

She Said/She Said Podcast With Laura Cox Kaplan
Episode 272: Creating jobs and impact through tradition and influence
Guest: Kate Stewart, Creator/Ceo, Bauble Stockings

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

Hey friend, welcome to She Said. She Said Podcast, a top rated global career and personal development podcast with a unique focus on helping you create more influence in your life. My name is Laura Cox Kaplan. I've spent my entire career thinking about influence and I've seen firsthand the impact that effectively mastering and really using influence can have. I created this podcast to help us dig deeper into the different dimensions that help us build and sustain influence. And each week I'm drawing on this incredible community of women to help us do just that. It's important to remember though, that creating more influence for yourself is actually a skill. It requires investments of time and energy, including listening to podcasts like this one, but those efforts can pay big dividends toward successful outcomes. Whether you are navigating a career or life pivot, maybe starting a business or raising money for a special cause, or running your household or just trying to connect with folks who don't share your views, understanding and using the different dimensions of influence will not only increase your chances of success, but will leave you happier and more fulfilled and better positioned to have the impact that you hope to have.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:38](#)):

I am really delighted to have you here and I look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback and how you think about influence in your life.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([01:50](#)):

Hey, friend, welcome to episode 272. With Thanksgiving just next week, I'll bet that you are starting to think about the holidays and your holidays shopping and you're starting to make lists and hopefully get organized. I hope that you caught last week's episode with master organizer Carrie Peoples who joined me in episode 271. She shared incredible tips for getting your pantry and your closets organized in particular. And the reason of course that that matters so much, really anytime, but especially at the holidays, is that it helps you clear the headspace so that you can really focus on celebrating and spending time with the people who are important to you. So if you missed Carrie, go back and check that out because she is really fantastic. But I also wanted to create, and I'm in the process of creating a series of episodes that are focused on the holidays, but that are still obviously career and personal development oriented and that also dive into this of influence.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([03:01](#)):

And so I wanted to kick that off today with one of several amazing female entrepreneurs who have created social impact companies. Now, those are companies that are for-profit, but that are also really focused on giving back and creating economic opportunity, especially for women. Now friend, you have endless choices in where you spend your hard earned dollars, and that's true at the holiday time. It's true of any time, and that's why I oftentimes like to share either

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here or on Instagram, some of those companies and founders who I think are doing a wonderful job of using their influence and their talents to build a better world and to give back in ways that make a real difference, including, as I said, creating economic opportunity for others. So one great example and the entrepreneur who is helping me kick off our season of giving is the incredibly delightful and thoughtful and spirited and talented and inspiring just all the adjectives.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([04:08](#)):

Kate Stewart. Kate is the CEO of Atlanta-based Bauble Stockings. Now, Bauble Stockings is an heirloom quality needlepoint stocking company that was inspired by a really unique tradition in Kate's family. I'm going to let her explain more about Bauble Stockings, what they are and how the company came to be, how the tradition came to be. But suffice it to say, I think Bauble Stockings and that lovely tradition that goes with them are something that you should consider for your holidays. This year, I purchased a set of Kate's Hanukkah themed stockings this year, and they are absolutely gorgeous. You'll find a link in the show notes for this episode, episode 272 where you can learn a bit more about Bob stockings and you can purchase your own Bauble Stockings. And as a special gift to you, Kate will give you free shipping on your order if you use the promo code Laura, L-A-U-R-A, but friend, be sure to hurry because that generous offer from Kate is only available until November 30th, but you would want to hurry anyway because bubble stockings are incredibly popular and often sell out.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([05:22](#)):

So you'll want to get cracking on that right after this episode. Now in my conversation with Kate, we talk about how and why she built her company and she shares some really great advice for other entrepreneurs, including some great advice that she learned watching her dad. I especially love the fact that Kate touches on several of the most powerful aspects needed to build influence. We talk about connection and community and investing in others just to name a few. Kate and I also talk about using influence, create the good that we hope to see in the world. Trust me, friend, there is lots to love about Kate and her wonderful company Bubble Stockings. I think it is the perfect episode to help us kick off this holiday series. So here is episode 272 with Kate Stewart. Kate, welcome to She Said, she Said

Kate Stewart ([06:21](#)):

Hi. Thank you so much for having me.

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

Well, I am really thrilled to have you. I've been looking so forward to our conversation and really sharing you and Bauble Stockings with this audience. So let's start there. Let's talk about what are Bauble Stockings? What is this company that you've created?

