

89. Unlocking Contentment with Leisse Wilcox – Episode Transcript

Leah: Welcome to Her Story of Success, a podcast featuring stories from influential women, trailblazers and business leaders who have defined and pursued their own versions of success and fulfillment. We hope these stories, lessons learned, and celebrations inspire you to believe in yourself and enjoy your own journey a little bit more. I'm Leah Glover Hayes, your host and CEO of Her Story of Success women's business collective. Today, I'm very excited to share with you my friend Leisse Wilcox. Leisse and I met at the SheEO global summit in Toronto, right before the world shut down from COVID in early 2020, and we have been fast friends and followed each other ever since. Leisse is a transformational mindset and success coach that helps high achieving and purpose driven women figure their shit out. She has been featured on NPR, ABC, Sirius XM, and more. So Leisse welcome to Her Story of Success. We are so excited to have you.

Leisse: Thank you. I am very excited to be here. Can you believe we met like a week before it all?

Leah: It was legitimately like the week before the world just shut down. It was crazy. And I loved it because (A) I love being in a room of powerful women. But what I really loved was being in a room full of powerful women using their power to help each other. And I am just excited about this conversation, because you really focus on a woman finding her own power. And I think you and I have talked about like, some people hate the word, empower. Some people love it. I love it, because being someone that grew up poor and not having a lot, it was other people doing things and giving me things that allowed me to get to where I am kind of that hand up and things. So I love that word, but everybody can have their own thing.

So I'm excited to dive into a little bit of your work that you do with women, why you started doing it, and just the transformations that you've seen. Cause I follow you on Instagram. And I love when you talk about the women and the transformation that you've seen in people's lives. So share with us, what does transformational mindset and success coach mean? And then we'll kind of go back from the beginning.

Leisse: So I always go back and forth on my title. I think I actually probably introduced myself to you like this when we met, but my favorite title is "professional human and real life adult."

Leah: Yes.

Leisse: Cause that's like the most accurate. Well, as it turns out when you're running an online, service-based business, Google hates that description. So it's like, "Man, how did my awesome title get shut down, because it's not FTO friendly." So, but I go back and forth on success coach and self-actualization and embodiment coach, the baseline, because I do have to be searchable and I do have to have some kind of like measurable objective that creates an instant trust with people, I'm a taught and master coach, and I really do help people figure their shit out, because I ultimately understand the human experience so deeply. And when I say I understand the human experience, it's because I understand the emotional experience. Like I'm such a passionate advocate for emotional health. And, you know, I love to say through my books, through my podcast, through my coaching, I am changing the global conversation on emotional health and self-love. And what that looks like is profoundly simple and profoundly complex. I simply give people the permission to be themselves. We each have like these divinely appointed gifts and strengths and talents, and we are invited into them and we are invited to use them through every challenge and obstacle and relationship we get into, right? And I think we spend so much of our time putting on the mask and really doing what we think or acting in ways we think will please other people, we really act in ways we think we are supposed to, or that we should. And when you keep putting on the mask and you keep putting layers and layers and layers on, you start to lose touch with who you are, like, who you are as the person not you as a wife, you as a mother you as the employee, you as the employer, like not you as a something, just you as a you.

I kind of got to this work accidentally, but because of my own upbringing, I was somebody who had, like, decades worth of masks I was wearing. And over time and through healing from, I have a really challenging past that included like emotional abuse and a really painful divorce and then breast cancer, I learned that in taking off those masks one by one, I got to this beautiful gift of who I am, and when I just gave myself permission to be who I was, literally everything got easier. It didn't mean that my life is not hard.

Leah: Right, right

Leisse: Facing those challenges gets easier because I gave myself the permission to really love and accept and choose myself. And that's the work that I think is the biggest gift that I can offer people. I invite them to simply be comfortable in being who they are, which sounds really simple. It's such a big deal, because when you feel comfortable to simply be who you are without judgment, without expectation, without shame, without any of the other things, that's when you actually tap into your own purpose, your own expectations, your own gifts and talents. And that's how we

get this massive ripple effect of change and positivity. Right? When we simply just show up with like our God-given talents and we feel free to use them in the way that feels best for us.

Leah: Before we go back into your past, what are some of the transformations that you've seen in your clients? Like give me like maybe one example of like a woman came to you needing this or thinking that she needed this. And then was she a business owner? What was she trying to achieve? And then like kind of the ROI, like what did she get to out of that?

Leisse: Can I be super, super real in my language?

Leah: Yeah. You can curse or say whatever you want. You can use the F word. We're fine. Here. I'll click the explicit button. It's fine. We're adults.

