

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 247:

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

Hey friend. Welcome to the podcast! With summer almost here, many of us are planning for some much needed time away from our regular work schedules, but have you ever found that sometimes when you're taking time off you don't return as recharged as you had hoped, or maybe you take a full-blown sabbatical only to find that you aren't feeling more rejuvenated at the end or that you didn't manage to tackle some of the goals that you hope to work on? Now that I'm engaged in my own version of an annual recharge, sometimes with mixed success, I have discovered a few tips for getting the most out of a recharge and I wanna share those with you today. For me, summer is typically my time to dial back on my day-to-day work, and that may be true for you too. And while I typically still work in the summer <laugh>, I do try to dial back and really change my schedule so that I'm focused on really boosting as much creativity as I can.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([02:30](#)):

So I'm going to boil this list down to my top tips that have made the biggest difference for me and that hopefully will be helpful to you too once you have a chance to listen. I would love to hear your thoughts on other ways that you get the most out of a recharge. Time away can and is a critical part of building influence -- a topic that we talk about on

She Said/ She Said Podcast every week. The reason is that a recharge allows you to unplug a bit more and to reflect on those goals and priorities or maybe challenges that you're sorting through, but that you need some additional time and really space to get your creative juices flowing to really open up your your mind and important, and I believe critical element of influence is making investments in ourselves. Those investments are what enable us to bring our own dreams to life and to contribute to others in ways that can actually have an even greater impact.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([03:44](#)):

So with that, here are my top tips for making your recharge or sabbatical or even just a short break, more valuable.

TIP ONE: My first tip is to be intentional. It's important to have an overarching plan for what you hope to have accomplished by the end of your time away, and it's important to put in place some very specific goals for each day or week or maybe every other day to help yourself stay on track and to act, actually make progress toward your goals. Now to be clear, you do not need to plan every second or every day. In fact, you absolutely should not do that, but what I would recommend is actually setting some clear objectives, including making time to reflect on specific challenges or maybe opportunities that you're already grappling with. A recharge can be the perfect time to do that and to work through some of those things.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([04:51](#)):

It can be a time when your brain isn't as occupied with your day-to-day work responsibilities and with other priorities. Hopefully you're not balancing work and school drop-offs and kids sports and social engagements and doctor's appointments and on and on and on and on, and you actually have the time and space to think. While it's really important to not be too rigid with scheduling this important time and space, it's also important to not leave your precious recharge time to chance because when we aren't intentional, the time can literally slip away from us without our really realizing it and then we'll have very little to show for it. The alternative is to carve out windows of time to proactively think or mold particular topics or challenges. You are much more likely to make progress on those things when you do that, and you will likely find that the dedicated time will actually help clarify your thinking.

Laura Cox Kaplan (05:59):

TIP TWO: My next tip is more of a reminder <laugh>, and it's this. A recharge is not the same thing as a family vacation. As any working mom will no doubt attest, vacations and family trips are two very different things, especially when kids are really, really young. Family trips are great and they are incredibly important, but they typically don't offer the ability to really focus on personal and professional development goals, and that is probably an understatement. If you're listening and you have really small children, A recharge, on the other hand, at least the type that I'm talking about, is time set aside with intention to focus on personal and professional development goals. It's an opportunity to really use your brain differently to maybe read a bit more potentially and actually think and reflect on what you've read. Maybe it's an opportunity to write more or to pursue or engage more fully in a creative hobby or a hobby that you'd like to try.

Laura Cox Kaplan (07:06):

It can be anything you choose that helps you invest time in something that takes you away from the day-to-day with the intention of boosting your creativity and helping unlock potential problem solving skills. Now, with regard to family trips, if that is your only option, and for many people, that will be the case, if you can find a way to carve out time for reflection, you might be able to accomplish the same thing or at least a version of this, especially if it's the only opportunity that you have because that's better than nothing. What I like to do on family trips is to get up a little earlier than everyone else and actually spend the first hour or maybe even the first two hours of the morning alone riding and thinking or maybe walking on the beach. I tend to feel more recharged at the end of the trip when I do this.

Laura Cox Kaplan (08:04):

This is not the same thing as a full recharge and fully unplugging, but those little windows can be really helpful until you can carve out more time for a more complete recharge and really an opportunity to do a deep dive creatively.

TIP THREE: My third tip, and I think this is probably the most difficult and it is to set some boundaries. If you aren't taking a recharge in tandem with other people in your family, like your spouse or your partner, you might want to consider referring to this time as work. Now, it's true, it should not be the same type of work or schedule that you keep when you are actually working, but it's important to set clear boundaries for others so that you don't become someone's default errand runner just because you're taking a recharge. By setting intentions and making plans that becomes a bit easier to manage.

your time away should not be the same as you just making yourself available to everyone else unless that really helps you boost your creativity.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([09:16](#)):

My guess is it will not. I've learned this lesson the hard way and I find that I have to make more plans than maybe I might really like to do in order to circumvent this tendency. Another idea for making this work is to help other family members to create their own recharge priorities and to actually set some goals together. Now, I'll be honest, I've not had great success with this yet, at least not with everyone in my family, but I do think it's possible to create some shared goals as part of a family recharge. I'm actually gonna give this a bit more thought and I'll circle back to you on this idea. Now, my fourth tip relates to guilt, and this may or may not apply to you, but if you are somebody who tends to deal with some mom guilt and frankly who doesn't, just know that the mom guilt doesn't necessarily go on sabbatical just because you do <laugh>.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:17](#)):

