

Marriage Startup Episode 35

[Intro music]

LESLIE Welcome to the Marriage Startup Podcast, Episode 35 - Our 2015 First Quarter Retrospective. In this episode Laura and I interview each other about how the year's going so far, for each of us individually, professionally, and as a couple.

LAURA We start with looking at the goals we set back in January.

LESLIE And we'll probably talk about kids too because: family!

LAURA And of course we have the heart of the show, "What we're going to do for each other this week".

LESLIE I'm your co-host, Leslie Camacho. I'm the Chief Espresso Officer of the Camacho household, and I'm the CEO of Haywire where we're working on some awesome secret things that may or may not exist one day. We'll see. Hopefully we'll know by the end of April/early May [laughter].

LAURA And I can attest, they are very super awesome. I'm your host, Laura Camacho. I'm the co-founder of Glimmering, partner with Wild Goose Guidance, and the master baker of the Camacho household.

LESLIE Aren't you just the owner of Wild Goose Guidance?

LAURA No.

LESLIE Oh. Okay. Why is that?

LAURA Because it's not just me.

LESLIE That makes -

LAURA I'm *partner* with the Wild Goose.

LESLIE That makes sense, and you take that really seriously.

LAURA I really do.

LESLIE I should've thought of that. All right, let's carry on [laughter]. So, the only community news and update we have today is that we're recording Sunday night and hopefully this is our last show before - on a weekend, because we're changing our schedule, like we announced last - on Wednesday or - last week's episode. Basically we're going to stay recording on Wednesdays, starting from this week on out, but we're going to publish late Monday/early Tuesday. So this gives us a time to do the recording the way we want, because we do our best shows on Wednesday mornings.

LAURA Or Wednesday at 1:30 when the babysitter comes.

LESLIE Right. Wednesdays.

LAURA Wednesdays.

LESLIE Whenever that happens to be.

LAURA Yeah. During daylight hours -

LESLIE Exactly.

LAURA - is the key word.

LESLIE So yeah, we know that we do our best shows Wednesdays and that we get the best feedback, so we know that we're serving you the best when we record on Wednesdays. But we also needed a buffer time between when we record and when we publish, and just having that one day - and if there was a delay, sometimes we would record and publish on the same day - doesn't give us the time to build in the type of stuff that we want to build in into the actual episodes prior to publishing. That's something we'd like to slowly start doing over time here, so this is the first step towards that.

We're recording Sunday, this episode will go out late Monday/early Tuesdays, and from then point on, that'll be our release schedule. I'm really excited about that.

LAURA Me too. Feels like we finally found our groove, or acknowledged our groove [chuckles]. We're going to run with it.

LESLIE Right. We found what works best.

LAURA Yes.

LESLIE And we've made a way to continue making it work best.

LAURA Exactly.

LESLIE The other news is that since it is Sunday evening, two of our kids are supposed to be asleep but they're not. We had the baby monitor on here in the office so there may be some background noise with Alana telling Ethan some stories, and maybe some singing. We don't know [laughter]. Sophia's still up, maybe bouncing a ball around somewhere. That might be noticeable but maybe not. It'll be exciting [chuckles]. We'll know by the end of the show. So just a heads-up if there's some extra noises.

That's it for the updates this week. I think we covered almost everything else last week, and we have a really meaty show to dive into, so let's just get to it.

LAURA Yeah. So this is our retrospective show. For the sake of our audience, what is a retrospective and why are we doing a quarterly one?

LESLIE A retrospective is a term that I learned from the practice of Scrum, which is sort of a project management technique. It's actually more of a philosophy process that's pretty involved, but one of the things that Scrum does is at the end of a set time period you get your entire team together and you talk about what's working and what's not. It's not a review of the work itself, though sometimes that will obviously come into it, but that happens separately.

There's a review where you talk about the actual work that you've done - "Hey, this thing, I did this," or, "This nut's working," or, "Here's what I have left to do." That's a review. But a retrospective is a look at what is actually working for us, or what's not working. I typically do a personal retrospective every two weeks or so, but I've also discovered it's really good to do a high level look at it as well once a quarter so you can really step back and get a bigger picture that a quarterly view gives you versus a view that you would just get on a weekly basis or every two weeks or something like that.

Plus it's also really good to have a retrospective with someone who knows you and works with you on a regular basis. No one is more qualified [laughter] for that than you -

LAURA That's good.

LESLIE - as my spouse and my business partner, and all the other wonderful sentimental things we could say here. So that in a nutshell is a retrospective.

Now, there's lots of ways to hold one and conduct one but my favorite is just to ask five questions of yourself, so each of us is going to answer these five questions for ourselves and then we're going to help each other think through or talk through any points or themes that we see that may need some clarification. We will put these five questions in the Show Notes as well so you can swipe them and make them your own, because even though this is used mostly in technical teams, there's nothing techy about this. It's so dead simple, and that's its beauty.

The five questions are this:

1. What should I stop doing?
2. What should I continue doing?
3. What can I do better?
4. What have I learned that I need to write down so I don't forget?
5. What things are blocking my progress? (Is there anything actually preventing me from doing the work that I need to do?)

So that's what we're going to do. We're going to check in with each other about this. Why don't I just start with the first question, and then we can go back and forth or play it by ear, depending on how it goes?

LAURA Okay, yeah. I would love to hear you go first, because I'm not entirely sure that I have answered the questions exactly right.

LESLIE Well, as long as your answers are helpful to you, that's what a retrospective is about.

LAURA Okay. Then I should be all right.

LESLIE Again, there are literally 100 different ways to do this, and different team leaders will do it in different ways for whatever reasons, but it is totally appropriate to just make it your own. So as long as your answers are helpful to you, to help you do better work, that's all that's required.

LAURA Okay.

LESLIE All right. So for me, what should I stop doing? I'm going to start with the one that's hardest for me to admit but is very true, in that I've just been playing too many games. I actually took a look at the number of hours I've invested in games, actually playing games, because now most of the games actually track your hours, which is scary [chuckles].

LAURA Yeah, it's terrible. I remember when *World of Warcraft* introduced that.

LESLIE Oh, let's - I -

LAURA It was shameful.

LESLIE That's a little bit different.

LAURA [chuckles]

LESLIE But we won't nuance the difference between *Warcraft* and games.

LAURA Okay.