Leisse: You may live to regret those words, but working with me is the emotional equivalent of a cervical orgasm.

Leah: Wow.

Leisse: When you know, you know. And it's like, people come to me, like asking those questions about like, "What were the measurable objectives, and what was the ROI?" It's such a masculine stance to take, right? Like, "What did they get out of it? How much did they spend and what did they get out? And what was the lasting change they saw?" Working with me is a deep, internal shift. It can feel a little weird, a little unexpected, a little bit doubtful of like, "I don't really think this is going to work." And then all of a sudden it's like, "Oh my God, I totally get it." That's what, yes, a cervical orgasm feels like, and that's what, that's what the emotional work feels like working with me.

So almost across the board, people come to me when they are at the top of their game and they've, you know, they're making great money. Like they're making six, seven figures. They have a family, or they have the husband, or they have chosen to be single, and they're really, really comfortable with their choices. They built the business, they've done the things they wanted to do, and they've done the things they thought they were supposed to do. And so suddenly, they're kind of looking usually in their thirties, often 40, sometimes into fifties, they're looking at this like life checklist in front of them and they're like, "Oh shit. I did everything right. So how come I still feel like this? How come success doesn't feel like I thought it was going to feel? You know, I've been pining to be a mother and now I'm a mother, how come it doesn't feel like it's supposed to? I'm in this marriage and for all intents and purposes, it's a great marriage. So how come it doesn't feel right?" Or, "Oh my God. I am at the top of

my game.” Like I just worked with a realtor recently who’s like, the top in her huge region. And she was like, “But it’s so lonely. Like I was never prepared for this.” And so I feel like that that’s the commonality and the common thread. People come to me often because they have created this identity where they are the one that people lean on. They are the ones who have their shit together and they like, they know all the things, and then they turn around and they’re like, “Oh my God. I got so good at building and creating and achieving. I literally have nobody to talk to.” Not because they don’t have friends, not because they don’t have support, but because most relationship dynamics are not designed to sustain that heaviness of like, “Okay, just so you know. I also have self doubt.”

Leah: Right.

Leisse: Most friendships can’t support that. A lot of marriages can’t sustain that. And so my work as a coach becomes — it’s like coach is such a stupid word when it comes to this work, but it’s very SEO friendly — my work really becomes about creating an incredibly sacred and safe container in which you can put all of your emotional shit. You take all of those feelings that you have never been allowed to feel that you’ve never been taught that it’s okay to feel. You’ve never been taught how to feel or how to communicate or how to express them. You take them, you put them in the container, we work together, and then because of my own intuition, because of my own education, like my years and years of experience, it’s like, I visualize me putting on this little, like, detective hat, and I’m just simply observing. I’m looking for patterns, I’m looking for recurring language, I’m looking for and listening for like limiting beliefs, and “Oh, interesting that you kind of identified, there was a block in your heart. And then you had a heart attack.” Like there

Leah: Oh wow.

Leisse: There’s patterns of speech that people use. It’s called quantum linguistics that we’re not even aware of, but absolutely have an effect on us. And my background, like my pedagogical background operates that, you know, we have our actions and behaviors, which are directly tied to our thoughts, but our thoughts are fundamentally tied to our subconscious beliefs. And sometimes that’s the stuff we don’t even know that we know. Right? And even deeper, there’s a layer of like, how do we not even know that we know that like, what’s the program behind that? When people go to therapy and they talk it through, or when people go to a lot of traditional coaches and they kind of just like, they set some objectives and they’re like, “Okay, cool. If you can dream it, you can do it,” it’s not enough.

Leah: Yeah.

Leisse: At different points in your life, sometimes it's enough. When you get to the top and you're like, "Are you fucking kidding? Like, I still feel this way after how many years?" That's when you know I'm the right coach for you, because we dive so deep, into all the subconscious stuff, and we figure out a way of "How do we learn those lessons safely while honoring them and simultaneously detaching from the story or the pain of the story that got you there?"

Leah: Absolutely. And so when I hear that, like, I'm, you know, a huge proponent of emotional health and I go to therapy. Like I'm a firm believer of talk about that. And why would someone come to you versus doing therapy, or would it be both? Like, why are they coming to you instead of therapy?

