

SHOW OPEN:

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

This is She Said/She Said Podcast , a top rated career and personal development podcast and media platform for women. I'm Laura Cox Kaplan, your host and the founder of She Said, she said, media. Each week we tackle valuable career topics, including things like how to navigate change and how to build the influence that you need to make your career and life pivots more seamless and so much more change is the only thing that we can absolutely expect in our lives and careers. And even though we know it's coming, it's often the thing that we are least prepared to deal with. It can be uncomfortable, and of course it can be scary whether you're at midlife and you're launching kids into the world, or maybe you've outgrown your current position or you have a dynamic business idea that you wanna try, or maybe you're headed back to work after a maternity leave or transitioning into that first job.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:12](#)):

This podcast focuses squarely on helping you to think through and navigate all of those important pivots, both the ones you know about and you plan for, as well as those pivots that surprise you. Most of all, I hope to meet you right where you are and with amazing guests who share great advice and perspective, not to mention a healthy dose of inspiration, because I wanna help you create and foster the impact that you hope to have in the world. Hit the subscribe or follow button from wherever you're listening and join us. I am really delighted to have you here.

EPISODE 266

Laura Cox Kaplan:

Hey, friend. Welcome to She Said/She Said Podcast , a top rated career and personal development podcast for women. I am delighted to have you here because this week I am launching our new Bulletproof Your Career series. This is the first in a series of many episodes that will be kind of bite-sized, maybe 15 minutes or so in length with perspective and action items on what you can do to make your career more bulletproof.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([02:23](#)):

Because let's face it, change happens. It is one of the only things that you can absolutely take to the bank. So knowing that and thinking about it strategically means that your best defense may also be your best offense, and that is the primary goal of this series, to help you be as prepared as possible as you evolve and as the different dimensions of your life evolve as well. But that means actually helping you make some important investments in your future, and that is why we're here. So a question for you friend as we get started. How many times have you said to yourself, I have so much experience, but I have no idea how to take that experience and deploy it into something else? Or maybe something entirely new. Maybe you are sitting in your career and you've been

doing the same thing for maybe a couple of decades and you don't feel challenged in the same way that you used to.

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

Or maybe you took a break and you're eager to get back into your career, but what you were doing before is a lot less appealing to you now than it was then. So what should you do? Okay, so that's what we're gonna tackle today, and one of the most important first steps when attempting to bulletproof your career or to create your next career is to really start with where you are today. And to do this well, honestly, can take some time, and it can mean a real investment in yourself, but what it doesn't have to be is too complicated. This really, we don't need to make this a complicated exercise. Here is what I recommend that you do to start, create a spreadsheet or a Google document and include on that document all of the things that you know how to do, all of the things that you have done and all of the unique experiences that you've had.

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

Now to be clear, this is not a list of three or four things, but rather a much more inclusive and a much more exhaustive list of as many experiences as you can remember. Now, I like to create actually a separate folder in Google where I can also capture a lot of supporting evidence as well and have it all in one place. Because your spreadsheet or your Word document, your Google document can get a little bit messy. I'm okay with a little bit messy. That's part of my process. So if that speaks to you, it will work. You may wanna come up with some other format, but the bottom line is, and most importantly, capture all of those things as you start this exercise, my strong advice is to not get too hung up on exactly what you say on that spreadsheet, but instead just make sure that you're capturing all of those experiences that you've had and as a second step that you're then going back potentially and jotting down a few notes about what you learned during that experience.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:45](#)):

Provide some color commentary. Don't just write down what you did, but also try to include how you felt about it and why. Maybe ask yourself as you're going this, was it a positive experience or a negative experience? What did you like? What did you not like? What did you wish had been different in some way? Again, the goal here is to really capture everything that you've done in order to help you look for some useful threads for building something new as well as sparking ideas that maybe have been dormant. Maybe there's something that you did some job that you had or an experience that you had early on in your career that really lit you up but you forgotten about it or you forgot how much it meant to you at the time. Again, this doesn't have to be pretty, it can be if you'd like for it to be.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([06:41](#)):

Mine generally isn't. Just capture the essence of each of these ideas in one place so that you can then work with the data. Now, a lot of coaches and authors will give you other tidier ways to do this, but I honestly think that the most important thing is just make that list. That is the most important part. Another tip that I think is especially helpful here, since it can often be difficult to actually remember all the things that you've done, especially if you're going back a bit, maybe a couple of decades or so, make sure that you also pull out your old calendars, maybe your old journals, maybe even past employee evaluations that you've received to give you some additional material to work with. What you're looking for are things that you've done well, areas where you've really excelled, things that you loved, experiences that you've had, and again, be really inclusive with this.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([07:39](#)):

