

Marriage Startup Episode 39

[Intro music]

- LESLIE Welcome to the Marriage Startup Podcast, Episode 39 – Pause and Praise. In this episode, we press pause because we need a breather, and we'll probably have to cough. And I also have the hiccups, so there's that. It's been a rough four weeks, and this past week was especially challenging.
- LAURA We're going to reset by giving praise and thanks to each other, our family, our friends, and the gracious *Marriage Startup* community.
- LESLIE We'll be back in the next episode to continue the series with Dr. Wagner on Human Flourishing, and that will continue in Episode 40, not this episode. Yeah, we're already flustered and off script, because it's been that way.
- LAURA But of course this week we will still end with what we're going to do for each other, which is the heart of the show.
- LESLIE I'm your co-host, Leslie Camacho. I am the Chief Espresso Officer [chuckles] of the Camacho household, and professionally speaking I'm in transition yet again, for all good reasons.
- LAURA And I'm your co-host, Laura Camacho. I'm just going to leave it at that. That's all I am right now. I showed up, I'm the co-host right now.
- LESLIE Yep. The news and updates is simply this. If you listened to the last episode, we are starting Season 3 with health, doing a deep dive there, because it's been ragged for us most of this year, and it's been very challenging. The past four weeks have been especially challenging. As we started to push to the next show done with Dr. Wagner, and tried to get schedules, the stress just mounted, and not just with *Marriage Startup*. This podcast in the overall picture is something that is really meaningful to each other and to our listeners, but it takes up pretty little time comparatively. So when the stress starts to happen with the podcast, it's a good measure that everything else is out of whack.
- LAURA Yeah.
- LESLIE But even before that, I think that we had probably the worst week in our marriage, at least in terms of communication, that we've had in a long, long time. That was the real measurement that we had to press pause. We are usually really good about communicating with each other, and last week we said the same things and we meant completely different things. Instead of talking to each other like we normally do, it just sort of all came to a head on Saturday. Yeah, I don't even...
- LAURA I think it was just because we've been operating as individuals for so long, because you were gone for eight days and I know I got in my head – I was in survival mode, "I have to just do everything all by myself. No one's here to help," and I think that I never really got out of that mindset once you got home, and we didn't ever really sync back up.
- LESLIE No, we didn't, and we tried. We talked about it but we never actually followed through and scheduled it, or when we both affirmed that yes, we need to rest, we didn't actually ask for what we needed for ourselves, and

that's where we got into trouble. So yeah, we just have to hit pause. Plus the business trip itself was a success, but you and I really haven't had a chance to sit down and talk about it. I have had two family members die within three weeks and I haven't even begun to unpack that, let alone share what I'm going through with you on that. Then life just continues.

You don't get to stop very often, but here is one area that we felt it was necessary to press pause, and then also to share the why. I don't want to – I don't feel like it's productive to share the nitty-gritty details of what happened between you and I, but I do think it's important we say, "Yeah, it was rough." We can count on one hand still the number of really bad days we've had in our marriage, and I would say Saturday made that list.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE We recovered, we're both still feeling really raw and really tender, but I think we're back in sync in terms of you and I. But we'll just get quickly out of sync again if we push forward at the same speed that we've been going at. So that brings us to today's episode [chuckles]. It's Monday morning, I have a call in three minutes. We're going to finish this episode by sneaking it in between my calls this morning. At the beginning of the week, that's another sign that something is seriously off.

But let's just set the stage, because from your listening standpoint it will all be seamless. Again, we just want to talk about how this works at our end and how we work through that. We are big believers that when you reset, especially in times of difficulty, it's important to step back and just give some thank yous, and some things we need to share some praise with. What are the positives happening in our lives? What are the things outside of all the dramatic stuff that we really need to focus into, that will help us reset our posture about how we want to look at each other and at the world?

We've described the pause portion fairly effectively, I'd say. Is there anything you want to add to what the last week was like?

LAURA Yeah. I just think there wasn't a moment where we said, "Hey, hold on a minute. Wait. Stop." We tried to connect but it was all as life was just pushing at us, and so there really wasn't that time to just stop and reconnect. So we're trying to reconnect in mid-motion, and that's where things started getting really skewed for us. I think it's very important if you start feeling that – and that's one thing we've committed to each other. If we start feeling that way, someone needs to call time out.

That needs to be not any sort of condemnation of either one of us and our communication skills or anything, but just an acknowledgement of, "Life is crazy. We're going to get farther and farther apart, and things are going to get messier and messier if we don't stop right now and get reconnected."

LESLIE Yep, so that's what we spent our time and energy doing yesterday, and I am so thankful it worked. All right. I need to stop, take this call.