Leisse: I mean, as you know, just because you are in a particular profession, doesn't mean you're good at it, right? There are excellent physicians. There are terrible physicians. There are excellent police officers. There are terrible police officers. There are excellent therapists, and there are terrible therapists. There are excellent coaches. There are terrible coaches. So I feel like people are really drawn to me because they genuinely feel a connection with me. Integrity, authenticity, it is like the cornerstone of my business. And I'm actually using this copy on my website because I feel so strongly about it, that my greatest metric of success, like what keeps me really in check is sitting around the family table with my three little girls at dinner and being very clear that, like, I did what I set out to do today. Like I live in such alignment with my truth and I think I walk the talk. So people work with me because they feel that like magnetic, authenticity, and integrity. Almost 10 times out of 10, I hear from people, "I don't even know why I need to work with you. I just know that I need to work with you." And it becomes more of that, like, wisdom share dynamic. So I say that working with me feels like actionable therapy, because there is so much space to consciously talk it through.

Leah: Yeah.

Leisse: And it feels like guided meditation, where there's so much deep, subconscious healing that I don't let people stay in their story. So, you know, we tend to get stuck, and a lot of talk therapy...

Leah: Let's talk about that for a second. Cause you just did something on your Instagram. You did talk about your story and detaching from it. And that's the whole reason I started Her Story of Success. It's like, you know, a lot of us have reached a level of success and we got to that point where we're like, either "Something's missing," or "Is this really all it is?" Or "I have more to give, learn, do, be, and I'm looking for that thing." So that's why I was really excited to talk to you, because you

are talking to the same woman that I'm talking to, like at the same stage. Like I think the thing that I appreciate is like, it can be dangerous to always look at, like, I want to achieve more. But it's also not bad to also want to achieve more. Like, I think it's the mindset. So I want to, I want to get into that a little bit. Like when do you see it? That it's healthy for people that are like, "No, I have more in me. I want to achieve more" And then when do you see that it's dangerous to always be searching and going?

Leisse: Yeah. It's intention centered. So if the intention is like, "I have to become like the best coach in the world." It's like, "Why? So I can serve the most people or so that I can have the ego accolade of, when Taylor Swift needs a coach, she calls me, you know, like that kind of thing." Right?

Leah: Yeah.

Leisse: We have these competing — they tend to be competing and they quote unquote, shouldn't be, they should be working in together in a nice way. But internally, we have these masculine and feminine energies that we each possess. And usually women at the top of their game have a ton of masculine energy because, it's so drive oriented, it's do, achieve; do, achieve; do, achieve. If I want to achieve more, I just do more, period. And then you have this feminine energy that is so much more flowy, like, honey, you know, it's this "sink into surrender." It's "be in the flow." It's holding onto the vision and letting the details fall into place, which for a lot of us tends to be more challenging, because that's so foreign. It's like, "Cool. How do I surrender? Like, give me the checklist."

Leah: Exactly.

Leisse: That's all masculine.

Leah: Cause you know, do achieve, it's like, "Well, if I do this, if I learn this new skill, if I go do this, then I can accomplish more." Oh, I'm so interested in this.

Leisse: I had a client last year who had, like, she was her own phoenix. And she had created this business, she was earning six figures and she was like, "I just know that I can do more of this. And I think that I'm think I'm ready to scale." And when people come to me, they're not looking for a business coach, because I'm not a business coach, but I'm also not just a relationship coach, I'm not just a life coach. It's like this very holistic experience because of the emotional body. Like our emotions are all these feelings that are constantly giving us feedback as to what still needs to be healed. And when we heal it, we show up differently in our business, and in our relationships, we show up differently in life.

Anyway, so I had this client and she was like, "I've reached this one upper level, this like ceiling of success. And I think I'm going to double it, like I'm going to scale up." And so we just kind of worked through it and we were like, "Alright, you earn this much now, for you to double that, what would that look like?" "Well, I'd have to hire a team." "And what would that look like?" Okay. Like, we went through all of the, like the intention behind that. And suddenly it was like, for her to double her growth, which she absolutely was capable of doing, she actually lost everything that she loved and valued.

Leah: Wow. Let's pause on that for a second.

Leisse: Yeah.

Leah: So this woman comes to you, because she's like I'm at the top of my game, and I think that I can double. What were the things that she loved, that when you went through this process of, this is what it's going to look like, what was it that she was going to lose?

