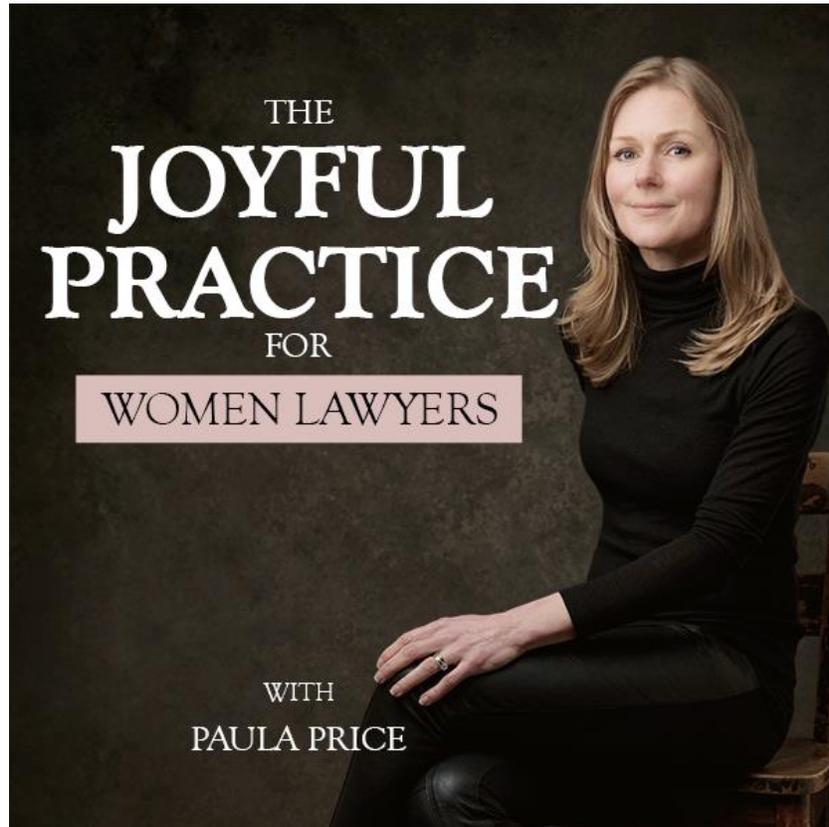


Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Paula Price

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast episode number 57.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, lawyer turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. Join me every week for a break from the hustle so we can focus on you, what you truly want, and how you can create it.

If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. It's Paula. I'm so happy to have you join me this week. It is a pleasure to be recording this episode for you. It is a beautiful June morning here in Vancouver. It's not particularly warm, but it's warmer than it has been. We've been having a bit of a June-uary in this neck of the woods, which means quite a bit of rain and pretty cool weather and a lot of gray days.

But I am okay with that because I think what it means is that we'll have a slightly cooler summer and maybe fewer forest fires, which have been really affecting us recently in the past few years. So fingers crossed everybody that this is a good sign of things to come. It is also exactly the middle of June, and it is my mother's birthday today. So big shout out to my amazing mom who is a total inspiration.

She is a retired schoolteacher who ventured into the land of screenplay writing. What is so amazing is that when we chat often she will let me know of an award that she has received. Having entered into a competition, whether it's for screenwriting or music that she's writing in relation to her screenplays, that has won some sort of an award at an international

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

competition. It really is amazing. So thank you mom for being so amazing. Happy birthday. You're the perfect mom for me. Thank you.

So for today's episode, we are talking about casting a compelling vision. I love that you have joined me for this episode because casting a compelling vision is in itself such a fun thing to do. Really, today we are talking about casting a compelling vision for your career, for your future. An idea that came to mind just as I was about to hit record was also just looking at the summer.

If you're like me then you're about to have your children finish up the school year, then you may be looking at a couple of months where you're going to be a lot more hands on in terms of planning the day to day. So as I was about to hit record, as I said, I thought hmm, not only can I create a compelling vision of the future in terms of career and professional work, but what about applying some of these principles to creating a compelling vision for the summer. So I'll just drop that thought with you.

