And so Laura, it wasn't in my, I know everything that impressed him. It was my ability to bring to, to steward that conversation in a thoughtful way that demonstrated that I was confident enough in myself to ask the questions and fill in my knowledge. I like to think of knowledge. One of the frameworks I teach is this puzzle. We think as women, if we don't know something, it's like devastating. If there's a, if we're building a puzzle and a puzzle piece missing out of our puzzle, we're like, oh my gosh, everyone's gonna think I'm a fraud. They're gonna think I'm stupid and I don't know what I'm doing. But the truth is, like when I sit down with women and Laura and I ask them, let's treat it like a puzzle and a puzzle, the first thing you do is put the edge pieces around because you can tell it's an edge piece, right?

Reagan Cannon ([24:01](#)):

So you're like, okay, let's build the end. So start with what, you know, start with what you know, you probably know a lot more than you think you do. And then in a puzzle, you look for something like really distinct in the puzzle image, and you go find those colors and you fill in the next set of knowledge that you know. And then what you're left with is the parts of the puzzle that you're not quite sure how to put them together. And that's like, you know, the last pieces of the puzzle that if you do that work, instead of throwing up your hands and saying, oh, I really don't know, or I'm not the right person, or I'm not sure, stop and ask yourself, what do I actually know? And then, uh, fill in until you get all the way to the end. And what I find for most women is we know a lot more than we think we know. And then go get the strategic consultation to fill in the rest. And when we do that, we build really strong relationships with our peers, raise their status by making them a subject matter expert, invite them in. And we actually end up building more credibility than, than we detract when we do that.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([25:05](#)):

I love that. That's really, that's such great, great perspective. Okay. I'd love for you to talk a bit about your career trajectory. We sort of jumped right into the meat of the conversation and the tools. But I'd love for, to backtrack just a bit and have you talk a little bit about you, your career journey. You, uh, I mentioned in the intro, uh, you had a terrific career at both Amazon and at and t holding big jobs very early on in your career, but you left to do what you're doing now. Let's talk a little bit about that career pivot, why you wanted to pivot and what you're doing.

Reagan Cannon ([25:39](#)):

Yeah, so I spent over 20 years in corporate America, as you pointed out. I, you know, one of the things I talk about is I moved up very quickly when I first entered and then I got stuck for about eight years. I got stuck in this no man land where I could not move any further, any faster. I got stuck. But right before I could jump into senior leadership, which is why I'm so passionate about that topic, eventually I did, it required a move, it required me to operate differently and I was able to actually get promoted and move into senior leadership. So the last decade I was in corporate America, I was a, a se uh, an executive leading teams of five, 10,000 people, as you heard, very operational, very technical, and uh, always with a passion of developing leaders always. And so I even spent a stint in leadership development, both at at and t and I led all executive development for Amazon and really wow.

Reagan Cannon ([26:35](#)):

Got got to lead global coaching and development, which was a thrill for me. And what I learned along the way were these different mistakes I'd made that I learned, uh, from on how not to be a great leader, how to be a great leader, how to scale myself as a leader.

When you're leading large teams, you have to do things differently. When you start leading organizations, how you communicate, the time you spend on strategy, your foresight, a lot of the, uh, how you, what kind of leadership team you build and how you empower them differently because they're so senior underneath you now. All those things were lessons I learned on how to scale myself as a leader. And so what I did, Laura, is I'd always wanted to step out of a corporate at some point and be an executive coach and speaker. That was what I wanted to do.

Reagan Cannon ([27:31](#)):

So, uh, it just so happened just sort of like sometimes, you know, it took some planning and some luck and some circumstances. But last May was the right time for me to step out and do this full-time. I had been running alongside, as they say, the train of of entrepreneurship for a while. I had gotten my executive coaching certification, written a book, you know, done a lot of things while I was still working. But eventually it just came to the point where if this is what I wanna do full-time, I have to step out and do it full-time. And so I took that and what I call put on my left turn signal cut across traffic, you know, just and pulled into entrepreneurship cuz never that elegant to leave a, you know, 20 plus year career. But I was able to step out and now I've been doing this and helping leaders understand how can you unblock your leadership to achieve your full executive potential? What is it that is holding you back? Maybe you were a founder and now you're, you know, your business has grown. You don't know under understand how to change. You're a woman leader who's gotten to a point, now you're stuck and you keep getting told you're not ready. You know, it all these areas where I saw leaders getting stuck and they need to transform their leadership to unblock their executive potential. So that's really what I'm focused on now.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([28:50](#)):

Yeah, that's so exciting. I mean, what an amazing career trajectory and an opportunity to really take all of these things that you've learned and deploy them very differently. I'm curious, you mentioned that you, you know, you, you got the training. Were were you doing this work as a side hustle before you ultimately decided to pull the plug on your corporate career and launch off as an entrepreneur? Or how, how did you sort of navigate that particular element of your story?