LAURA [chuckles].

LESLIE The second portion of this shorter episode is going to be on the praise list - things that we are thankful for, things that we've received through no fault

of our own that will help us reset our posture and our look at what we're doing, and the next steps. We'll see you guys shortly.

[break music]

And we're back, trying to get this very, very – this may be the most haphazard episode we've attempted in the short life of this podcast, but I didn't want to skip it because this is what it's like. Our friend Jamie Landsman from Twitter posted – she had a Tweet, not specifically at us, but she said, "I wish there was a podcast that showed life in the kitchen, in a home -

LAURA At home with three kids [chuckles].

LESLIE - first thing in the morning, in a home where you work out of the home, and everyone's involved." It was something like that. Jamie, I'm sorry if I didn't get the exact quote right. It was something to that effect. This is not in the kitchen but I feel like this is in the spirit of that.

LAURA Yeah.

LESLIE So we attempted to get the first part recorded, or we successfully got the first part recorded this morning. The day has passed, I've been on the phone since we've been recording. I managed to sneak in two 15-minute power naps.

LAURA Oh, did you?!

LESLIE Because I was exhausted, and on one of my client calls today, the contractor I'm working with did some training and so I just put it on mute, and that's when I ate my lunch. Because I had to record the training session so I couldn't stop there, but he was the one doing all the talking so I just muted, turned the video off the GoToMeeting, and ate the leftover curry you made me, and just going full steam.

So I had a very good day, but after this I still have a scope of work to write, I have a budget that's due and that's going to take about an hour to get done, and I have a deadline to meet on that, then I have a Haywire meeting this evening, and a meeting after that, and then it'll be 10 PM. It's just one of those days at the end of a very long period.

We have a guest in the studio with us. Ethan's sitting on my lap, because we attempted to leave him in the house with the girls and there was much wailing. You want to say hi, Ethan? No? Okay. He's probably going to make some noise here before too long, but you know what? That's what it's like. That's what it's like trying to get all this stuff off the ground and coordinate two businesses, life at home, kids, sickness, and all that stuff. All right, there you go, buddy.

LAURA Yeah. This is not the shiny, happy view.

LESLIE No.

LAURA This is the real view [chuckles]. This is how it is sometimes.

LESLIE It felt important for the spirit of what we're trying to do to not talk about this next week, in the past, in some sort of scripted version. It's just happened, it's raw, it's real. I think you and I are in a much better place than when we first started this morning. In any case, let's get back to the second part of

this, which is the praise part, because I'm in a really good place to explore that.

ETHAN [slams door as he exits studio, devastated that he missed his cue].

LAURA Okay.

LESLIE While our kid wanders out into the rain-soaked yard.

LAURA In his socks.

ETHAN [makes questioning noise, as if to say, "Do you not see I have socks on, Father? Honestly, what do you take me for?!"]

LESLIE In his socks, so that's okay [laughter].

LAURA You go first.

LESLIE Welcome to business at home. Clients who might be listening, don't hold it against me.

LAURA No, you should be amazed that he does such great work with so much disruption in his life.

LESLIE [chuckles] It's not usually like this either.

LAURA No.

LESLIE It's just part of the process. All right. I'm just going to go down my list. It's a short, meaningful list, and this is stuff that I'm thankful for that's happened in the past three weeks. I have a lot more to be thankful for than that, but I just wanted to focus in on the same period that has caused all the challenge and distress in my life, that there's also been some amazing stuff there as well.

The first one is my friend Nathan, who is the co-founder of a place called The Cotton Bureau. The day after my stepbrother died, or maybe it was the day - I don't remember. He certainly did not know - I got a DM from him saying, "Hey, I just wanted to show my support for what you're doing in the podcasting realm. I wanted to give you a coupon for a free t-shirt."

ETHAN Ooh!

LESLIE Because The Cotton Bureau makes custom t-shirts. They do really awesome stuff. We're going to link to his company site.

ETHAN [makes serious noises, as if to say, "That's right. Everybody should check them out because they're extremely cool."]

LESLIE But I've known these guys for a while. They've transitioned, they've made a huge upheaval. They went from being a creative agency -

ETHAN Hee hee!

LESLIE - to doing these online t-shirts full-time. I have a lot of respect for what they do, and it just meant the world to be to get that out of the blue. I used it to order a nice shirt that I love because it's not the typical tech nerd grey or black.

LAURA [chuckles].

LESLIE It's a bright orange shirt that represents the Pacific Northwest even. I love it. I'll send a picture of it, or put it out there, because I'm not sure you can still get it. But in any case, I was really thankful for that. The other thing that I'm just really thankful for is our friends Nicole and Andrew. You guys, I mess up your last name all the time.