LESLIE That's a different thing. But in the first quarter, I spent over 100 hours playing games, so that's over a week playing games, easily. Out of all the weeks available, that is way too much time. Now granted, the majority of that time is not done during business hours, but that also impacts the stuff I'm doing in the evening, it impacts family time. And granted, some of this is playing games with other people, so some of it's recreational, some of it's connecting with friends, or some of it's even here with family.

But it's too much. There's an inequality to it, and as I was looking over things, it just doesn't feel right. Most of the time I'm really good about monitoring that and making it something that's a pleasant escape, easy to come back to, but this quarter it wasn't like that. It was something that I did to escape inappropriately, versus just a nice breather like, "[exhale] Okay, now I'm rested, let's get back into it."

LAURA Right.

LESLIE So what I did was I deleted them all from my computer, so they're gone. Then I also went the extra step of unsubscribing from all my gaming feeds - all the RSS subscriptions, all the podcasts, the sites I regularly visit - because I don't want to be enticed by whatever the new shiny is. Because (1) I don't want to be spending money on games that way, and (2) I don't want to know. There's nothing critical for me to know about what's going on in the gaming industry that's going to actually help me. Anything super important that I miss, my friends are going to tell me about anyway.

I didn't want to just expel it from my life completely. I know that there's a new *Halo* this year but it's in the fall, so that's my hook whenever I say, "Oh man, I wish I could play a game now," or, "Here's a game I really want to buy." I just think, "No, there's *Halo 5*," and that's a game I know you and I are going to want to play together.

LAURA Yes.

LESLIE Because *Halo* has played a very critical -

LAURA [chuckles]

LESLIE And this is no irony.

LAURA No, it's like our marriage game [chuckles].

LESLIE Yes. It was a wonderful surprise to discover just how much of a gamer girl you are. So every *Halo* we play through it together and I don't want to miss the next one. That's my incentive to not play games now, to not spend the time on it, to not spend the money on it, because I know if I don't do it now, it's going to help me have the resources and the time and the mental space to really enjoy it with you when that comes up later this year.

LAURA So zero games whatsoever, or are you still playing *Lords of Waterdeep* on your phone and *Hearthstone*?

LESLIE I think the only exception is *Lords of Waterdeep* on my phone, like a board game. I mean, technically that's a game but it's not the same, because that is something I can just get in and out of in 10 minutes.

LAURA You're not playing *Hearthstone* anymore?

LESLIE No. I got rid of *Hearthstone*.

LAURA Wow.

LESLIE All the RPGs I was playing. All of it, it's gone.

LAURA I'm impressed, Leslie. That's big.

LESLIE I have stuff to do, and the games aren't helping. I am way more excited about the stuff that I'm doing and that we're doing than any video game. That was the other thing too. It's like when I discovered this thing, it's like, "Yeah, that's too many hours," and my first question was, "I should just cut back. I should say I'm just going to limit myself to games." Then I thought about it. Is there actually any game that I'm enjoying more than building Haywire, and then pursuing these things with my family? I allowed myself to ask that question, from an enjoyment perspective. I didn't ask is it more important, because -

LAURA More ethical or moral.

LESLIE Right, because those are easier questions in an objective way. But since games are for enjoyment, I wanted to use that enjoyment part as the first question, so I just asked "Is there anything, any game I'm enjoying more than building Haywire, than pursuing the secret project and pursuing the third podcast I can't talk about yet, than doing the stuff with you?" The answer's no. I would rather be doing all those things more than any video game.

LAURA I just realized this is because of your Pruning phase, right?

LESLIE Yeah. Yeah, that's part of it. That inspired it.

LAURA That's awesome. Just as a brief aside, one of the card readings that I do for Wild Goose Guidance is called the Seed Journey, and it takes you through one card at a time through the growth of a seed from Ploughing the Field, Germination, Transplanting, etc, etc. The stage that Leslie's on right now is called Pruning and it talks about how you need to thin the crop so that your energy can be spent toward growing the most important fruits. You pruned games.

LESLIE Exactly. There is a part of me where I'm bias, because I am shilling for the company, so to speak, but we're also eating our own dog food. The Seed Journey has been incredibly beneficial to me in helping me get clarity, get unstuck, feeling like okay, here is something I can use to really align my thinking with what needs to get done, in ways that I wouldn't have done for myself, and I think that's been the greatest thing. Here's this outside voice with this really creative, inspired idea, and I can start there. That allows me to think better about what's going on.

LAURA Yeah. It's a really different perspective than a business book or article that would probably tell you the same thing, but there's something about the message coming from such an odd angle for the business world I think that really is effective.

LESLIE Your command of language is much more beautiful than *Essentialism*, say.

LAURA [chuckles] Exactly. It is the essential intent.

LESLIE Or most of the business books I read. Then the last thing that I should stop doing is I have to stop project management work.

LAURA Yes!

LESLIE I have one last project management client and I'm going to do my best to make this my last month, but it's a really complicated situation. Or at least I tell myself it is. So I'm going to do my best to let go of that this month because I know it's not what I'm supposed to be doing, and I know in my heart the longer I do it the less valuable I am to the client, even though they'd be paying me the same.

But I know that - I know for sure now, having done project management work for the last 4 or 5 months and having tried and attempted, it's weird. Last year, I kicked so much butt at project management. I excelled at it and had a really great time with it. But in October when I made the decision to start coaching and start really focusing on agency owners specifically, versus what an agency needs, or making the owner my priority, I have not been good at project management from that point since.

LAURA Yeah, and I think that situation with that client is hard because you really like them, and they're really great to work with. It's just a matter of it's not a good fit for you. Has nothing to do with them.

LESLIE Yeah. I love the tech person I'm working with, I love the client. Sometimes the work is a little - the actual work is kind of blah sometimes, but that's project management work.

LAURA Right [chuckles].

LESLIE But my heart's not in it and so it's become a distraction that helps pay the bills a little bit, but that's not good. I can't have a client just because we need the bills paid. I mean, we can but - yeah.

LAURA If the bills can be paid another way, and they are starting to be with the work that you are truly passionate about, that's the direction you're needing to head.

LESLIE I have more coaching leads. I just got three more leads on Friday. I have another - if the secret project works, that's going to change everything. And I don't mean that as a teaser, it's just - I mean, the secret project's a super long shot. Chances are it's not going to work, but I'm trying to invest -

LAURA Don't say that!