Reagan Cannon ([29:16](#)):

Well, it's so interesting, right? I was leading a team of 10,000 people for Amazon. So you think, hey, what kinda, what kinda margin do you have around the edges for that? Right? It is, it is hard, right? Um, but you know, this is where, uh, it just worked out. I was, a friend of mine had said to me, let's go get our coaching certification together. And I thought, you've lost your mind. I'm leading the largest, most complex organization I ever had in my life. This was a December of 2019, but I had always wanted to do it. And this is, sometimes you just need those friends, Laura, that just look at you and go, you're

doing it. I'm sending you the link. Pay that put, put your credit card down and we're doing it together, and I will make sure I help you get through it.

Reagan Cannon ([29:58](#)):

I said, okay, girl, I'm gonna do it. And of course, the world shut down just three months later, um, in oh wow, early 2020 and I was enrolled in this virtual class to get, I had to do six months of training to get certified. And it worked out perfectly because I was actually at home getting, you know, going month, week to week, getting my certification. And what I needed to do is get a hundred hours of coaching in. So yes, I had to figure out a way, you know, I was like coaching on Sundays and I was working during the week, but I got so much energy from the relationships I had in my coaching practice that it actually, instead of it being an energy detractor, it actually was an energy giver for me. And that was a real clue for me that this was the right career move for me because speaking and coaching gives me so much energy that I recognized that this was something I could do alongside, uh, what I was, what I was wearing. Not in a large way, but in a, in small ways. I could be those building those building blocks for what was going to be my eventual career.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([31:10](#)):

Yeah. So interesting. I'm curious, given that y in your corporate roles, I imagine, well, I know you had autonomy because you were in very senior positions at the same time. It's a corporation. There's a lot of bells and whistles, a lot of, you know, benchmarks that you have to meet and a lot of, you know, internal management that happens there. It's very different when you launch something on your own and you're completely self-driven and it is an incredible gift, but it can be very difficult in learning how to manage yourself very differently than you probably did in your corporate world world. So share with us any perspective or lessons that you've learned in that pivot. You can, we can talk all day long about how great it is, and I'd be the first to say that is true. But I would also say there are some really significant challenges that go along with it too. So let's talk maybe about your perspective around that and anything that you've learned that you can share with my audience.

Reagan Cannon ([32:05](#)):

Absolutely. In fact, I just wrote, uh, an article that I'll be publishing on LinkedIn and other places that, that's called the eight Things I Learned About Entrepreneurship that I kind of wish I'd known before I quit My day job. That's the title, <laugh> title.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([32:22](#)):

Um,

Reagan Cannon ([32:23](#)):

And so this is hot off the press of things that I've been thinking about. And you know, one of the things I learned is don't underestimate the impact to your identity when you go from being a career, corporate, career woman to now being an entrepreneur. It is, you show up to, it's huge. I remember last summer I showed up to a party, you know, and they're like, so what do you do <laugh>? I was like, how do I describe what I do? I'm like, uh, help women leaders. And I was like, I don't even know what to say, right? Versus I'm an executive at Amazon. People are like, oh, executive at Amazon doesn't take a lot of explanation. All of a sudden, Laura, my identity was changed. And so I would just say, don't underestimate the impact to your identity. I think the other thing is people, when they think about entrepreneurship, a lot of times, and especially in the services industry, they think about what service they want to, oh, I love coaching, or I love consulting, or I love speaking, or I love leading workshops, or I love, you know, whatever it is.

Reagan Cannon (33:33):

And you think that is your business. That is half of your business. The other half is you building your value proposition marketing. What I tell people is, I know this sounds like unattractive, but you just became a salesperson. When you're an entrepreneur, you are a salesperson. You are selling what you can do, what problem you can solve, how you can help people. I think there's this, like, if you build it, they will come kind of mentality. That is not what I found. You have to be out there advocating for the, for what you can do, how you can help people. Now, if you come from a place of selfishness, um, how much revenue I'm gonna make, how many clicks I'm gonna have, how many podcast followers I'm gonna, you will fail you. What I have found is you have to be focused on what impact can you make in the lives of others.

Reagan Cannon (34:29):

That's what I, I ask, pray, think of to myself every day, what impact do I need to make today and what do I need to learn? And if you have that sort of mindset, you will be more successful because you're, you're, you'll be coming from a place of how do I help others? And, but you still have to get out there and market yourself. Bring awareness, talk to your network, you know, and if they really understand the value of what you're doing to help others, they will help you. But I think sometimes we think, well, I'm gonna be a coach. I'm just gonna show up and people are gonna sign up for my program. That's not how it works. I think that's a, that's a big learning. So ask yourself, do you wanna be a coach and a salesperson? Do you wanna be a consultant and a salesperson? Do you wanna be a speaker and a salesperson? Because you're really taking on that dual role. And it doesn't have to be slimy, you know, used car salesman kind of shooter, you know, oh, this is buy my snake oil. Like, it's not like that. You build relationships <laugh> and help people solve problems that, but you gotta put yourself out there. That's something just to be prepared for.