Don't forget too, to include any nonprofit or volunteer work that you've done, and if you've been a stay-at-home mom for the past few years, don't forget to include all those things that you've learned how to manage and juggle, and that might also include managing all of that under some type budgetary constraints, potentially maybe efforts that you engaged in to help your money go further, especially if you weren't in a dual income household. For example, you might also wanna pull out your Add a Girl file if you have one, and if you don't know what I'm talking about, you can go back and listen to episode 184 from the archives where I talk a little bit about that in the context of helping you tackle self-doubt and really boosting your confidence. But your at girl file is essentially that file of notes and letters and things that you've done well, areas where you get a pat on the back, you pull that out when you need a confidence boost and you review it, this is a great time to include that data as well.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([08:47](#)):

So take a step back from all of this and reflect on this big list that you've created, all the experiences that you've had where you were recognized for your effort and you made a difference to others and they told you so, and include all of that on this list. Next, let it all sit and then go back to it and start to review it again with fresh eyes. And as you go back through this material, start to look for narratives that help you see your experiences a little bit differently. One of the initial goals here is to really look for an overarching purpose that will begin to reveal itself to you. And that sounds a little woowoo. It isn't, honestly, once you've put these things together, you begin to see a thread. Will every single experience that you've had fit into that? Probably not, but many of them will.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([09:45](#)):

And it may tell you a story that you might have been overlooking or maybe we're just too close to it to see. Now, a couple of other things you might ask yourself, why start with purpose? Why is that the most important thing? And the reason is because purpose is really that secret sauce that can help you stay centered and focused, and as we evolve in

our lives, it can sometimes be challenging to stay focused on that overarching set of values that can be especially important as we're navigating change, and in particular as we're thinking about a career shift or maybe a job shift or some big pivot in our lives. Now, one other thing, as you review this list, you might also wanna ask yourself a few key questions that can help you go a bit deeper. Now, I have to thank Michelle Gibbings who is a workplace expert and author who actually has written extensively on how to create a career that you won't hate.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([10:49](#)):

And I have pulled a version of some questions that she created in order to share them with you because I think they're really good. The first is, what has mattered to you and what matters to you most? Number two, what and who has or have inspired or inspires you? When have you been the most motivated and why? And number four, what difference have you made and do you still wanna make through your work? And number five, when have you been the most proud of who you are as a person? These are some really great level setting questions to reflect on and ask yourself, as you're going back through this list, you may wanna add a few additional questions to your list, and I would love to hear examples of the things that you come up with as well. Ultimately, this exercise will give you a map of sorts, and that map can then help guide toward or maybe away from potential opportunities, and most importantly, can help you see potential connections that you might otherwise have missed.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([12:04](#)):

I'm gonna talk more about what to do when you see what I like to refer to as "opportunity holes." We're going to talk about that in a future episode, but for now, since I promised to keep this episode brief, a couple of other points to note about the exercise. First and foremost, it's designed to get you out of your head and out of your day-to-day, and it's also designed to help you increase what's called cognitive flexibility. That is essentially your capacity to see potential opportunities that maybe have been right in front of you, but that you might have had trouble seeing because you're just too close to them, and it's hard to do without an exercise like this. By using your own experiences to spark your creativity, you can expand the way that you've been looking at and thinking about your career or your role.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([13:00](#)):

This exercise really is an exercise in creativity and in using your career experiences to spark additional inspiration. And that is a really cool thing. It is highly likely that as you go through this exercise, that you will begin to see a number of ways that you can do more of something or something different, both inside your organization or maybe outside of your current position or role. But remember, this is just a starting point. If it looks like nothing more than just a list of stuff with no rhyme or reason, I promise you don't despair. Just put it aside for a minute and then go back to it. It will ultimately begin to make more sense and to show you some clear threads and opportunities as you

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Episode 266

Title: Want to bulletproof your career? Start by digging into your purpose!

begin to reflect on it. At least that's how it works for me, and it has worked for many people that I've recommended it to, and in many respects, an exercise just like this is what ultimately led me to podcasting, along with podcast, some helpful prodding from a friend. Okay, friend. I would love to know what happens when you try this exercise for yourself. So once you've had a chance to do so, and to begin to dig a bit more deeply into your experiences and your purpose, be sure to send me a message. Tell me a bit about what happened, tell me a bit about your journey. I would love to hear until next week, friend, you take care and I'll talk to you again real soon. And remember she said, she said, podcast is produced weekly by she said, she said Media.

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