Kate Stewart ([06:40](#)):

Bauble Stockings are based on my family's Christmas tradition where after all your presents have been open, you go to the tree, you get your bobble stocking down, and the final gift of Christmas or a clue to it is in the stockings. So little ornament size stockings about the size of your hand. And the idea is that the last gift that each person opens is the most thoughtful gift. It's the little gift that leaves them feeling warm and fuzzy and thought of, and their keepsake ornaments, their heirloom needle point, hand stitched stockings. So I want people to grow up with them and keep them forever.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([07:14](#)):

Yeah, they are absolutely gorgeous. But Kate, how did the idea, how did you get from idea and this amazing family tradition to actually turning it into a business?

Kate Stewart ([07:26](#)):

Well, it all started when I realized that not every family had a bobble stocking. I got engaged to my husband around Christmas time. He actually proposed to me with an engraved ornament that said, will you marry me, Kate? So Christmas is a big theme in my life, and shortly after that I asked him, well, when do I get my bobble stocking? He said, what? And I said, the good presents. And he was like, what are you talking about? And I was like, every year growing up, my dad and my two big brothers, and I would go shopping for a special gift just for my mom to say thank you for all she had done. And we hid the gift or a clue to it in this little stocking that hung on her tree. And my dad called it her bobble stocking because on a good year it was a bobble, which is a piece of jewelry, B-A-U-B-L-E.

Kate Stewart ([08:12](#)):

I feel like I spell that a lot for folks. And when I realized that not everyone had this, because I asked all my friends, you know how your mom got the last gift? I thought, oh, that's an idea. And then when we launched the company, we realized that people wanted to do it with everyone, not just their moms. So it expanded. It took me, I think my first email about it. I started reaching out in 2015 and we launched in 2018. So it was a long, long winding road to take an idea. I got engaged in 2010. So it was not a short path to launch the company.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([08:53](#)):

Yeah, maybe talk us some of those initial steps and what you were doing at the time. Were you working at the time?

Kate Stewart ([09:00](#)):

Yes. I actually worked the first two years of Bauble Stockings. I had a full-time job. So when I launched Bauble Stockings, when I first emailed a somebody about making Bauble Stockings, I

knew that I wanted them to be needle point because my mom's was needle point. My mom's a big needle pointer. Really? Peter, my husband, when I got home, I was working as my dad's secretary. His secretary had fallen in love with a guy she met online and she was moving to Colorado and her finding the love of her life was my win. I needed a job and my dad was like, you don't steal, you come work for me. The bar was high, I'm very honest. So I was working there, but I was going, well, what am I going to do next? And I was about to start my family and my husband said, what about that Bob stocking idea?

Kate Stewart ([09:55](#)):

You always said if you start a company, it would be Bauble Stockings. So I was on a family beach trip with Peter's whole 23% extended family in Delaware, and I guess I needed some alone. Sometimes I just disappear sometimes just because I need space to think. And during that trip, I started emailing people who looked like they manufactured needlepoint, and I said, hi, my name's Kate. Can you do this? I put out an RFP request for proposals on Alibaba, which is kind of like the Asian, I should say. People always say China, but it's everywhere. It's India, China and Thailand, Vietnam. If you want something made, you can put a request for proposals on that website for free, and then people write you and say, I can do it, send me samples, all of that kind of stuff. So I started emailing with them and then three years later we had a product to launch.

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

Amazing. Amazing. Okay. You have built into this company though a real social impact investment strategy. If you will maybe talk us through sort of why and how and the particular targets that you have chosen, sort of talk me through what that looks like because it's such an important part of your story. We're going to be posting this conversation leading up to the holidays, right? We're talking about bubble stockings, which are associated with Hanukkah and Christmas, primarily mine or Hanukkah stockings. A lot of people will have Christmas stockings, but leading up to this season of giving, this is a really important thread in your story, so I want you to make sure and talk about that.

Kate Stewart ([11:35](#)):

It's a very important thread, but it's also an interesting one in terms of we have a lot of points to wanting to be a socially minded good for the world company. And that's a lot of my doing. It started out with getting them made. So they are hand-stitched needle point, and I knew I wanted them to be hand-stitched needle point from the very beginning, what my mom's was. And it turns out there are only about six or seven manufacturers of needle point in the world. I did not know that. Starting out, wait, you said

Laura Cox Kaplan ([12:09](#)):

Six? Six or seven or 67.