Laura Cox Kaplan (35:38):

I love what you just said, you are a thousand percent right it, and it is, it is really important that you make that mental shift, um, that is so important. I'd love for you to go back Reagan for a second and talk a little bit about the identity piece, which I think is such an important one to tackle, and that I really think we oftentimes just don't realize what a big thing that is. Um, you mentioned, you know, sort of how you define yourself, sort of how you, you, uh, re you know, you, you're telling a different story about who you are when someone at a cocktail party says, oh, hello, who are you? And what do you do? And what you said when you were in your corporate role versus what you say now and how it's just, it's a weird thing to get used to and figure out how to tell that story differently. But maybe if you could share any perspective and tools on how to tackle that identity piece, maybe some, you know, tactics that you found that work really well, both for yourself as well as your clients.

Reagan Cannon (36:40):

I think the biggest thing, and the way that you, the way that I have found to be most authentic is to talk about the problem that you help your clients solve. What is it that, what value are you contributing to that person and what it is that, what problem you loved, like you are obsessed with? Uh, you know, when I was first starting out, they said, you've gotta find a problem that you absolutely love and there's demand for. So you have to find that sweet spot. And that takes a lot of effort. Um, I had a strategist that helped me kind of guide through the ask me questions, you know, help me kind of peel back the layers. Who was it that I loved helping? And one of the things I did, just a real practical, um, tactic in order for me to find that.

Reagan Cannon (37:31):

It was interesting. I met with a coach who said, you know, Reagan, what I did is I put all my coaching clients on the left. I put all their attributes across the top, you know, were they man, woman, mid-career, senior career, were they employed, not employed, like, you know, just list all of them, right? And I, I had to get a hundred hours of coaching for my certification mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So I kind of had a little list of clients and I, so I went through that, Laura, and then he said, okay, now at the end, I want you to rate, were they high? Were they a great fit, an okay fit, or not a fit at all for you? And then he said, go back through the people who are good fits and ask yourself like, what? And look at their attributes. And what I found was that these, that the, you know, the coaching clients that I will best resonated were people who had hit a roadblock, expanding their leadership and needed to be unblocked, pulled out a career quicksand, pulled out of that quicksand and given the tools, practical tools, needed to rescale their leadership and achieve their executive potential.

Reagan Cannon (38:36):

And I thought, that's who is best. And so I had used a very practical framework to find that problem. And now when I meet people, I'm much more confident to say I'm an executive coach and speaker who help people recognize their full executive potential, right? And they, they, they're like, okay, I get it. And I say, I specialize in women and helping women advance in their career. And that is something that then they go, oh my gosh, I know someone who needs you, or I've heard, or I need you, or I know, like, lemme refer you or help you connect me. Right? And like how, uh, our mutual friend Sylvie said, you gotta meet Laura. She's got a whole podcast on helping women. You know, and so that's how it started, right? And so you do, you have to yeah. Um, use tools like that to flush out. I also say, what gives you what's a high energy, neutral energy and low energy? What's energy draining? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, sit down and write down in those three categories, what is it that gives you that energy? Because I think once you have a really clear point of view on the, on what gives you energy and what problem you solve, I think that's when you start to feel confident, Laura, around where is your business solving, how are you helping others? And it helps you really define yourself and your identity.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([40:01](#)):

Yeah. Oh, I love that so much. I have loved this conversation. There is so much great stuff packed in here. I know folks are gonna love hearing it. You can, I'm gonna include in the show notes a link where you can reach Reagan. Uh, you can invite her to speak to your group or reach out to her for coaching advice. Um, anyway, I am really, really happy to have you here and I'm so glad that Sylvia Laier connected us. Really great to meet you.

Reagan Cannon ([40:29](#)):

Thank you so much, Laura. Loved being here.

EPISODE CLOSE:

Laura Cox Kaplan ([40:34](#)):

Hey friend. I hope you enjoyed this conversation with Reagan Cannon as much as I did. Be sure to check out the show notes, which you will find via the link wherever you're listening, it's episode 248. There you will also find a full free transcript of this episode. I have also included links to a fabulous Ted Talk that Reagan delivered along with a link to her website and how you can connect with her. If you're looking for some coaching help or looking for a great public speaker, she would be fantastic. So be sure to check out those things as well. You know, of all the things that she talked about, I mean so much. In fact, everything that she said really resonated with me, the identity piece particularly. But one of the other things that I especially liked was when she talked about taking the mess out of the message as she was talking about building relationships. I really love

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that. But I'd love to hear what of all of her tips and perspective really resonated most with you. So be sure to let me know. You can send me an email at: info@shesaid.media, or you can contact me via the contact link, which you will find in the show notes, or you can reach me on social media. I am very active on Instagram. You'll find me at Laura Cox Kaplan or on LinkedIn again at Laura Cox Kaplan. Thanks, friend. You take care and I'll talk to you again real soon.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([41:59](#)):

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