LESLIE - everything into making sure it works. Well, anyway, that's a sidetrack discussion. What I'm saying is it's time to actively see if I can let it go responsibly, responsible to us and responsible to the client because I can't just leave him hanging.

LAURA Right.

LESLIE So I've just been praying for wisdom and resources, and a way to hand them over to something better that's really going to help them. Because I've been really helpful in the things I'm doing with them. We're having a real impact, but I can just see it and feel it coming to an end.

All right. That's it for my "What should I stop doing?" review. What about you?

LAURA Okay. I have three quick ones. I need to stop going to bed late, which really means stop going to bed after 9:30. I am a much happier person when I go to bed at that time because since I'm getting woken up at least once a night still, and up for the day at 5:00, I really, really need that first stretch, because Ethan doesn't usually wake up until between 2:00 or 3:00. So if I get a nice solid stretch before he wakes up and then another couple hours after, it's not ideal but it's better. It's better.

LESLIE Yes. Yes, it is.

LAURA And anything that I gain from going to bed after 9:30, I completely lose the next day anyway.

I need to stop keeping my phone by my bed. For a while I was doing it because I felt very anxious about not having a way to contact you when you were sleeping in the office. It just - and it was mostly my anxiety talking, I think, but I just felt very nervous not having a way I could just get to you very quickly. But since you are mostly sleeping back in our room again - yay - I need to let go of that habit. It's not serving me well. I don't check my phone in the middle of the night, but I think just having it there, there's some psychic disturbance just knowing that it's there. Because phones are very busy things and I need to disconnect at night. So keeping that and letting it charge on my desk at night, I do notice that I sleep better, so I'm going to do that. Or I'm going to - you know what I mean. I'm going to stop keeping my phone by my bed.

Then the last one is I'm going to stop procrastinating on sending out the *Marriage Startup Podcast* newsletter.

LESLIE Yay!

LAURA [laughter] I am so intimidated by writing for it, and I don't know why because I am so good at writing newsletters.

LESLIE Yes.

LAURA I have two other newsletter projects that I do, and the words just flow. I don't know what my block is with *Marriage Startup* newsletter but it needs to stop.

LESLIE Well, it's intensely personal, and I think the other thing we haven't figured out with the newsletter is, is it more of our story? Is it resources? And originally we had very much considered this a commercial project in the sense that we wanted the podcast to be the free thing that we contribute, and the newsletter would also obviously be free but it would be kind of like the first stepping stone into something more -

LAURA Really push the material kind of thing.

LESLIE Right, right, and doing that. But now that we've decided not to do that - and it feels a lot better to not have the commercial pressure on it - I mean, there may be things that we do that we charge money for, like a retreat or something, who knows, but that's no longer - we are very much treating this like a non-profit that we're doing and being responsible to a non-profit. We haven't talked about this, but this might be a good aside to do it now, because this is also part of retrospectives. It's a side note but when you talk about these things, it's important to understand why and what the alternatives are.

So not a side thing for the sake of side things, but in Christianity there's this concept of tithing where you give 10% or more, or a portion of what you're doing, and you're setting aside and investing it back into - traditionally it would be your church but since we don't really have a church, we have tithed differently for years and years. I've always wondered what does that look like from a business standpoint, so now I've begun to see *Marriage Startup* as this needs to be the way that we tithe everything that we do through Glimmering.

We can help support it through that, we can tithe our time in terms of how we look about contributing the hours putting into this thing, and it's just a way to give back, give back to things. We truly believe that what we're giving away is the most important things that we know. We don't know anything more important than keeping your most important relationships healthy, because everything out of life flows through that if you're a relationship person, which most of us are.

So yeah, I really - so I think that kind of - we've had to do a reboot on all the plans we've considered -

LAURA I know.

LESLIE - for *Marriage Startup*, including the newsletter. And it's not like we had a solid thing to begin with but there's also okay, so what is it then? I'm really glad that you're starting to think about that.

LAURA I'm also really curious to know what our listeners would find valuable in a newsletter. People still read newsletters, right? Email newsletters? I don't subscribe to many but I do read the ones that I get. I read more newsletters than blogs at this point.

LESLIE Yeah. Newsletters are by far the most effective communication tool online still. It's been that way for almost two decades now and there's no sign of it slowing down. Twitter, Facebook, social media, etc, all of those have their pros and cons, but when you talk about people actually reading and absorbing and acting on what information they receive, email is still king and there's no close second. Not blogging. Podcasts are a different beast. Podcasts are the closest thing to email. I don't know, I haven't seen an email versus podcast comparison study on that.

LAURA It's hard to take action directly from a podcast, though, and that's what email has over it, because you can click a link in the email -

LESLIE That's true.

LAURA - much easier than you can if you're listening to a podcast.

LESLIE Okay, this is too much of a sidetrack.

LAURA Yes, it is.

LESLIE But the important thing - newsletter.

LAURA Yay, me. Yes. I'm going to try and work on that, and if anyone has any feedback for me as I start thinking about the *Marriage Startup* newsletter, I would love to hear what would be interesting, helpful to receive, I don't know, on a monthly basis in your inbox from us.

LESLIE So you can do that by emailing us at hello@marriagestartup.com or by leaving a comment right on the show, which would be marriagestartup.com/35. You should write a separate blog post about it -

LAURA Yeah, I will.

LESLIE - so we can do that.

LAURA Let me put that in Nozbe right now.

LESLIE All right. Is there anything else on your "stop doing" list?

LAURA Nope.

LESLIE All right. So, what should I continue doing? For me, the number one thing I should continue doing is having my focus be on priorities versus tasks. And versus is the wrong word, so the better way to say it is priorities are greater than tasks, in that while I value both I value priorities more. That has been a game changer for me since I started doing it in January.

LAURA Yeah. We talked a little bit about that last week too.

LESLIE It's related back to that idea of Pruning that you talked about, because if I just look at my tasks list there's no way I can get it all done. It's just overwhelming. But if I think of it in terms of priority, or it's like, "Okay, this, then this, then this, then this," and that also goes back to the multi-project thing that we talked about too, because in that priorities list is "Don't multitask. Finish what you start." Then I can look at my tasks list and I can say, "This is a really important task but it's part of a project that's not currently active, so I have to shelve it." It doesn't matter how critical that is, that I feel about it, I know that if I start that it's at least a 10% reduction in my effectiveness in the things that I need to finish before I start new things. So things like that have been working really well for me.