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Kate Stewart ([12:11](#)):

Six or seven. Six or

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

Seven,

Kate Stewart ([12:13](#)):

Two hands worth maybe. Wow. And that's me giving, I think number six and seven to me are my guessing. There's people I haven't found yet that do it, but wanting it to be a handit product. I talk to people. Like I said, I was talking to people for about three years and I finally found a team, or the team, actually this team in China found me and they said, we found this of yours, and we were wondering, can we try this? So I sent them. They wanted me to send my mom's stocking to them, and I was like, absolutely not. I was like, I can send you pictures. So I mean, it was pretty difficult to be like, you're going to guess at how this is made by pictures. I remember putting quarters next to it so they could guess the size of it, which I don't know if that's really helpful to send to a country that has a different currency than us.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([13:05](#)):

All the things you learn,

Kate Stewart ([13:07](#)):

I have fixtures. So I emailed back and forth with them and finally before, I think I'd spent a thousand dollars on samples or something very low before I said, okay, I'm going to jump on a plane. I'm going to come over there. And they were very surprised. I don't think they thought I was actually going to come, but I feel very strongly about meeting your makers. I have to sometimes watch my tongue about it because I know a lot of my friends have never met the people who make their things, and that's totally their choice and everybody does business differently. But for me, I was not going to meet them. That was out of the question. And I was going to meet them very fast for me. At the time I was okay. My children were born in September of 2015, so I was pregnant when I sent that first email with my first kid, and then September of 2017. So when I flew to China, I was 12 weeks pregnant with Calder, and we left our toddler with my parents. And when I got there, I realized it wasn't a great fit. I wasn't able to meet the Stitchers, and that for me was like, I can't do it. And so I left there knowing I had to find another manufacturer, which had already taken me three years to find this manufacturer.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([14:27](#)):

Kate, can I pause you for a second? Yes. So why was it so important for you to meet the Stitchers?

Kate Stewart ([14:33](#)):

Well, my product is a hundred percent hand stitched. The needlepoint community in America is amazing. There's only 200 needle point stores in America, which I think a lot of people don't realize how rare needle point is for a hobby that's enjoyed by so many people. And I studied abroad in college in Switzerland. When I graduated college, I took six months and I backpacked around the world by myself visiting 23 countries from New Zealand up through Japan and China and down to Egypt. I went through Egypt by myself as a 22 year old. So for me, I've met so many different people in my life and I've heard about different situations and all that kind of stuff to where I don't know, I knew that it was important to my story. For me personally, honestly, with all the needle point companies that are out there, I think it's amazing how few people post pictures of their stitchers because it's a handmade product.

Kate Stewart ([15:35](#)):

I think it's such a selling point on the fact that we are able to pay really good wages for the product because it, it's such an heirloom. It's such a very well-made product. So that's one line of it. So I left China, I spent another almost year, I'm trying to think of when that was. Yeah, another year. It took me one year almost to the day to find the team in Haiti. So I was talking to people all over the country. I had 50 different groups I was talking to. I'd gone to the Fairtrade website and downloaded an Excel sheet that is basically in code. It's like we do hand work. Well, does hand work include needlepoint? Well, no, but if you come here and teach us, we'll do it. We need the jobs. And there's nothing more stressful than that going, I can't jump on a plane and then take a bus. And I mean, a lot of these people were not an easy trip away. And I at that point, had a toddler and I was either very pregnant or holding a newborn. And I think that's also funny about small businesses is when you talk to women starting them, they're like, I had a baby and I thought I should start a company.

Kate Stewart ([16:43](#)):

It's a genius idea. I also had a full-time job that had no maternity leave. I took my babies with me to work. I mean, grandpa was there, but I had a pack and play in the copy room.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([16:54](#)):

Amazing.

Kate Stewart ([16:54](#)):

So we were just working, working. I love work. I'm not the smartest person in the room, but man, I will go shoulder to shoulder with anyone on, let's get the job done and do it right. So that was the first thread of it. Now the second thread of our give back and how we've always given to charities now, we just had our fifth anniversary and we've now given over a hundred thousand dollars to charities across the

Laura Cox Kaplan ([17:22](#)):

Globe. That's amazing, Kate. Yeah. And how do you decide, I mean, I know in this season because of the absolutely horrible events that have taken place in Israel that you are giving back a percentage of your Bauble Stockings that are your Hanukkah themed Bauble Stockings. But talk about maybe the process that you go through for selecting your

Kate Stewart ([17:47](#)):

Charities. Yes. Well, originally I knew I was always going to give back to charity because of two conversations. I spoke with my dad, who is a successful businessman, and I spoke to Peter's dad, who is also a successful businessman. Both of them are entrepreneurs. Peter's my husband. And so I spoke to both of them and both of them off the cuff had said they, they'd given back more over the years. But Bill said different things came up. And them being entrepreneurs, at least me growing up with my dad as an entrepreneur, sometimes we had money and sometimes we didn't.