TIP FOUR: So my fourth recommendation is to recognize that if you are prone to guilt, just know that it will likely join you for the ride, but that's okay when you experience it, it's important to remind yourself that a recharge again is about investing in yourself to help make you better at all those things that you do the rest of the time. Taking a short break away from those obligations or at least pulling back from them somewhat is a great way to improve your performance, to give yourself clarity, to boost your creativity, and to give you more fuel to really tackle the tough stuff. You will inevitably be better at all of your jobs, including being a mom after you've scheduled this time for yourself. Now, another topic that's important to think about. If you do take a full-blown recharge and you do manage to pull yourself away from work for several weeks, self-doubt can sometimes creep in, especially if you go from 90 miles an hour to 30 miles an hour overnight, you might feel like maybe you're not needed when you see that the team is able to function just fine without you or that the rest of the world marches on even though you're taking a break.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([11:40](#)):

Now, on the one hand, that should be a great comfort, right? But on the other hand, you might find yourself wondering, what if they can actually do it better without me <laugh>? Yikes. Now, obviously that is not the case, but it's important to have thought about this in advance, especially if these are feelings that you might relate to or experience already, these feelings can easily creep in. So if you know that about yourself,

you can also do a couple things to prepare for it in advance. Here's what I recommend. Build in a short wind down period. As you head into your recharge, as you begin to ease off the gas pedal, just slow the cadence and start to build in more and more time for your new goals while dialing back on the day-to-day work. Now, of course, this may depend upon the line of work that you're in and maybe clients that you're serving, but try to find ways of actually easing into the transition.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([12:43](#)):

Then when you're ready to reemerge at the end of your recharge, embrace that same strategy rather than diving back in full speed, ease back in and have a transition period, set some goals for your transition while maintaining that reduced schedule. Now, the reason why this matters is because while change is constant, we are actually not wired for it. In fact, so much of our neurology actually rejects change. This, of course, can vary from person to person, but when you intentionally inflict more change on yourself than you need to, it can simply create more stress. At least in some of us. In my mind, that can defeat the purpose of a recharge altogether, whereas a more gradual ramp down and then ramp back up can be less jarring. You will have to decide which way of heading into and out of a recharge works best for you.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([13:42](#)):

But those are a couple of tips that I find work well.

TIP FIVE: Now, my next tip relates to reflection. However you plan to spend your recharge or your break, be sure to spend some time reflecting on the experience. If you are inclined to write regularly in a journal, maybe build in some additional time for this. It will help you capture those feelings that will bubble to the surface and all those new ideas that you're having as you step away from the day-to-day. You also don't want to lose those amazing ideas that ultimately will emerge those lightning bolts of inspiration, if you will. This can be great stuff to use once you go back to work, and I do find that it bubbles to the surface even more easily when you do take a step back. It's one of the reasons why I'm such a big proponent of stepping away for these longer breaks whenever it's possible.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([14:42](#)):

TIP SIX: One more tip that I think is important, but it is kind of a cautionary note and it relates to missed expectations. Even if your recharge falls short of your plans and frankly, mine did this past year, that's okay. The more important thing is reframing the

experience around what you did learn and how you'll use that knowledge going forward. Just because we make plans doesn't mean that everything will magically fall into place. Life happens always, but when we can reframe those experiences in ways that actually help us grow and learn, then that's a good thing, and by missing out on much of my recharge last year makes it even more meaningful to me this year, and I'll likely be even more disciplined about setting some specific goals for what I want to accomplish. One of the goals for me this year will be reconnecting and spending time with those people who leave me recharged.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([15:44](#)):

Life is busy and often we have so many competing demands and priorities that it can be difficult to make time for those who leave us feeling really buoyed and energized and a recharge can be a great time to build in that additional time for these relationships when you can really spend some meaningful time together. But again, we have to be intentional and actually schedule that time. So that's one of the things that I'm building into my recharge along with a number of other goals. Now, to wrap up this topic, I want to circle back to the topic of influence. Stepping away from your regular work and routine allows you to reflect on your accomplishments, your challenges, and your personal growth, and through this reflection, you can gain a deeper understanding of your strengths, your weaknesses, your values, and your aspirations. This heightened self-awareness can actually enable you to communicate your goals and values more effectively, which in turn can enhance your influence and friend.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:51](#)):

If you're feeling a bit stuck and you're grappling with a career or life pivot, this can be one of the best ways to gain some added clarity. But my strong recommendation would be to set some intentions and some specific goals for this time so that you actually are able to gain that clarity. Friend, as you think about any future plans for a recharge or sabbatical. As we launch into the summer, let me know if you use any of the suggestions that I've shared today, or alternatively, I would love to hear other tips and tools that you have found helpful to help you maximize your recharge time. I'd love to hear and I would love to share your perspective with others. Most of all, I am delighted that you're here with me today, and I hope you found today's episode, episode 247, a good investment in you. I'll talk to you again next week. In the meantime, you take care. She Said/ She Said Podcast is a weekly production of She Said/She Said Media.