My second thing is *The Miracle Morning*. That has also been life changing. I am still floored by how much that book has changed my life.

LAURA Yeah [chuckles].

LESLIE As much as I don't want to admit it, as much as I don't like the tone of most of the writing, the actual practice and information, based on the information in there, has been a game changer for me. More so than any book I've read in the last year. Send me commission checks, Hal [laughter]. So I need to keep doing that, because has just been - I love doing it. I feel lost if I'm not in my morning routine, if I haven't done that yet.

The other thing is reading textbooks. This is something I got more recently from *Love is the Killer App*, where one of the things he says, that if you want to be really valuable to somebody in a way that's totally free and beneficial for all involved, it's read textbooks. He says to split your reading

80/20, so 80% of what you read should be meaty textbooks, like hard cover books, or their equivalent in a Kindle because I read on Kindle, and then 20% online. So cut out 80% of your feeds and start buying books and reading them.

That has also been a game changer for me. I have read now three meaty textbooks in the last 60 days, and I'm surprised at how easily I get through them. The sheer amount of information that I've been able to share with the people I work with, to implement into my own life, that's quality because books of that nature go deep, and so you can actually get a sense of what implementation feels like. And most of the time you can't get that from a blog post.

Then the other things, just real quick, are journaling, both the *5 Minute Journal* and the *Bullet Journal*. That's part of my Miracle Morning, but I wanted to separate those out. Those are both working really, really well for me. Then the last thing is that the winning mix of things I get paid for is coaching, consulting/training, and sales. Those three things are what I am best at, and they're also what - that combination pays the best, and it's what's serving me best in terms of what brings me alive, and therefore it's the thing that I can also help people with the best. I have not enjoyed anything more than that combination in years. I would have to go way back to my early EllisLab days to find things that I enjoyed just as much, and they would probably be related to most of the skills involved right there.

LAURA Yeah, I'm sure.

LESLIE But that's me. That's my killer combination of stuff right there. All right, what about you?

LAURA I need to continue writing. I've gotten into a writing group and I am so happy about it. I just love it. I love writing, and I'm doing it. I write so much right now. One of my goals was to write 100 blog posts this year. I've kind of expanded that from blog posts to published writing, because I've done a lot of newsletters too. I'm already at 41.

LESLIE I just want to say that when we were talking about our goals, I said, "[whispers] You should do 200."

LAURA [chuckles] You did.

LESLIE I did.

LAURA Well, I'm probably going to make 200 because I do - yeah, for Wild Goose Guidance I do two newsletters a month, at least, and then I blog, I write blog posts. I don't have a specific goal for how many blog posts but I should probably think about that and map that out a little bit, kind of just let the inspiration take me. But I'm really proud of myself. I'm doing so well writing, it's really well received, and I feel like I've really hit my groove as a writer. It's really just because I've been writing, which is what all the writing books tell you [chuckles]. All the writing advice really boils down to "You just need to write," and that's what I've been doing.

I need to continue with *The Miracle Morning*. Last night I did my *5 Minute Journal*, the evening entry, for the first time in six weeks, but I did it. Even though I hadn't started that morning, I started in the evening and just filled

that out because I thought of it, it was sitting there, and I knew that if I just waited until the morning I was less likely to get it going. So I actually didn't do it this morning but I'm going to do it tonight, and I'm going to try to remember to do it tomorrow so I can get back into that groove.

LESLIE Maybe you should put that by your bed instead of your phone.

LAURA It is by my bed.

LESLIE Oh, well, there you go.

LAURA Yeah. The problem is I have this toddler who comes in and steals my pencil.

LESLIE [chuckles].

LAURA I can only keep a pencil there because I don't want him to write on the walls or anything with a pen. But the pencil goes missing just as often, so I don't know. We'll figure something out.

Then I just have to continue with what I'm doing with Wild Goose Guidance. I love it so much. I just can't believe I get to do this and connect with people in this way. The people are willing to pay for this and help support our family, and I get to - I don't know. It is so rewarding for me, and I know that they get so much out of it too but the idea that - I don't know. It feels to me that - it means so much to my heart to get to do it. It just floors me every time. I'm really, really excited because I actually got to transfer money into our bank account and pay us [chuckles].

LESLIE Yeah, that's right.

LAURA From my first quarter earnings. I actually got to - I basically covered our mortgage and utilities expenses.

LESLIE Yep, and you were able to pay us before I was able to pay us this month, and we needed it, and it worked.

LAURA Yeah, and it just - I don't know. Thanks, you guys. Thanks for trusting me with your stories and your hearts. It's amazing. I love it so much.

LESLIE You get paid to write. Essentially, that's what it is, where you actually get paid to inspire people with your writing in ways that helps them think and get unstuck. I am so thankful I kept my mouth shut with all my objections to your crazy idea.

LAURA [chuckles] Thank you.

LESLIE Which was my first thoughts on it. I still remember walking home from the park, kind of praying about it, and just got that distinct impression where it was, paraphrasing the voice in my head, "Shut up. Support her no matter what. Do everything you can to make sure she's successful at this." I said, "Right, I'm going to do that" [laughter].

LAURA Thank you. Yeah, I was really scared to tell you. The weekend - you were actually gone when I started the business.

LESLIE [chuckles]

LAURA And I had texted you, I was like, "So... I started a business." Then I had to tell you what it was, and I was so nervous because I knew you didn't really

get it. You were very - yeah, anyway. It's turned out really well. I think you've come around.

LESLIE Yeah, definitely. I'm a huge supporter, and I'm also very thankful for all of you that support us by working with Laura in this way, and that includes people who engage you for the free ministry part of it, and those who help support her financially through it too.

LAURA Yeah. I actually broke it down. I wanted to do 50 readings this year and I have done 17 this quarter so far - sorry, 17 paying clients, and then 10 or more non-paying. I haven't kept as close track of the non-paying numbers because I just don't. I don't keep track of it because it's not in Paypal [chuckles]. So at least 10, probably more, and then a lot more even of those 17 paying clients, a lot more back and forth in email afterwards. I don't just send something and -

LESLIE Yeah, you've easily broken the 50, especially if you count some of the free services that you do for everybody.