Kate Stewart ([18:22](#)):

I was very used to the ebbs and flows of cash. So it kind of stuck in my head though these two separate conversations in the same week with them. So I just said, okay, from the very beginning, I am going to insert that I will give a percentage of my profits to charity. And that's always been an interesting point, regardless of semantics, how people use their wording. I always say of profits, I don't want to promise something that I can't give, that a bill comes. I mean, everyone knows right now the price of things has just gone through the roof. The cost to make something. Especially, I mean, this year, David, my partner in Haiti said, Kate, I want to give all the stitchers a raise. Well, to give all the stitchers a raise, that means my price goes up. And at first I was like, David, I can't handle this.

Kate Stewart ([19:15](#)):

And then I came back, I had to calm down a little bit and be like, okay, I can do this. But I would rather the payment go to the team in Haiti, right? They should get paid more per piece. I love that. David was like, I'm going to raise everybody's wages. But that cuts down on the percentage of profit on this end of things. So I've always said of profits and people sometimes ask about it, and I'm just like, it makes the most sense that what I'm giving back is always a piece of what should come into my pocket and I want to give it out of my pocket. You know what I mean? I gotcha. I don't want to give it from my Stitcher pocket because that just, anyway, that makes the most sense to me. So always said, I'm going to give a percentage of my profits to charity.

Kate Stewart ([20:01](#)):

Now, the percentage has gone significantly up since those first days because of our guest artist program. So our guest artist program has just been a huge success. So what happens is I

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approach in 2022, we had 23 guest artists, which is insane. I will never do that again. This year we have four guest artists, and actually we have a surprise one. So there'll be five. You're the first to hear of that, and the guest artists get to pick their charity of choice. So instead of these huge name people who are lending their good names to me, like this year we have Paige, Gavigan, cotton Colors and Guru.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([20:47](#)):

Yeah, amazing. Those are

Kate Stewart ([20:48](#)):

Huge names. And I'm like, and I can't pay you. How does that work? And it's like, I don't have the money to pay you. My margins are pretty tight, but could I give 10% of the profits to your charity of choice? And that way there's a win for everybody. We're creating more jobs in Haiti. We're giving back to something that means a lot to them, and I don't know what they get out of it. I get the good fortune to work with these incredible women. It's

Laura Cox Kaplan ([21:16](#)):

A beautiful collaboration though. I mean, they're getting the benefit of the collaboration and it's an extension of their brand potentially into a market that maybe they're not in. Right?

Kate Stewart ([21:28](#)):

I mean, to be sitting there with, I got to sit on stage with Maggie and Morgan and Paige this past, and Danielle Rollins was the moderator. I mean, it was insane. That was very cool experience down in West Palm. But I mean, the people that they collaborate with, I mean, they are the most inspirational women. And I guess maybe I should look at myself and go, wow, I, I work with a lot of amazing people, but Maggie, for instance, just came out with the most stunning collection with brackish bow ties, and then she's doing these designer diamonds direct. Let's just talk about fancy and then to go and me, how am I on this list? It's such a joy. I'll never, not that I'll never understand it, but sometimes I feel like, I don't know. I look at it and I'm like, wow, how has this come to be?

Laura Cox Kaplan ([22:29](#)):

It's amazing. But you have, I mean, an incredible track record of success. I have lots of things to ask you about. I want to understand, I want to understand, you said your dad is an entrepreneur and your father-in-law is an entrepreneur. So both you and your husband grew up in these worlds that were fueled by this entrepreneurial spirit. So tell me what your dad was focused on as an entrepreneur and how he worked inspired you.

Kate Stewart ([23:02](#)):

Oh, my dad, what's funny is I look back, I couldn't tell you what year he went out on his own. I know it was a really big deal that he left. He was one of the top guys for Cushman Wakefield, Atlanta, and then he left to go out on his own when we were in elementary school, and we all went to private school growing up. So to take that risk, to me, I'm looking back going, wow, that's crazy. To give up the security to say, you know what? I can do this. I've got it.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([23:30](#)):

And he was the primary breadwinner. I took

Kate Stewart ([23:32](#)):

It. Yes. So my mom took care of all of us, and dad went out on his own sometime when I was in elementary or middle school. And I don't even know. That's the funny thing about kids. I'm not keeping track of where my dad is, and he's from St. Louis, Missouri. So being in real estate when you're not from the city where you're in real estate's, a lot of who knows who kind of thing. And so dad is, he does private equity for real estate. His business is so interesting because he has investors that give him money, large sums of money to buy these things, and then he pays them out. And one, there's so much trust involved in that. And what I found when I started working for him is that a lot of these guys have been with him since I was a little kid.