LAURA Hunzicker.

LESLIE Yes, Hunzicker. They invited us over for Friday night, this past Friday, and we so needed that. It was - we've never really gotten our families together like that before, and it was a really good experience. We're going to do it again. I don't know, they've just shown us a lot of support, love and support, and I think what's been really nice is that they've made the effort. We have certainly been stretched to our limit, and they've been the one to reach out and do that. It's so, so appreciated.

LAURA They actually live around the corner from us, and they frequently entertain our kids. They have two kids a little bit older than ours, but they're really sweet boys and they are good friends with our girls.

ETHAN Tee hee!

So the Hunzickers are often hosting our children for play dates [chuckles].

LESLIE What's really neat is we can switch between business talk, and parent talk, and personal talk, and professional talk with them, because she runs a business here in town in Bend, and he's a serial entrepreneur of sorts, and an avid rock climber, so we can talk about the extreme sport stuff that he's way better at than I am. Anyway, it's just a lot of fun, and I'm really thankful for the new and growing friendship with them.

I'm also really thankful that on the funeral trip to go see my - for my grandmother's services, it was the first time that my brother and my sister and I have been in the same place I think since - for a year. Even a year ago it was a very trying experience, and this time it was very relaxed. The three of us got to just hang out and -

ETHAN Yeah.

- it was the first time the three of us had been together with my mom for a long time. It was just really special. I really, really appreciated it.

Then the Haywire guys have just been amazing. They've really had my back and supported me. We made a big business pitch, then it went kind of sideways but not necessarily in a bad way, so there's been a lot of upheaval in their lives, at least in terms of Haywire's concerned. We're not sure where that's all going to land just yet, but just at a person-to-person level, they've really had my back and supported me, and each other too.

Then in the same space, I've received two partnership offers. I'm not sure how that's going to play out, but I am profoundly thankful that people that I have huge amounts of respect and admiration for -

ETHAN Yeah!

- have reached out and said, "Hey, we want to work with you in a really meaningful capacity that kind of honors the things that we've been working for in all these different ways."

ETHAN [makes noises, as if to say, "My daddy rocks. You guys would be so lucky to work with him. Especially because I am a secret ninja, hi-ya!"]

I don't want to disclose what those are just yet, because they're in no way finalized and who knows what's going to happen, but I feel like regardless of how either of those play out, I'm just so thankful for the encouragement of what it means.

Then the last part is the relationship with my kids that I have, especially with Alana and Sophia. It just keeps getting better and better. I came back and I found love notes to me. Sophia wrote about me in her homework, and I have made sure to take each of them on one-on-one dates. We went on a daddy/daughters date.

LAURA And Ethan was super stoked to see you too, and that was really rewarding. We picked him up together after I got you at the airport. We picked them up at their sitter's house and he just wanted to be in your arms -

ETHAN Yeah!

- and close to you, and that was really, really rewarding for me to see too.

LESLIE Then financially we were in the black in April, and it looks like we're going to be in the black in May too. So that'll be two months in a row where we're in the black, and that's extremely welcomed.

LAURA Yeah [chuckles]. It's a big relief.

LESLIE Extremely, extremely welcomed. So that's my list, and I hope people can tell by the sound of my voice that this isn't a brag list.

LAURA No [chuckles].

LESLIE This is just the way I have to reset myself in times where it's been really trying, to just say, "No, the world is not actually against me. There are things that are working." But it requires deliberate effort, especially if you deal with depression like we do. It requires deliberate effort to put it out in front of you and just recognize it, acknowledge it, and then also accept it. This is just a public acceptance of the good things happening in my life that I intend to follow through on, and use as inspiration to -

ETHAN Yeah, Daddy!

- continue just going. All right, that's my list. You may have a harder time because the boy is now jumping off your leg onto -

LAURA He's using me as a ladder to -

LESLIE Onto the couch.

LAURA - jump onto the couch.

ETHAN Hi!

LAURA Well, I had so much support last week from our friend Pat, who has sadly left for the rest of the season back up to Olympia, but while she was down here this winter she found a house in Bend, so she's going to be splitting time between here and Olympia. Her house is within pretty easy walk of us, and while you were gone Pat really took care of us. She took the girls

a few times. She took us out to brunch once. She fed us supper another time.

Friendship with Pat is really easy, very flowing, reciprocal. I take care of one of her kids on Tuesday, or I have been, but we just pass our kids back and forth as we find it convenient. I really leaned on her a lot while you were gone, and I'm really going to miss her [chuckles]. Oh, man.