But what I'm really talking about today is creating a compelling vision for your future in terms of your professional work, which I think ultimately also is wrapped up in your nonprofessional work. I like to look at us as whole humans whose professional work and whose personal life and interests and all that, they all wrap up. We're all one person doing all these things. So we can't really look at one in isolation from the other.

So with that we're going to jump into today's discussion. If you're listening to this episode and you're thinking about casting a compelling vision for yourself, I would ask you to think about what that means for you. For a lot of lawyers that I work with and who I speak with about their careers, often what they want is to experience more joy in their day to day. They want more fulfillment. They want to find more meaning in their work. They want to create more of an impact. Maybe that's why you're here. Maybe that's

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

why you listen to this podcast because it's all about creating a joyful practice.

When you're thinking about casting out your vision into the future, it helps to start with where you are right now. Maybe you're feeling some of these things. These are things that some of my clients report feeling to me. Maybe you feel like you're okay for now, but you can see yourself reaching a plateau pretty soon. Or you're growing, but you're growing in a direction that doesn't feel quite right to you.

Maybe you're taking over somebody else's practice. It's not exactly the practice that you would have created for yourself where you find yourself getting a lot of assignments in a particular field of law that just doesn't resonate. So that might be what you're currently feeling.

It may be that you feel overwhelmed. It may feel like your practice is relentless. It doesn't seem to be slowing down. You don't know how you're going to maintain the pace of your practice. Everybody seems to want your time right now. It's not leaving you any mental bandwidth to take a step back and think about what it is that you want for the future.

It may be that you feel confused about where to start. You know that the path that you're on right now is okay. Or maybe it's not okay. Maybe it's amazing. Really what you want are some ideas about how to make it even more amazing. But sometimes it can be really overwhelming to know what first step you need to take to get there. Where do you even begin?

It may be that you feel constantly rushed, like you're not moving fast enough even though you're working around the clock. You might feel rushed at a micro level, like your day to day is feeling very, very hurried.

It may be that you're looking at your future in the longer term, your five year out future, your 10/20 year out future, and you're thinking that where you

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

are right now, you're just not getting the experience. You're just not doing the work right now that you think is at your level or that is at the level that you wish that you were at. You may also feel increasingly disconnected from your work, your family, your friends, and even yourself as you find yourself drifting, not really knowing where you're headed.

So what you want to feel. We've described the things that you may be feeling right now. Maybe some of those resonate with you. Maybe there are other things that resonate with you. I'd invite you to think about what those are. I would also invite you to think about where you want to be. So what you want, how you want to feel in your practice in the future, is you want to feel satisfied daily. That you're moving toward a goal, and that you're taking clear steps to get there.

You want to feel excited about the future trajectory of your career. You may not know exactly what it's going to look like. But you want to feel excited and motivated. Like every step you're taking is moving you closer to that. You want to be clear about the end goal and confident about what needs to happen next.

So, again, you may not know exactly what that end goal looks like. I mean, maybe you do. Maybe your goal is to become a judge. In which case, you know what that looks like. Chances are you can figure out what those steps are to get there. Or you want to be a partner at your firm, and you know what those steps are to get there. Or maybe what it is that you want is a little bit harder to delineate, but you know, at its core, what it is that you want to be doing in the future.

It may be that you want more ease around time. You don't want to feel so rushed and so hurried all the time. You want to know that you're on your path, and you're exactly where you need to be right now. People may still want you all of the time. You may still have those emails flying into your inbox. But when that happens, you're able to navigate those demands with

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

confidence and with grace. So these are things you may really be wanting to have in your practice.

Finally, you may want to feel more connected. You want to feel really connected with the work that you're doing daily. You want to feel connected with your goals. You want to feel like your purpose is really clear and that your actions are aligned with your values and what it is you're trying to achieve. What you want is to feel in integrity with yourself.

Now chances are you have been thinking about this and you've tried to figure out what a compelling vision would be for you. I mean maybe you've looked around at what's been done before, whether it's at your office or somewhere else. Maybe you looked at the senior members of your law firm. You look at each of them and you look at their practice style. You look at the composition of the clients that they work with and that type of mandates they take on. Maybe you see yourself trying to fit yourself into one of those models.