Kate Stewart ([24:20](#)):

They have been Uncle Al, people who just dad has made them part of our family. And I just think that's the coolest thing about him not being from this town. And he made his friends and he's got so much trust and his returns, I think his returns over the history of his company are like 20%. They're insane. And the way that he looks at it is, my investors get eat before I eat. Amazing. He makes sure they get paid before him. He's an investor in most of his own deals because he wants to show he's got skin in the game. And so watching my dad do business I think has affected me because I want to have the same trust with everybody I work with. I am the most open book you'll ever find. I believe that honesty is the best policy. I think I've been so vulnerable on Instagram and through with our customers.

Kate Stewart ([25:18](#)):

If I can't ship something, you're going to hear about it. I can over communicate. Dad sends an email to all of his investors every single month giving them an update on each of their properties, which is kind of crazy that he takes the time to sit down and be like, and come to me. He says, come to me if you have questions or you want to talk about this. Investors get all the finances every quarter, and they get to go through and highlight, I'm an investor in one of his deals and a highlighting, dad, why are you still paying for ads and telephone books? And he's like, that's a good question. So being the child of an entrepreneur is fun because you're like, it does transfer over to how you do business. I think so much of honesty and doing good business

and putting others ahead of yourself, you learn that from your parents. And I 100% learn that from my parents saying, my customers know that they are the most important thing to me.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([26:18](#)):

Yeah. Oh, Kate, I love that. I love, I absolutely love that. Let's talk a little bit about scaling a business that holiday focused. These are holiday stocking. So you have a real seasonal market that you're meeting. So talk about that. Did you have investors who were like, are you nuts? Why am I going to invest in a Christmas slash Hanukkah business?

Kate Stewart ([26:44](#)):

Well, I am lucky. I'm a hundred percent owner of this company, so I can do whatever I want, Laura. But no, we have grown so much. I keep track. Y'all should see my Google Docs. I love facts and stats. It's like one of my, I've had to write down my priorities before and be put facts and stats at the bottom because I could nerd out on data all day. And we have grown. We started, it's funny, the star of David was our first religious stalking. I didn't have a cross. I had starved David first, really, because I have a friend who married a Christian Guy, and I went over to talk to her about starting the company. She was like, Kate, I'm not going to put Santa. I already have a Christmas tree in my house. I am not putting Santa. And I was like, you're right.

Kate Stewart ([27:34](#)):

So I was like, so every family is different. So that's how the star of David got started. And that became so popular that we were like, let's do more. Let's do, so we have Dals and we have a Menorah now. And I actually just had a friend at school. Our school here in Atlanta is, I want to say it's probably 25% Jewish. Most of my kids' best friends are Jewish. And so I was with a bunch of girls the other day and they were like, well, Kate, you have three. We need a fourth because our family is four. And I'm like, oh, that's such a good point. So now we're talking about what's the next symbol, or do we change the colorway or there's this hand symbol, I forget the name of it, but it'll be really cool if we get it done right. I'll send it to you.

Kate Stewart ([28:21](#)):

So that's been really fun because I also am crazy about wanting to be inclusive. I realized very early on that I want people to come to my table and feel like there's something for them at my table, whether they're buying or not. I don't want anybody to come to the table and go, well, what would I be able to buy? And so we've been working on that. It's been really interesting with skin tones and stuff like that, because hard with threads is translating it. We've had a lot of gray skinned gray skin stockings come up and we're like, I don't know who that was. So we are actively working on that. If anybody doesn't feel included yet, we are trying our best to just get it right. We don't want, and so that's how it started. It was kind of just like, I want everybody to come to my table and feel included. And then you asked about Christmas. So then from there though, we were like, well, why is this stocking a holiday thing? Originally the Jewish ones were

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already, people were like, whoa, stockings. I'll never forget, I had a Jewish guy. I've had multiple Jewish guys buy them. Just like I've never seen a stocking with Star David. And they're like, I'll buy it just because I think it's interesting. And we were like, what is that? That's so strange that a stocking is so associated with, right. Why? There's no need for that.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([29:44](#)):

It's one the Christmas stories. I mean, I think it's hung by the chimney with Care, the stock,

Kate Stewart ([29:49](#)):

But that's just funny. That's a weird thing to go, that's ours. No, it's not. So then we launched Valentine's Day this year, and that is Hearts. And they sold out so quickly.

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

No kidding.

Kate Stewart ([30:03](#)):

And we were like, okay, we got something. So then we did Derby Day. I have a Kentucky Derby party every year, and I was like, let's do a Kentucky Derby horse. So we have those, and then we've got a 4th of July, uncle Sam, and then we have, oh my gosh, we don't have a Halloween one yet, working on that with a particular person, and we just haven't gotten down to it, but I'm not going to do it without her. And then we've just had so much fun making stockings, a non-holiday thing. Interesting.