LESLIE Pat is great because she's just far enough ahead of us in life to feel like she's a legitimate mentor to some of the stuff that we do, including the business stuff.

ETHAN Yeah!

LESLIE Not only is she a super kind person, but incredibly intelligent and accomplished.

LAURA Yes. She is probably the smartest person that I know, actually.

LESLIE Yeah, she's up there.

LAURA And definitely the best educated.

LESLIE Yes. She's easily the best educated person I know.

ETHAN Uh... yep!

LESLIE [chuckles] At least that I have regular contact with. She's so sharing and easy with the information too. But her kids are our kids' age, and so it doesn't get into that weird zone where too far ahead. She personally is ahead in that aspect of her life, but in terms of parenting we're on the same page, facing the same challenges. That's the other thing that makes the friendship work, and I really like that.

LAURA Yeah. The other thing that really got me through was -

ETHAN Uh-oh! Heh!

LAURA I just have a huge debt of gratitude to the makers of WeChat [laughter]. I talk to my best friend who lives in Oklahoma every single day on WeChat. We have since included her sister-in-law in our WeChat group.

ETHAN Oh yeah!

LAURA I'm forging a bond with her sister-in-law, so I have these two really close friends that I get to talk to every day. That has really kept me sane. We have dumb conversations and we have super deep conversations. Right now we're all talking about the books that we're going to write, helping each other plan them out. We cover the whole gamut of self-help group stuff [chuckles] and it's really, really special. That would not be possible without WeChat. It's been a really valuable tool.

LESLIE That reminds me, I owe you guys a write-up from some of the feedback I've gotten.

LAURA Oh, good.

LESLIE I don't know him that well, but a guy who's always been really friendly to us for a long time, his name's Kai, on Twitter. I met him once because he helped us with some research we were doing for an app last year. But he

had some stellar advice and contacted me with some people to give you guys some places to start in the book writing stuff.

LAURA Cool.

ETHAN Ha ha!

LESLIE I've just got to put it together. So Kai, if you're listening, thank you also for that.

ETHAN Ouch!

LESLIE Now Ethan's gotten used to everyone he's saying hello.

LAURA The other support I had was from my Facebook parenting groups -

ETHAN Oh yeah.

LAURA - and the special needs sub-group. I leaned on them a lot this week and crowd sourced some information and some script writing that I needed to get done for a situation that arose. It was super stressful for me and they really helped carry that, so I really didn't feel like I needed to lean on you so much. I was grateful for that because you had so much going on already, I really - I knew that you were willing, I didn't want to keep it from you, but I also knew I didn't have to share all the gory details of everything. That was really, really helpful for me.

We have amazing babysitters who love our kids, and I'm so thankful for them. They are so faithful and kind.

ETHAN Yep!

LAURA I just finished scheduling out the days for summer. I'm just so happy that we have people who love our kids and whom our kids love to be with. We'll have time even in the summer to continue to schedule, even though Sophia's not going to be in school.

I think the last one I want to add, because this one is - it's the most timely. It's most on my mind because today was one of my biggest work days for Wild Goose Guidance. I am just so thankful for my clients. I sent out 65 New Moon Cards today, which is just a little one card promise for the month, and a way to set your intentions, to guide your personal growth throughout the month.

I sent out 65 of those this morning and I've had such nice feedback. Someone gave me a tip! This month is the first month that I offered the opportunity for someone to click a link to PayPal and send me a tip, because my New Moon Card readings are always free. I really want to stand by that, but it's also a huge time commitment for me.

LESLIE Yes. Yes, it is.

LAURA It's getting faster. I'm getting better at it, and especially when I get away, I can do it a lot faster than if I have a kid on my lap, like this. But my clients are just amazing. They work so hard on their personal growth, and it's so rewarding to get to walk with them in this area of their lives. I don't know all of their stories but I know little snippets. I know some really, really amazing people because of this business, and I'm really thankful for that.

LESLIE So the thing is, when you start making like this more and more just comes to mind. I'm still thinking. There's the Stewards' Group, the guys in there that really support me. I don't want to sidetrack into a theological religious thing but I have felt really supported just spiritually speaking over the last three weeks. So yeah, I think the invitation is that we could not have made this list on Saturday. We just felt like -

LAURA [chuckles] No.

LESLIE It felt like the entire world was against us and all the good things that we'd ever done had turned or fled or gone away. To get back into a positive space, we just had to press pause on our lives, recommit to each other, and then start making the thankful list as a way to do it, because now the other thing that's happening as I'm going through this exercise is I'm thinking, "All right. Who else do I need to help? Who else is going through these things?" I won't say their names but I can already think, "Oh yeah, three people have reached out to me in the past couple weeks and I know that they are also going through challenging times."