LAURA Oh yeah, right, because every month I do the one card mini-readings for the new moon, and I have 60 people on that list now. So every month I'm doing 60. Anyway, did I mention I'm writing a lot? I'm really excited about that. That's it. What can you do better?

LESLIE Okay, so there's only two things here. There's lots of things I can do better so I had to focus again on what are my priorities? The first is go to bed earlier. I'm staying up too late. This was somewhat related to the gaming because I stuck to my priorities list for the most part for gaming. There were some times where I violated the priorities and put games in front of stuff, but that was the minority of the time.

The majority of the times I get my stuff done and start gaming at 11:00, and then find myself, "Oh, look at that, it's 2:30. I guess I should go to bed," and that impacts my morning. So then I'm kind of doing *The Miracle Morning* but not really, and then - because *The Miracle Morning* also involves these rituals before you go to bed. Now that I'm not gaming, I'm still up late. Sometimes I'm working, sometimes I'm just goofing off, sometimes I'm reading. They're all reasonable things for whatever reason. I mean, I could justify them if I wanted to but I know that I need more sleep. I need more sleep and better sleep, and so I need to be doing better at that.

The second part are dealing with my own sales and my own leads. I've made a lot of improvements in this area, but I have a long way to go in terms of learning how to sell my own services. This is the thing that irks me because I'm really good at selling other people's services. I've made us a nice fair chunk of money over the last year-and-a-half selling - if I put it in perspective, since I left my CEO job I've sold over \$500,000 in Web work for various people, and another \$100,000 on top of that when it comes to things like events and some of the other things I've helped people with. So I know I'm good at sales for other people, but that has not translated into being good at selling my own services. Things like *Book Yourself Solid* and *Love is the Killer App*, I've been just devouring those but moreover I've been trying to put them into practice, and it's been working.

LAURA Good.

LESLIE So this is just a note that I am - I've made solid improvement but I'm nowhere close to how good I want to be at this. The thing that's really helped me is I realize that every time I teach myself - specifically teach myself how to get better - I get that much better at teaching my clients some of this stuff too. Because there's a difference between being able to do this for somebody, and teaching someone how to do it themselves.

Some of my coaching clients right now, they're paying me to help position their business, and that I'm really good at. I feel like I'm good at positioning myself and the work that I'm doing, but the next step is actually selling it, and so right now I can only offer to teach my clients positioning and I can offer to do the selling for my clients. But I want to be able to teach my clients how to sell past the position as well, so that's given me some extra incentive that fits more in line with my personality, that gets us what we need which is cash in.

Because that's my quote from last year from Mike - I always screw up his last name but *Design is a Job*, Mike Monteiro? I can't remember his last name.

LAURA Show Notes, people.

LESLIE Yeah, Show Notes. But anyway, Mike has this quote in *Design is a Job* where he says "The number one reason agencies go out of business is a lack of sales, and the number two reason is who cares?" [chuckles].

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE When I read that quote, I did exactly what I'm doing right now - just put my head in my hands, like "It's so true. I could be so good at running a business, I can be great at team building, I can be great at coaching, I can be great at ops, I can be great at yada-yada-yada. What? No sales? I'm out of business." It doesn't matter [laughter]. It does not matter.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE What about you? What can you do better?

LAURA Well, as I already mentioned, I can do much better at the *5 Minute Journaling*, and really *The Miracle Morning*, I need to get back in that routine. Part of *The Miracle Morning* that I need to integrate is planning out my day better. I think I should set aside part of that early morning time when I get up with Ethan, I'm feeling super-blurry, I really just need to write down my three things I need to accomplish, maybe the three things I want each kid to accomplish for the day, so that I have more direction.

Because as we referred to, I don't know, a couple episodes ago, I really am not very good at self-direction when I have this - I don't have any external structure in my life right now other than what I create for myself. I'm not in school anymore, I don't know what to do with myself [chuckles].

LESLIE Welcome to owning a business.

LAURA Thank you [laughter]. Can I go home now? So I think if I start my morning with those, it will very much be like affirmations in a sense. But I think it will get me on track for the rest of the day, and I think especially writing down three things for each of us - me and the kids - will be really good, because especially when I'm tired, it is so easy to just let everything

devolve into sitting on the couch in front of screens, and I'm so uncomfortable with that. Yet it happens about 75% of the time right now because I'm so freaking tired all the time. But I just - if there is a plan, I think that I can peel everyone up off the couch and get us all moving in one sort of coherent direction. That's what I'm hoping I can do better.

I can also do better with my exercise, and I have been just this last week. I really stepped it up. Was it this morning that I ran 2 miles on the elliptical trainer?

LESLIE Yes. We counted out that yesterday. You walked - between the elliptical

LAURA Oh, on Friday.

LESLIE - and your walking, yeah, on Friday you did over 5 miles. That's awesome.

LAURA Yeah, and some of the time with three kids in the stroller, which is about, wow, almost 200 pounds of kid and scooters and paraphernalia.

LESLIE I also want to say, we don't have - I mean, they've posted this publicly but I don't - we don't have permission to name names on the show specifically for this, and any time it's exercise and getting healthy people sometimes don't - anyway, there's a thread going on where people are talking about - you posted about how you've been running and other people have been encouraging each other to do it. To the people on that thread, especially those of you who are just getting back into exercise, just awesome.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE I love how you're owning it and you're telling us about it. You are inspiring us, and we hope we're doing the same, so thank you for sharing those things. Anything else?

LAURA No, that's it for that section.

LESLIE All right. So this one, the "What have I learned that I need to write down so I don't forget?" this I think is part of my special sauce. I haven't seen too many other retrospectives that have this specific question in it, but I think this is a really critical question because documenting what is working for you that is not second nature, or even if it is second nature just writing it down so you can understand it, is really, really important.

This is something that I started putting into practice for the various teams that I've been working with. People have always hated it until the second month. By the second month, the third month that we're doing it, they're just like, "Oh, Les, I can't believe we weren't doing this the whole time." Because when you write down what works, you're more likely to do it, and when you keep doing stuff that works you see improvements across the board. I don't know why most people hate writing down things, because that's part of what separates us from the animals [laughter] but there is. There's this aversion to writing stuff down. Just get over that, if you have it. Sometimes I have to get over it.