Kate Stewart ([30:31](#)):

And really branching out. So if you looked at my sales for, if you looked at my online sales the first few years, my website was dead. Six months of the year, seven months of the year. I mean, it's kind of hilarious to look at it now. And now we do pretty well in the other months. That's amazing. And we've kind of figured out a way to spread it out because it can be intimidating when all your money comes in the last three months of the year. It takes a lot of planning to go, oh, my bank account's full. And then be like, oh no, it's not. You got to pay for everything. We have an eight month lead time. I order. I've started ordering next 2024 stockings already to Haiti, and we pay them upfront. You don't have credit in Haiti. You pay people upfront in Haiti.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([31:18](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Maybe talk about some of your big collaboration partners, your larger ones. You've already talked about some of your other collaboration partners, but you have a relationship with Neiman Marcus, I mean among others, but maybe talk a little bit about that and how that got started.

Kate Stewart ([31:36](#)):

Oh gosh. We've been so fortunate to work with amazing people. Just off the top of my head, we had exclusives for Love Check Fancy for two years. We did full-size stockings for them, and they just found me on Instagram and dmd me on November 7th. Very late in the season, they DMed me and said, Hey, can you get these into our seven stores? And I was like, okay. And that was the little ones. And then we did full size for them. And then Nikki Hilton is kind of the most famous. I feel like people always like, oh, didn't you work with a Hilton? I'm like, yeah, Nikki is the best. She's the coolest person. She's so kind. How

Laura Cox Kaplan ([32:12](#)):

Did she find you?

Kate Stewart ([32:14](#)):

Nikki found us when an influencer named Emily Jackson here in Atlanta, who goes by the Instagram handle stuffy Muffy. We gifted her a stalking. She posted it. Alison Spear, who's a PR person in LA saw it. Alison Spear went to my website, purchased them, I shipped them to her. She gifted them to Kathy Hilton, who is the queen of Christmas in la. Then Nikki happened to be at Kathy's house when Allison's gift came in. So she opened it. So Nikki saw them there, and then Nikki went the same week. Nikki went to an opening of a Love Shack Fancy on her street in New York, and she saw the stockings there and she posted them on Instagram. Didn't tag me. Luckily an artist in Camden, South Carolina, Willa Hart, Allie is her real name. I talk in people's Instagram handles all the time. So Allie of Willa Hart saw it dmd me.

Kate Stewart ([33:08](#)):

I was in Birmingham at a show. She goes, did you see Nikki Hilton just posted your stockings? I said, what? I jump over there. I DMed her, my PR team, dms her, and she just ended up being the best, the nicest. The Hilton family has been nothing but kind to me. And again, like I said earlier, I don't pay people to work with me. I give back to their charities and for them to do that when I know, I know through through now how much it costs to work with celebrities, literally the most generous thing anybody could have ever done for me. That's amazing. It was the kindest, how do I help you? How do I support these women in Haiti? And so Nikki really opened the floodgates for people approaching me to work with me. Nikki got us into Alice and Olivia, and we did customs for that.

Kate Stewart ([33:58](#)):

Stacy ett, the owner of Alice and Olivia. And once those people had worked with us, I'm going to say people treated us like I was someone, but I had worked with a lot of amazing people before then as well. Jennifer Hunt of Dogwood Hill had been doing things with me, but really we have this roster now that when people go, who are you? And I'm like, I promise I'm somebody. I

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promise. I promise that we're doing good stuff. And then last year, year before Draper James came to us and said, we just want to literally, they did a giveaway where we did, I don't know, five sets of their designs and their giveaway on Instagram was just to follow us.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([34:43](#)):

Wow.

Kate Stewart ([34:44](#)):

And that's how you could win the stockings. It was like, go follow our friend's Bauble Stockings. That's amazing. Who does that?

Laura Cox Kaplan ([34:49](#)):

Well, it's amazing. It's amazing. Kate, if you were to give a Wouldbe entrepreneur some advice for how to position themselves so that they could take advantage of these kind of collaborative relationships, what would you say?

Kate Stewart ([35:08](#)):

You're either going to pay, which I think is totally fair. You're either going to pay and expect to pay 10 to 20% off the top or have a really good reason why you can't pay. I think that that's not to say I'm lucky for that because I would love to pay. All these people deserve to be paid. I wish I had the cash to pay these people, but I have a very good reason why I can't pay, and I make up for it with saying, but I'll give 10% of the money out of my own pocket to make sure that your charity benefits. I've tried to make it a win-win for everybody. I do the professional photography, I put them in our catalogs. I try and promote them as much as I can, which some of these people, I'm like, they don't need my promotion. But honestly, we all need promotion. We all need someone to vouch for us and say, Hey, they're a good person. Hey, I like working with them. They are a nice person. I'm so lucky because honestly, everyone I've worked with is awesome. Everyone is so great. And I think I would know if they weren't because I'm not, again, I'm not paying them. So people can be like, you know what? You're not worth my time.