Maybe you're looking at people who are outside of your organization. Maybe you're on LinkedIn and you're looking at other professionals in different industries. Maybe you're looking at different lawyers and different types of practices. Whether it's in house or a solo practice or a small firm or some other configuration. So you might be looking around and thinking, well who out there is doing it the way that I think that I might like to do it?

What you're looking at is do they seem happy? Have they achieved professionally in alignment with what I would hope to achieve for myself? Maybe you are looking at them thinking is that right for me? Is that a path that I could potentially follow?

Now, I'm all about doing the research, and I'm all about looking at others and looking at how they practice and trying to figure out how that resonates with you in what you want for your own practice. However, one of the

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

potential downsides when you're looking around and looking at what other people are doing is that you may be limiting yourself. You may be limiting yourself to what you can already see.

So if there are certain multiple choice options that are out there and you're limiting yourself in that way, there might be something that is not quite on the menu that you might want to create for yourself. It may also be that as much as you're looking at others to guide the direction that you want to go in, you may be missing out on your own ingenuity and creativity.

So that's where casting a compelling vision for yourself comes in. What you need to do is to create a vision that will compel you to move forward instead of trying to avoid pain, and I'll get to that in a minute. You need to create a vision of your future that is so compelling that you can't stop thinking about it.

When I say future here, I'm thinking about your professional work. But as I mentioned in the introduction, not just your professional work. Your professional work and every other aspect of your life. How do you want that whole package to look? What is that compelling vision of your future? How are we going to design your professional work in a way that aligns with what you want, not just professionally, but also in your nonprofessional work, in your personal life.

Once you create that vision or as you create that vision, I invite you to think about what it feels like to be there. I was listening to this TED Talk recently. It was Marisa Peer. She's a psychotherapist who operates out of the UK. She's very well known. She's got a very interesting way of speaking. She is very compelling.

She talks with exercise. It's all about realizing how connected we are, our thoughts and our actions. I mean her pitch, ultimately, is that we want to partner with our brains in working towards our goals. One of the things that

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

she is highlighting is that our brains are so powerful. Something doesn't have to actually happen for us to feel it in our in our bodies.

She uses the example of cutting a lemon in half. If you were just to imagine in your mind's eye, and I invite you to do that right now as you're listening to this podcast. Imagine you have a lemon, and you cut that lemon in half. So you've got this bright yellow, juicy lemon. We all know lemons are kind of sour. They're fragrant. They're maybe a tiny bit sweet, but mostly they are sour.

So you imagine bringing that lemon to your mouth and biting into it. What happens? If you really imagine it, close your eyes, think about it, what does that do to you? If you're like many people, you will actually produce saliva in your mouth thinking about that lemon.

So the way that you think, without even having a lemon there, can produce a reaction in your body as though there was a lemon there. What I'm inviting you to think about is when you create that compelling vision for yourself, that vision of the future, I would invite you to imagine what it feels like to be in there. What is the equivalent, the lemon reaction if you want to call it that, to being in that future vision for yourself?

Fun, right? When you've got that vision, you can declare it. Maybe not at first, but ultimately you're going to want to announce it in some ways, right? You want to live into that. You're going to be able to make decisions from that place.

There's a wonderful quote. It's attributed often to Hal Elrod, which is this idea that when you set a big goal for yourself, attaining that goal is one thing, but what ultimately matters is who you must become to achieve that goal. That really is at the core of what is so compelling about creating a vision. It is reaching that vision. It is working toward that vision, and it's who you must become in the process.

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

So why does it work? Why is it so compelling? When you create a vision for yourself, when you cast that compelling vision, why is that so effective? There are two things that I would like to highlight here.

Number one is that creating that compelling vision for yourself allows you to tap into your internal motivation. I mentioned before this idea of moving toward pleasure. When you think about what motivates humans, and we are all humans, I think, if you're listening to this podcast. Maybe you're listening to it with a dog in the room. I don't know.

But really, we are all humans, and we are all motivated by two things. We are motivated to avoid pain. Avoid pain. Sorry, I said that a bit oddly. You're also motivated to pursue pleasure. So you're either avoiding pain or pursuing pleasure.