So, here are the things that I need to write down. I need to actually write down my approach to priorities are greater than tasks, and how that helps me get clarity on a daily basis. Because like I mentioned earlier, this is something that I think I should be teaching but I need to understand what my brain is doing on my behalf, that it's doing based on years and years of

experience, but I've never actually thought out what's actually happening that makes me think that way.

Saying priorities are greater than tasks, I know that is not original to me, I know that I picked that up from other sources, so I also want to source where some of this thinking came from and then figure out what's unique about my approach to it. But I think this is something really valuable, and as I'm getting more into coaching and as I'm thinking about how I can really have the impact into the lives of agency owners and therefore their internal culture and their teams, this is something I really want to be able to teach.

Because I know this not only works for personal development but I know it works for product development as well, because you can get so distracted by your task list and products, and then you make a product that crosses everything on your list but you haven't made something that people connect with, because your priorities are wrong. You've put some feature as a greater priority than the user satisfaction, or the things that create empathy, that connect your software to the users' experience.

That's one of the things I know I'm really good at, is teaching people how to develop software that creates that connection, that actually builds a relationship around what is essentially a code base, that creates a human connection across that. So I want to start detailing what that looks like. I think that's really important for me to start working through, because it feels like a life's work to figure that out.

The second thing is that - and it's related, is that I need a note taking system because with these books that I'm reading, I'm taking some notes but not enough. I actually need a note taking system, and this is one of those things where my laziness in college failed me. I went to a college that with a few exceptions did not challenge me, and this was more about me being a business major and an Honors student, because the Honors classes always challenged me but the business classes 9 times out of 10 were so easy I didn't have to do anything. I could just show up, do some light reading, rely on my short term memory, and just do better than 90% everybody else. My Honors classes were the opposite of that - I had to do a ton of work [chuckles] to get B's in those classes.

But somehow that work never related directly to taking notes - it was more about essays and my writing skills and my critical thinking skills. So note taking for note taking's sake, I was never good at that and I don't know what that looks like. I know that people have all sorts of systems for that, and in particular I heard an interview on the Tim Ferris podcast that has - he interviews - I forget her name, but it's the incredibly intelligent woman who runs Brain Pickings.

Tim and this woman were comparing their note taking systems and it kind of like blew my mind the way that they take notes. So I want to get better at that, and I want to actually have a system for that versus just writing down a quote and writing down a page number like you might in a bibliography. Because what they were doing was so far beyond that that it blew my mind, and I want to know more about that.

LAURA Okay. I just put a note to leave that in the Show Notes for people too.

LESLIE Yeah. That's it for my stuff to write down. What about you?

LAURA I have three. The first one is very much related to previously - I need to write down my daily schedule, and I'm thinking of revisiting the Kanban board which we've kind of let go by the wayside for a while. Maybe redoing it, I'm not sure. That's not what I've learned I need to write down but it's something that I need to write down, and I've learned that I need to write it down because I will - if I get tired and overwhelmed in the day, I just shut off onto autopilot and the whole day is wasted. So writing down those things that I know need to be done is going to be good for me.

I feel like I'm not actually doing this - answering this question right.

LESLIE [chuckles].

LAURA But here's some other things that I need to write down. I want - I started using the Day One app, specifically for this kind of thing, just to take notes on my day so that I don't forget stuff. I always do a picture. I have a few tags and thinks to check my moods and stuff. I want to also include gratitude, because gratitude opens you to seeing the good in the world, and I just want to see more good. So I'm going to stay the course with Day One, I'm actually really enjoying that.

Then I have some private guidance from the Wild Goose that I need to spend more time with. It's very easy for me to spend lots and lots of time pouring into my clients and then I get the short end of the stick, and I need to set aside some time to really review the things that I've received for myself, makes notes on them and really make a study out of them. I have some of the stuff on the back of my office door, and I need to start writing things down there so that it's in my face when I am in my office.

LESLIE Do you use Day One for some of that?

LAURA No, not for that, no.

LESLIE Okay. So just real quick, Kanban is mostly for project management and what I hear you describing is something that's more personal, like a productivity system. This is not the right place to go into the difference between the two, but one of the things that you might take a look at is just Bullet Journaling. I'll link to that to the site, but I would encourage you to go watch the 2½ minute video with what that is.

LAURA I know.

LESLIE And use that as a starting point -

LAURA I was really afraid you were going to say that.

LESLIE - instead of Kanban. Well, because what I'm saying is you're already writing and there's something where if you start learning the stuff with physically using your hand, it helps your memory, and then move into a digital system. So I don't know if that's the right thing but that was the first thing I thought of. It's 2½ minutes of your time to explore, and if you don't feel any connection with it, don't do it. It's not something I will say -

LAURA No, I do.

LESLIE - "You should try this."

LAURA No, I do and I feel like it's something that I could get really excited about starting, and then would probably just fall by the wayside, and that's keeping me from starting it.

LESLIE All right. The very last question - "What things are blocking my progress?" For me, there are a lot of little things but I deal with those on a weekly basis. Thematically speaking, there are two things. Project management work, which I've already talked about. I just want to acknowledge that to myself as a blocker in that it's not going to go away until I stop doing it.

The second one is that there's still a lot of fear in what I'm doing. The baggage - especially financial fears, and our finances are definitely on the way up. I mean, the trend has been very, very promising, but I know just speaking transparently, watching our savings disappear over the last two years, and I know we're investing in this specifically and we're literally buying the time to heal ourselves as a family, and I know it's not money lost because we're doing - we did with our savings exactly what we wanted to do with it.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE So for that, I'm very, very thankful. But there's this fear side of me that distracts me from doing the work, because if you chase the fear it's bad. It's bad. So I just want to acknowledge that as a blocker so I can deal with it. In my quiet time and my prayers, in meditation, I want to be able to deal with that and set it aside so that I'm not worried about it during the day, and I can keep going and doing it. Because we have everything in place to deal with it. We're not doing anything dumb with money, and so it's - but it's there and I needed to acknowledge that.

LAURA Oh, I'm there with you. I had a moment last week where it felt very dire and I was like, "Well, how fast could we move out of our house, rent it out, borrow my parents' motorhome so we could live in it?" I seriously went down that road. It actually was very comforting for me. I was like, "That's not a bad plan. If it came to it, we could do that." We have people who love us and would help take care of us.

LESLIE Yeah.