Kate Stewart ([36:19](#)):

I think always and making it as easy as possible, you really don't want to be a burden. And I say this as I don't want to be a burden on anybody. I'm probably a little neurotic about it, but if you make something challenging for somebody to do to help you, they're not going to do it. You need to make it as easy as possible. Set them up for success and then run with it and try communicate as much as possible. Communication is so key, but I say that don't overly communicate. Don't be in their inbox every day. Try and keep your communication succinct.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([37:01](#)):

Right. Strike that balance. Okay, so speaking of balance, you have two young children, right? Two young children. Talk a little bit about this age old question of work and life and getting the right mix and any advice that you have, recognizing that you can't do everything all at the same time. What's your advice for keeping the trains running on time, keeping everybody reasonably happy and fed and off to school

Kate Stewart ([37:31](#)):

And all those good things? Absolutely. I'll be the first to admit, I'm not a perfect parent, but I have a great spouse. I have great spousal support. My husband, when I first started the business and Peter had to start cooking dinners during the season, I remember all tearing up at a mom's group that I wasn't even really great friends with the people just being like, Peter's making dinner, and I felt terrible about it. Now I love that Peter makes dinner. I have accepted it. He makes dinner. I did get a subscription to Hungry Root this year, hungry Root, just, I'm going to give a plug right now. I don't get paid by them, but it is the easiest dinner plan you can do. Everything takes 15 minutes or less. It doesn't use all your dishes. So as a working mom, I think that UNG Guru is the best of the meal plan services. Anyway, so that has been huge. Peter is willing, willing. Peter is a great co-parent. He can make a dinner, he can take things, the post office if we need him to, he can pick up the kids from school. We do a lot of flexibilities.

Kate Stewart ([38:32](#)):

Things definitely get dropped. I will not pretend to act like things don't get dropped. If you feel like you are flailing about as a mom and a parent, like I'm there with you, dmm me, my sweet daughter got cookies for character last week, which is a big award at her school. I happened to be in Palm Beach. The teacher had even emailed me earlier that week to say, Hey, Kate, do you want us to move it? I know you travel a lot. And I said, no, do not let her lose her or whatever. I didn't realize Peter wasn't on the emails and Peter forgot. And so she got the award with all the other parents and all the other kids, and she didn't have anybody standing there for, and yeah, I will say that that was really hard as a parent to go, how do we do this?

Kate Stewart ([39:17](#)):

And they're letting us do a makeup, and the school has been so kind and it sounds like the counselor realized very quickly what was happening. Our counselor and our teachers are very aware of my job during the holidays, and communication is always key. Peter went and had lunch with her that day. They called him from the school, communicated to him what had happened. He of course felt terrible. And things happen. Life happens. As for balance, I realized earlier this year that my husband has had golf on Thursdays for as long as I can remember. It's been on his date. And he doesn't always get there, but it's always on our calendar. Peter's golfing, and I know that on a Thursday. And so I was like, well, you know what? I have beaten myself up about not having a hobby for so long. I remember a mom asking me if I had hobbies, and I looked at her blankly.

Kate Stewart ([40:08](#)):

I was like, I work. I run to relieve stress. Work is my hobby. I work out to relieve stress and to fit in my clothes, but I don't really have a hobby per se. And I was really embarrassed. I really beat myself. I should have a hobby. And now I've accepted, no, I don't have a hobby. So I put Tuesdays on my calendar. Tuesday is literally on our calendars. Kate's night out. It's becoming famous in our neighborhood for if you want to go out and have a drink with Kate on a Tuesday, she'll be out. It'll either be coffee or dinner, but it's on Tuesdays. I'm out of my house doing something with a friend or I haven't had to go by myself yet, but I would go by myself as well just to be like, it's fine. I am going to have some me time and cool off and do not cool off.

Kate Stewart ([40:58](#)):

You know what I mean? And I really encourage everybody to do it. It's been the most fun thing. It's just mom's night out and it's my night and I get to do what I want. But any parent, and I'm particularly hard on myself, but I assume most people are pretty hard on themselves, especially women. No one's got it all together. And I'm so glad When my kids were little, I was just worried that they weren't going to be good kids. I was worried they were spoiled or I was worried that they were little monsters or my kids rock. I feel like you can't really judge a kid on their behavior. They should have good behavior in general, but when they're little, they have feelings, right? They've got big feelings, little feelings. My kids are six and eight now, and it's a breeze. So if you've got little kids, and I'm just saying this because I probably need to hear it, but if you have little kids, don't feel like you have to control them or that they're being whatever, they'll get older and they'll grow out of it. Just let them have their feelings. It's fine. You're not a bad parent. You're great.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([42:09](#)):

I love that. I love that. Are they involved in the company at all, Kate? Do they sort of get to experience some elements on their level?