I should be the Nathan and send them - I don't have t-shirts but I can think of one person I should buy a book for and send an encouraging email to, and just reciprocate, with no expectation other than this is how you build relationships that sustain you through these things.

ETHAN A-ha-ha! I said bah!

LAURA [chuckles] I have one more.

LESLIE All right, go for it.

LAURA I am so, so thankful for Siobhán who does our transcripts -

LESLIE Yes.

LAURA - and who is going to have to -

ETHAN YES!!

LAURA I don't know how much of Ethan you're going to translate and transcribe, Siobhán, but I know you're going to try your best because you love his little voice. Thank you for championing our podcast and helping us get it out to people who would rather read than listen.

ETHAN [makes approving noises as if to say, "How could she not love my little voice? For I am adorable."]

LAURA I know that they appreciate it so much, and so do we.

LESLIE Yes, yes. Amen to that.

ETHAN Mummy?

LESLIE You're done?

ETHAN Yeah.

LESLIE All right. Well, normally we would take a break before what we're going to do for each other this week, but I already know what it is. So why don't I start and we'll just wrap this thing up?

LAURA Okay.

LESLIE Because Ethan's gotten comfortable, as we can all hear [laughter]. Laura, what I'm going to do this week is continue what we started on Saturday afternoon. We just need to over-communicate and make sure that we're actually scheduling time for each other -

ETHAN [sighs and makes noises to say, "Well, I could have told you that, Father."]

LESLIE - not just saying it but blocking it out -

ETHAN Wheeee!

LESLIE - making sure that I make myself understood, that you're not having to guess, and to make sure I'm inviting you to do the same. That's it. I don't want to make it more complicated than that.

LAURA That is actually what I had in mind too.

ETHAN [sighs] Happy.

LAURA This last week made it very clear to me that I still have some pretty unhealthy communication habits that I really need to work on -

ETHAN [makes firm noises as if to say "I don't know why you two don't just ask me, I'm right here!"]

LAURA - and I want to work on them with you, and it's scary for me. But I know that you're trustworthy and that you have my best in mind.

ETHAN Wow! Oh, wow!! What? Ooh!

LAURA [chuckles] So this week, I want to practice that over-communication without fear, and just be really bold and to speak my heart. I know that you trust my heart and you love my heart, even if my heart feels ugly things sometimes.

ETHAN Okay. Okay.

LESLIE Okay. Is that okay, Ethan?

ETHAN Okay. Okay.

LESLIE [chuckles] I accept. All right, let's get this wrapped up. We are recording with Marc on Thursday morning, so you're going to hear this some time Monday night or Tuesday or Wednesday. If you have questions to get in front of Marc, you'll have more than one shot to do this.

ETHAN Hep... [thump].

LESLIE We're recording Thursday morning. If there's anything pressing - some of you have asked for a copy of the food logs, and we are trying to get those together. I don't know that they'll be ready this week but I think when we get Episode 40 out, we'll try to have those available so that you guys can follow along with us -

ETHAN Hep... [thump].

LESLIE - and do that for yourselves as well. If you have questions about any of this stuff, feedback in general -

ETHAN Hep... [thump].

LESLIE - we love to hear from you directly. You can email us at hello@marriagestartup.com and that's always confidential. We never disclose that without your permission. You can also find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/marriagestartup](https://www.facebook.com/marriagestartup), and on Twitter, [@marriagestartup](https://twitter.com/marriagestartup).

ETHAN Hep... [thump].

LESLIE Yeah. Is that right? Oh, yeah.

ETHAN So fun!!!!!!!

LAURA It's so fun.

LESLIE It's so fun, it's so fun. If you have comments for this specific episode you can leave a comment at marriagestartup.com/39. That's the secret shortcut -

ETHAN [thump].

LESLIE - to getting any episode of this show.

ETHAN Fun!!!!!!

LESLIE [chuckles] And we respond to all that stuff as quickly as we can.

ETHAN Fun!!!!!!

LESLIE Oh yeah, is it so fun? You want to say bye, Ethan? You want to say bye, everyone?

ETHAN No.

LESLIE Nope? No? Okay. All right.

ETHAN Dad, dad, dad, so fun!!!

LESLIE [laughter] All right. That's where we're going to leave it. Thank you, guys, so much for your grace and patience. And hey, if nothing else, remember you can pause and make your praise list, and help get past whatever troubles you're going with. And as always, be kind to each other.

ETHAN It's so fun!!!!!!

LESLIE We will see you next week.

[Outro music]