What I would invite you to think about here is how you have typically operated in relation to your career, in relation to your legal work, in relation to your practice. Chances are at least some of the time you have been operating so as to avoid pain.

So what might that look like? Well, let's look at your day right now. What do you have on your agenda? Or maybe it's the end of your workday. So you might be looking backwards. You might be looking at what you did earlier in the day. You might also be looking at what you have to do tomorrow or later in the week. How would you describe it? I mean maybe what your day looks like is you're working toward a deadline and you don't want to disappoint anybody. You don't want to file late. You don't want to miss out on your limitation period.

Maybe you're planning your week so that you don't waste time, right. You're trying to avoid pain. You're trying to avoid the discomfort of letting somebody down. Maybe you're responding to client emails because you want to do your work, but you're afraid they're going to feel neglected. Or

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

you're showing up at events because you don't want to miss out. I mean it could be that what is driving you is the desire to avoid pain.

What I'm inviting you to think about today is what if you were able to shift the paradigm in which you're operating so that you were compelled toward pleasure instead of reacting or avoiding pain? So what would that look like? Instead of rushing toward a deadline so that you don't miss a limitation period, what if we were able to reframe that or reimagine that so that maybe what you're thinking of is here I am moving toward pleasure. I am filing the world's most compelling brief because I'm going to help my client get the result that they deserve.

How does that feel different? Right? I'm scrambling to make it to the deadline so that I get it submitted in time. There's that feeling. Then there's. I'm doing this with intention. This matters. This brief that I'm filing is going to make a difference.

Made maybe looking at another example. Maybe you're looking at how you schedule your days, and you're looking at your calendar, and you're building blocks into your calendar that reflect the values and the goals that you hold most dearly. So instead of thinking how am I going to get this all in? I'm scrambling from task to task. It's taking a step back and thinking okay, how does this really impact? How does this matter? How am I scheduling my time in alignment with what matters to me?

It may not mean that your days look significantly different. I mean I've got lots of podcast episodes about scheduling and time planning and all that. What I'm getting at here isn't so much the fact that your days are going to be having different tasks. You could have the same task, filing a brief, but the way you go at it is so different. The way that you're responding to client emails, the way that you're thinking about having to balance the various aspects of your practice. It may no longer be in reaction to avoid pain, to

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

avoid missing deadlines, to make sure that you're not falling behind. Instead, you're getting closer to that compelling vision.

So when you have that vision in place, all of a sudden the tasks that you're doing take on a different meaning to you. You might start thinking about it as opportunities to build skills that will allow you to serve at the highest level. Casting a vision allows you to shift your focus from being reactive and defensive and possibly in that fight or flight state to moving into that creative and purposeful state, that rest and digest where you have access to your creativity and learning and growth. So when the direction is clear to you, the projects that you complete on your way now have new meaning.

What I'd invite you to think about is if you do have a vision in mind for yourself, whether it's a vision for something that is more short term or more long term, I'd invite you to go back to a podcast episode that I recorded earlier about setting goals. It's episode number six. In that episode, I talk about a GREAT! goal framework. I'm not going to get into it right now. But within that framework, GREAT! is an acronym. It stands for the different components of your goal.

But two of them I want to highlight here. One is reason. What is the reason that you want to set this goal? Why is it important to you? That is a very compelling piece of goal setting that we may not necessarily spend time thinking about. I highly encourage you to really get behind that why because that is what is going to compel you when the challenges show up.

Another aspect is the E, energy. Right? What energy are you bringing to that goal? What energy are you bringing to that vision of your future? Is it determination? Is it courage? Is it excitement? Is it enthusiasm? Is it I want to feel fulfilled? So I really invite you to look at the components of that as you're looking toward the vision.

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

So I'm kind of talking a little bit off track. But really here what we're talking about is having that vision because it helps you with your motivation. What we're going to try to do is to move you from being motivated by avoiding pain. I mean of course you don't want to miss deadlines, but that doesn't need to be the governing feeling. That doesn't have to be the governing reason.

What if we were able to move you, what if you were able to move yourself into coming at your practice from a place of pursuing pleasure, of moving you're closer to that vision, as opposed to spending more time in that avoiding pain. So that is reason number one that casting your vision is going to be effective.