LAURA So as much as the savings account dwindles -

LESLIE I have friends that have straight out told me that they will hire me part-time to help me through this time, because they believe in what we're doing too. And I can be legitimately helpful to them. Just over the past couple months I've had two friends tell me privately, "Hey, Les, if it comes to it you tell me, and I will put you on the payroll, and we'll get you to work and doing these things." I don't ever want it to come to that but it just felt like this gift, like this affirmation - "No, you keep going what you're doing. We're behind you." To have a group of quality people like that around us - it's going to make me cry a little.

LAURA I know. I always tear up when you tell that story.

LESLIE So we are - and that's another reason to get over this fear. It's not because that's a safety net, it's because it's an affirmation and it's this call to be more responsible, to really keep after this, to get rid of the blockers preventing us from doing this work. So yeah, we're going to be okay.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE What about you? Oh yeah, because that's my - PM work and fear. What about you? What are your blockers?

LAURA Really, my biggest block [chuckles] is my hormones. One of my goals was fitness related, and while I am definitely getting more fit I am not losing the baby weight. Which is really the cumulative weight of three babies, and it is not a happy place for me physically right now. I'm doing all the right things and my body is not changing, and it's very frustrating. So I know that I'm due to go get my thyroid tested, because thyroid issues run in my family.

The other thing that I want to do is invest in personal training because I just thrive - hey, yeah, when someone's telling me what to do [chuckles]. There it is again, that theme. We once had a personal trainer together.

LESLIE Oh my goodness, John. If there's by some chance you're listening to this, thank you so much, you changed our lives.

LAURA He was amazing. We had him after Alana was born.

LESLIE He moved. He had the audacity to move from Bend.

LAURA I know. But I want to do that again. I want to start out slower than the - what's it called? HIIT, High Impact - whatever. Crossfit, basically, but not as cultish. I need to start slower than that, be kind to my body, and resurrect my core muscles after three pregnancies and whatnot. But I really need to do that and it is - it doesn't feel financially viable right now, but I also know if I don't I'm just that much farther behind when we finally feel like we can afford it. So we've talked about it and we're going to find a way to afford it.

LESLIE Yeah. I mean, this month we've done better than - in April we will have done - I think we will have earned as much as January, February and March combined.

LAURA [chuckles].

LESLIE Which sounds amazing - it is - but it's still not a lot [chuckles].

LAURA Keep in mind we didn't pay ourselves at all in January. Yeah, anyway.

LESLIE January was pretty dire.

LAURA Yeah. So anyway, really my biggest block is my hormones, I'm just going to say. I just need to help my poor body.

LESLIE And we'll find a way to invest in these things because again, I know - I've proven to myself over the years and all the studies show that business owners who take care of themselves physically do better. I know that spending a couple hundred bucks finding a way to make that work is going to ultimately have a return on investment that is (1) great for you personally. I mean, even if there wasn't a business angle to the thinking, you're worth it -

LAURA Thank you.

LESLIE - to figure out how to do it. (2) There is a very real business aspect. People who take care of themselves physically on a regular basis and

figure out how to improve that, it just improves their ability to think. Because you take care of the body, the mind opens up, and when your mind opens up, you have the ability to get more clarity, and when you have clarity you do the right things more often. So I have no doubt that investing in you, figuring out how to invest this in you, will pay off in all the right ways. We just have to figure out how to make it work.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE Is that it?

LAURA Do you have any goals that you've already completed?

LESLIE Yes, I do.

LAURA Let's talk about those really quick.

LESLIE From my goal list, I have two of my goals for the year that I completed. The first is to create a free product by the end of March, and that's the Haywire newsletter. The Haywire newsletter I started, I got that out right at the end of March. I got some really good feedback.

LAURA [chuckles] 11:57.

LESLIE Literally. Like, minutes before my deadline I got it out.

LAURA That's awesome. Good for you.

LESLIE And I also need to send a shout-out to the people that helped me get it out, because I did not do this alone, but Derek helped with the design, Mervyn helped with the editing, Matt helped me give directions and resources, you helped with the editing, Phil made sure we had all the technical stuff in place to actually get it out there and promote it on the site. It was a Haywire effort, but I feel it was a little bit my baby to get this first one out the door. So I felt really good that I actually got that done and out there.

The second one that I did is I actually started coaching, coaching clients. My original goal was a little bit different in that I wanted to have a group coaching thing set up. I still want to do that this year but it became obvious to me in February, and I think I talked - no, I haven't talked about this yet. The group thing, I just didn't have enough of a base to start with, because in order to make those groups effective you need a pool, because how you put those groups together is really important. You can't just take five business owners and say, "Hey, you're a mastermind group now and we're going to make it work." I could, but that's not the right thing to do.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE I still wanted to get that done in February, so I switched to individual coaching. I bit the bullet and I just started asking if I can coach people. Sure enough, now I have coaching clients and so I'm doing it. So those are the -

LAURA And they're your favorite - that's kind of your favorite work right now, huh?

LESLIE Yeah, by far. By far the coaching is my favorite work.

LAURA You have some really great clients.

LESLIE Yeah. Coaching and podcasting are my favorite. It's easily my two favorite things right now. But no one's paying me for podcasting yet, so coaching is where it's at [chuckles]. And I love the type of coaching I do because it's coaching and consulting, and the way that I define the difference is that coaching is where I'm helping you do the right work, consulting is where I'm doing the right work for you. So consulting would be helping you write a sales proposal, coaching would be training your team on how to write sales proposals, or training you on positioning, or training you on a particular thing, or guiding you through things so you can own it and do it yourself.

That's kind of how I've come to understand the difference between coaching and consulting, and I do both. I really enjoy both, but I've always done consulting, but this is the first time I'm being paid for coaching and I love it. I just want to get so good at that, at both group and one-on-one. Yeah, so I really love that.

So, those are the two things I've - well, and there's - I think the other goal I want to point out that I made really good progress on is taking each of our kids on an exclusive date, or spending exclusive time with them. I've kept that commitment every month so far, and I've already completed it for April as well. So yeah, those are probably the things that I want to report on now in terms of things I've completed and that I'm really happy with the progress on.

LAURA The one that I have on my list that we completed was we did a house swap already.

LESLIE That's right.

LAURA We spent spring break in Portland and our friends stayed down here. The only flaw in that is that we didn't get to hang out with them. They're super cool people.