Kate Stewart ([42:19](#)):

We had to pack an order, that's for sure. My eight year old, since she was a baby, our orders have pictures on them. So before she could read, she could pack an order. She probably knows all the names of the Bible stockings. They love our catalog. Our catalog is pretty famous. It's a great, I mean, it's every single design we've ever had, so they know them pretty well. Brianna's always asking if she can come help sell, which I haven't let her do that. I'm like, you're going to get bored. Called her. Doesn't really have any interest in it yet, but it'll be interesting. They'll never remember a time when Bauble Stockings didn't exist. They also think they're famous because they're in all of they are in our magazines, they're in everything. And they've asked me, they're like, am I famous? And I'm like, no, absolutely not. You're just a model and you're free.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([43:07](#)):

Right?

Kate Stewart ([43:09](#)):

You live in my house and it's really easy for me to take pictures of you, but I do pay them. Now. A law came out this year about using your kids for Instagram and stuff like that, which is fair. And I don't know if I actually qualify for this, but I'm obsessive enough to be like, alright, that's fair. They're big enough now to where they get, instead of saying, you get a treat, or you get a toy at the end of a photo shoot, I'm going to give money. I'm going to put the money in your account and you can decide to spend it or save it.

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

Amazing. Amazing. Yeah, they're working for the company. I love that. I absolutely love that. So for anybody listening, Kate, a lot of would be customers, probably a lot of current customers is my guess, but anything else that you want them to know about the company? Things that people don't normally ask you that you wish people knew about

Kate Stewart ([44:04](#)):

Bobble stock. Oh gosh. Every stocking has a story. If you dmm me and say, what's the story behind this particular design? I probably have a story behind it. Either whether the design is actually my childhood horse or my goddaughter or my friend's kid. Or if it's, oh, we had this in there and then we took it out and we moved it to this, or we changed the colors. Every stocking is very thoughtfully designed. My is Sarah Watson. She is in Fairhope, Alabama. She happens to be my best friend. I mean, my matron of honor, my child's godmother, it's her sister-in-Law. So I got very, that's amazing. Lucky there. And just to my customers and to people who would be customers, I really believe that our tradition and doing the final gift is the most thoughtful gift. I think it's something that you will, you'll never forget it. It is really the most, it's meant to be meaningful. It's supposed to make your holidays more meaningful. I love that. My kids know that this gift is from us. It's not from Santa, it's from us. My eight year old now gets to help pick out the present for our six year old. So she feels very involved. And I think that's really important that kids, especially little kids, when they think everything comes from Santa, to say, no, we were thinking about you and we got to give you the best gift.

Kate Stewart ([45:28](#)):

And when you start the tradition in your house, it's a meaningful tradition in your house and it's creating meaningful work in another. Our team in Haiti does need the jobs. I've asked David before, what would they do without the work? And a lot of them wouldn't be able to get work or at least meaningful work where they could pay their rent and feed their kids. And that's what we get to do. We have fair trade wages. It's B Corp certified, which is the highest. I mean, Ben and Jerry's, Patagonia, the best businesses are B Corp certified and Good Threads. Needlepoint

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in Haiti that I work with is B Corp certified. So I hope you love my company as much as I love my company, and I hope you realize how much I love our customers.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([46:09](#)):

Kate, what a pleasure to spend time with you. Thank you so much.

Kate Stewart ([46:14](#)):

Thank you for having me. This has been so much fun.

Laura Cox Kaplan ([46:18](#)):

Remember, friend, to get free shipping on your bubble stockings order, be sure to include the word Laura in the promo code. You will find a link where you can go directly to the Bauble Stockings website in the show notes for this episode, episode 272. And friend, before I let you go, just a quick word of thanks to you. I am so incredibly grateful that you're here, that you are part of. She Said, she Said Podcast. I love getting your notes and messages and your feedback. It really, really means the world to me. So thank you to you. I am truly, truly thankful. I hope you have a happy, safe, and wonderful thanksgiving. And most importantly, that you are surrounded by the people who bring you the most love and the most joy and friend. If you are feeling extra generous today and you enjoyed the conversation with Kate, click on the review the episode button and please give us five stars. I would be super grateful. I know Kate would be super grateful. Plus those reviews help me share this content and these incredible guests like Kate with others. For now, though, take care, and I'll talk to you again next week. And remember she said Podcast is a weekly production of She Said, she said Media.