Reason number two for why casting a vision is going to be compelling is that it allows you to fall in love with the process. So, as you know, this podcast is about finding the joy in your work. I've got previous podcast episodes that really talk about that. The secret is finding joy in the process of reaching your goals. As long as you are growing, you will be closing a gap between where you are today and where you want to be.

I'm going to use, as an example, the weight loss industry because the advertising that they use is so clear and it's so interesting. You'll see that typical before and after picture. I suppose it's not just weight loss. You can also look at Marie Kondo, right. The here's a space before Marie Kondo has an opportunity to work on it and here it is after. So there's a clear before and after.

So to summarize one of the reasons why casting a compelling vision is going to help you find more joy, more fulfillment in your practice, is that it will allow you to tap into your internal motivation. It'll allow you to come at your practice from a position of pursuing pleasure more often and, hopefully, avoiding pain less often.

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

Now, the second reason why this strategy is compelling is that it sets the stage for you to be able to fall in love with the process. If you've been listening to this podcast for a while, and particularly some of the earlier episodes, then you'll know that the secret to finding joy in your practice is to fall in love with the process of reaching your goals. As long as you're growing, you will be closing a gap between where you are today and where you want to be.

So if we look, for example, at the weight loss industry. If you look at the way that they set themselves up, there's the before and after, the contrast. We've all seen those images. I think what we also see often is a culture of almost drill sergeant like approaches that people take when it comes to looking after their health.

There was a show that was on TV a few years back. I think it was like *The Biggest Loser* maybe where the tone often was one of you must follow these rigid rules. You must follow this rigorous exercise program. You must be really stringent about your diet. I would invite you at this point to consider what type of strategy you have been using so far in order to close the gap between where you have been and where you have wanted to be.

Maybe there's a goal that you're working on right now that you can think of that you can use as an example. The question that I have is how are you treating yourself in that process? Are you taking a bit of a drill sergeant approach where you're hard on yourself and you're fueling your way to success by putting pressure on yourself to be perfect, to be the best, to not fail?

Maybe you berate yourself when you make mistakes. Maybe you get upset with yourself when you say the wrong thing. You might really beat yourself up when you lose a case or you misspell a client's name. Or maybe it's something bigger like you've changed jobs and you feel like it was a big mistake. Oh, how could you have done that?

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

I mean really, how are you talking to yourself when you're in that process? Are you telling yourself you should have known better? This mistake was something that you never should have made. I mean really, what is that internal dialogue? What is your strategy because they really are one in the same? That messaging that you have with yourself as you pursue your goals. Are you making that a process that is one that is fear driven? That is based on maybe reaching expectations in a way that might be unrealistic?

Or are you going to approach the process from the perspective of love and support and compassion for yourself? One where you come at your goals from a position of determination and growth and knowing that on your way, you're going to have setbacks and there are going to be challenges and you are going to be making mistakes, and all of that is okay. Really what we've got here are different ways of approaching the process.

One being very much aligned with the fixed mindset. I've talked about Carol Dweck on the podcast before. If you don't know her, she's an American psychologist who coined the term growth mindset. She also coined the term fixed mindset. She talks about the distinction between the two. With a fixed mindset, you approach the world from the perspective of you having limited capacity, right. Your intelligence is fixed. So if you come up against a challenge, it's hard for you. You have to work at it. Then you see yourself as having less intelligence. That this is a sign that there is something wrong with you.

Versus a growth mindset where you believe that your capacity to learn and your intelligence are not limited. When you have a challenge ahead of you, you see that as an opportunity to learn, as an opportunity to strengthen your brain. When you look at the neuroscience, our brains are plastic. They are not fixed. We are not hardwired to stay where we are right now. We are actually hardwired to change, to grow.

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

So what I'm comparing and contrasting here are different approaches that you can take in terms of the process that you follow when you go after your goals. Are you operating from a place where you are being really hard on yourself, being really critical of yourself, and making that process really painful?

Or are you taking a growth mindset approach where it's a much gentler approach? Where you're kind to yourself. You say nice things yourself when things don't go your way. Maybe it's okay well, I didn't get it this time, but I have learned something that I can apply next time. Or at least I'm trying. Or I'm in the game. I showed up. I'm in the arena. Whatever language it is that you want to use when you find yourself in a setback.