LESLIE Turns out they're awesome people that we do have a great time hanging out with. Next time - we've already talked about next time we will house swap to try and have a little bit of a crossover so we actually get to spend some time with them.

[sighs] Anything else? This was a meaty show.

LAURA This was awesome. I really like a retrospective. I feel super energized.

LESLIE Yeah, so going back to your original question - "I think I did it wrong" - well, no, you didn't. You made it your own and you answered the questions in a way that helped you think about it, and that's the main purpose of a retrospective, is to help you understand what's working, what's not, things you can do better, and be able to describe that and have an honest conversation about it. That's what's happened. Now we have things that we're actively going to work on from it, so yeah, that's a retrospective.

I would encourage you to take these five questions, make your own versions out of them, try them out, and just do it on a regular basis. Try to have weekly ones or bi-weekly ones, then do a higher level one like this on a quarterly basis too. Because that will really help you keep your commitments, both the ones you made at the beginning of the year, new commitments, that sort of thing.

All right. We're going to take a brief break and then come back with what we're going to do for each other this week, and close out the show. We'll be right back.

All right, and we're back with what we're going to do for each other this week. This is kind of the heart of the show where we are proactive about finding ways to encourage and support each other for the following week. I'll start this week because mine is short and sweet.

I am going to make sure that I'm not tempting you to stay up late, and therefore myself as well, because sometimes we'll - I'll get a show and I really want to watch it with you. So it may not seem like a big deal but - I know we've had conversations, "Yeah, but it'll be 10:15 or 10:30 when it's over, and that's not too late," but then it never works out that way because the show may be over 10:15 but then we're awake, then we're not in bed until 10:45 or 11:00. So if we can't finish by 10:00, we probably shouldn't be doing it.

I'm just going to be active and play my part in that, because that's something we're both committed to and we both know that life's better when we do that. So yeah, I won't be a source of staying up late temptation.

LAURA [chuckles] Thank you. I love that. [sighs] This week, I am going to - so a long time ago, really when we were planning the original idea that has now morphed into the *Marriage Startup Podcast*, one of the exercises that we went through was doing a family values map, like the word map -

LESLIE Oh yeah, yeah.

LAURA It's like a word cloud of your family values and the things that are most important to you. I've always meant to do some kind of thing on our wall with that, and I am going to do that this week.

LESLIE Oh, I would love that.

LAURA I know.

LESLIE That's awesome.

LAURA It feels so overwhelming, but I think I can do it.

LESLIE All right. Well, if you need help with that, let me know.

LAURA I just need kids not around when I'm painting.

LESLIE Done.

LAURA Thank you [chuckles]. That's the most overwhelming part.

LESLIE Yeah. I'd be happy to coordinate and help that happen because that would be very, very good for the atmosphere and environment that we want. I will gladly accept and help out with that.

LAURA Okay, cool. I kind of feel like we might have to do the word cloud again since it's been a few years.

LESLIE Yeah, I think so.

LAURA So I'll need your help on that one of these evenings.

LESLIE We want to make sure the kids can contribute to that but when you actually are ready to do the painting part of it, I will -

LAURA Yes. You guys can have a Minecraft date or go on a walk.

LESLIE That's right. I will figure that out.

LAURA Okay, cool.

LESLIE All right. That's going to do it for us. It's been a while since we broke the hour limit on our episodes but we managed to do it this week. It was a meaty episode.

Thank you, guys, so, so much for listening. If you have comments specifically for this episode you can leave them at marriagestartup.com/35. That's the secret shortcut for all the episodes. You can do [marriagestartup.com/\[the episode number\]](http://marriagestartup.com/[the episode number]) and you'll go right to that episode, and you can leave comments there that we will respond to as fast as we can.

You can also leave us feedback on Facebook at facebook.com/marriagestartup. And we were active on Twitter this last week. We actually had some nice exchanges, we announced the podcast episode on Twitter and got rewarded for it, felt very good. Just want to say thank you for that. You know what? I should actually call that person out by name because she was so wonderful about being encouraging. What is that? Hmm, distraction, typing.

LAURA Wasn't it someone else who had just discovered that we even had a podcast too?

LESLIE It was Kerri. Kerri Koenig? I can't pronounce your last name, Kerri, I'm so sorry about that. But Kerri, as soon as I announced the last episode on Twitter, she was like back on there saying thank you. We had a quick dialog and she was very much trying to inspire us to be active there, and it worked, Kerri - we're going to do that again this week. For anyone else that wants to find us on Twitter, you can find us at [@marriagestartup](https://twitter.com/marriagestartup).

Then of course you can always email us. If you have something private to share, something that you just want to give us feedback on but you don't want to make public - at least at first - anything that you email us is considered private by default and we won't share it without your express permission. So you can email us at hello@marriagestartup.com and share your thoughts there.

If you find the show valuable, which we hope that you do, other than giving us direct feedback, which is the thing that we value most, the next most valuable thing you can do is first, you can leave us a review at iTunes. The easiest way to do that is to go to marriagestartup.com/itunes, and that will take you straight to the iTunes podcast listing where *Marriage Startup* is. You can leave a rating and a review there, and that really helps promote the show.

I'm going to steal something from the *Fizzle* podcast, which I love. They said, "When you leave a rating, you either leave a one-star or a five-star - none of that three-star mess."

LAURA [chuckles].

LESLIE Have a strong opinion on it. We would rather get a one-star with critical feedback that can help us figure out how to make the show better than a three-star where you're kind of guarding your words. Or leave us a five-star review, even better. And we'll also take four-stars, but yeah, if you're going to go three, just - not three. Go down to two or one and really tell us what we could do to make the show better for you.

All right, so there's my pitch there. And since this is a non-profit and it costs us about \$200 a month to put this show out, we would also gladly accept donations. We are not officially a non-profit yet. That's probably one of the things we should do this quarter is actually set up *Marriage Startup* as an official 503C thing so that people can get tax breaks for helping us out.

But if you want to just donate to the show, we've had a couple people do that already. Just email us at hello@marriagestartup.com and we'll figure that out. Eventually we'll get on Patreon or some sort of system where we can make that a lot easier for anyone who wants to contribute. Thank you, guys, so much for everyone who's done that so far this week.

We're looking forward to our new schedule. This is going to go out to you on Monday and Tuesday. I'm really excited about that. So, we will see you guys next week. And as always, be kind to each other.

[Outro music]