When you have a clear goal in mind, when you cast that compelling vision, it's so much easier. It's so much more compelling. It allows you to shift yourself into that more growth mindset, that way of being where you can actually fall in love with the process.

So I would ask you to think about what your current practices. As you are reaching toward the goals that you have currently or that you reached in the past, do you push yourself? Do you judge yourself? Are you telling yourself that you need to go faster? Are you blaming yourself? Or do you blame others when things don't go as planned? Or are you inviting yourself to grow? Are you challenging yourself with exciting opportunities? Are you asking yourself what's possible for you that you never dared to dream about?

What if you allowed yourself to answer those questions? What would the answers be? What if you adopted a process knowing that all of it was in service of vision that you were getting closer to every single day? What would be different for you in your practice? Who would you need to become?

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

When you set a vision for yourself, you give yourself a future to live into. You get to be intentional about how you show up in the process. When you fall in love with the process of moving toward your vision, you will find the joy in your work.

I refer you back to episode three of this podcast about how to find the joy in your work. One of the quotes that I talked about there is this notion of how the Greeks defined happiness. They defined it as the joy that you experience in working toward your potential. As you know, your potential is an unlimited.

So what you will need to do in creating your compelling vision is you will need to dig deep. You will need to ask yourself some really good tough questions that will help you articulate what that compelling vision is going to be. If you need some ideas for that, I would invite you to listen to episode 54 where I talk about creating your legacy. There are some questions in that episode that may really help you figure out what it is that you're striving toward.

It will require you to surround yourself with support. That might be something that is a skill you haven't been developing, seeking out support. Once you've cast your vision, you may really need that support because you may feel like it's overwhelming, like it's impossible, like it's way too far out of reach. So you're going to want that support to help you get there.

You may not want to share with others right away that you've created this vision. It's kind of like in its infancy. It's delicate. It's fragile. You don't want somebody to come along and tell you it's a terrible idea or crazy idea. Because you don't want to abandon it. You want to allow it to grow and to develop and become something that you bring into the world.

Another skill that you'll need to have is belief. This may be really challenging. If you're used to believing what you see because there's

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

evidence of it and you can prove it in a court of law, then trying to believe in yourself in creating something that doesn't yet exist, that you don't know how you're going to build. Believing in yourself and your capacity, even when you don't think you can, that might be a real stretch for you.

But it is a skill that you absolutely must develop because it is probably the hardest thing that you will do. Because you'll want that certainty, because you'll want that proof, but it is also that belief in yourself that is going to compel you, that is going to allow you to keep moving forward even when it looks like that compelling vision is not going to come to be. So please believe in yourself. I believe in you. You believe in you.

Finally, you are going to need to develop the skill of being willing to let go. I talked about this last week. If you want to become someone who lives to be distinct, to be a woman of distinction, that means you are going to have to distinguish yourself from others.

It may mean that you need to pull away from the pack. It may be that you are going to have to turn down opportunities that are good opportunities in order to go after opportunities that are great. That might feel really uncomfortable, but you will need to be willing to do that if what you're doing is going after that compelling vision you have for your future.

So when you do these things, when you cast that vision for yourself, you will create an extraordinary career that you are proud of, you will create impact beyond what you even think you could measure right now. Impact of the work that you do, what you build, the people whose lives you influence, and what other people will build and create because of you.

As a result, you will create more joy every day because you're working toward your vision. You're loving the process even when it's hard. Of course every step you take that brings you closer to that vision will taste so sweet.

Ep #57: Casting a Compelling Vision

So my friends, that is what I have for you this week. So I would invite you to think about what vision would be compelling to you. How are you going to cast a compelling vision for yourself? How are you going to be as you progress toward that vision?

If you have any questions or you want my help, I would love to support you. You can reach out to me by email. You can reach out to me on LinkedIn, I would be delighted to hear from you. I would also invite you if you like this podcast, if you've been listening and you've been finding it helpful to please provide a rating and review that helps other people like you find this podcast. That would be great. So have a fabulous week. I will look forward to reconnecting with you again soon. Bye for now.

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