Leisse: So this is how we bring it back to values, right? Like values are fundamental to the work that I do with people. And when we use values, which is something we never ever think about, when we use values as the metric of success, like, "Am I living in alignment with my values?" Yes? Cool, success. No? Shit. So her values were like freedom, time, flexibility, family, authenticity. And for her to scale, it was like, "Oh my God, I lose all the freedom. I'm so much more beholden to, I don't have any flexibility anymore, because now I've put like a team in place. Oh my God, in putting a team in place, I lose everything I love about my own client interaction." And suddenly it's like for her to scale, sure. She would have made twice as much money. And she lost literally everything else that she loved about her business. And so it was like, "Wow, because now I don't live within any of my values." So in answer to your first question, like when does that get dangerous? Right there. When we are not intention centered, which is a very feminine energy and a very feminine metric of success, when we are not intention centered, and when we are not operating in alignment with our values or really using values as the foundation upon which we build literally everything else, that becomes the dragon you can never catch. You can chase it and you will never catch it, because that's when nothing will ever be enough. When you shift that, which is the deep change you get through working with me, when you shift that back into "Oh my God. Who am I? What is important to me? What is my purpose right here at this level in my current moment? What does that all look, and even more important, what does that feel like?" When you are so open and honest, because you've had that safe space to communicate it, that redefines your foundation from whence you

operate, and when you have that foundation really clear, then, you know, with like, a hundred percent certainty what you have to do to achieve next, because all of the really important foundational stuff is in check.

Leah: What did that look like for her? So you guys get to this foundation of like, "Okay, you actually don't want to double cause you'll lose everything." Was she disappointed? Did she just all of a sudden love where she was at and completely content? Like what did next look like in that work?

Leisse: The two words that come up, or I would say three words, that come up almost a hundred times out of a hundred, "I feel free, I just feel so content, and that was magic." Those are like three consistent words that come up in feedback. It's like, "Oh my God, I didn't even know it. But I felt like I had this weight on my chest for 30 years, and now like it's gone and you know, I have that freedom. I have this renewed clarity." There's this profound simplicity that comes from simple contentment.

Leah: Yeah.

Leisse: We feel like we're chasing happiness, and that's that dopamine high, which is not a healthy thing, it's like, to feel grounded and content, suddenly we're looking at inner peace as a new metric of success. It's like, "Great. You've got money in your bank account. You've got a roof over your head. Awesome. All of that is important and it's good. And it feels safe. How do you, how does your safety feel inside? Right? What does that look like?" Cause if that, if you don't feel safe in your one true home, which is like your being nothing else matters because nothing else will ever feel like it's enough, you will constantly feel like you have to over-deliver, over-perform, you know, overdo it in every way.

All of that leads to burnout. So suddenly we're like we can avoid all of that other icky stuff simply by getting crystal clear on who we are, what we value and what we intend to do.

Leah: Golly. Okay. I just have like literally a thousand thoughts. I hope the woman listening is like, "Okay. Like let's dig in a little bit." So when you said that, like when you have the contentment, you have the money in the bank have where you feel safe. I just went to Disney World with my husband, and before I started my company, I said, "I do not subscribe to the hustle and grind. I want no part of that." Am I a hard worker? I have had a job since I was 12 years old. Like I've paid for myself since I was 12 years old. I bought my cheerleading uniforms in high school. Like I've always done that. And so to me it didn't, it doesn't mean I'm not going to work hard. I just don't ever care to be known for being such an extreme hustler in her business. Cause I just think

that that's dangerous, and that's not my personality. To your point, when you get to know yourself, I'm like, "I am driven by fun. I'm an Enneagram seven. I want to enjoy my work." When people are like, "Oh, how do you choose who you interview on your podcast?" I'm like, "The people that I want to learn from," like, if I find someone inspires me, I'm like, "Hey, I would love to, to interview you." That's why you and I are talking. But I love that when you say like the contentment piece, because what I fight with all the time is I think, because I've struggled my whole life and I've worked for everything, and I was in debt and out of debt. And like now I'm in this place that my husband and I are, I'm just going to be transparent, we have no debt. We were selling a house, buying a house. Didn't have to take any money out of savings because we made well on the house. And there's this place of guilt that I'm not working hard enough, because it's not a struggle. Is that normal? I literally am in Florida, like in the most beautiful place, and I checked out, like, I've got my out of office on, I am not responding to things. And like a moment I felt guilty. I'm like, "I shouldn't, I don't deserve," I don't know if it's, "I don't deserve to have this because I haven't worked hard enough." Do you find that a lot with people? I'm like, I don't know what it is. Why can't I just be like, "No, you don't have to deserve and earn everything that you get." There are blessings in life and I want to learn how to just enjoy blessings.

Leisse: That's all limiting belief. It's all subconscious. And again, like, observationally, that little hat of mine goes on and it's like you said, five or six things that it's like, we would explore that together. Right? So when did you decide that success follows struggle, or that struggle follows success, right? When did you decide in the absence of struggle, you were actually experiencing an absence of success. And that's, that's just like a couple of highlights of like what stands out. That is also incredibly masculine driven. Right? If I want to be achieving success, it means that I have to be on. Period. That fear of stillness is another one of those little clues, which, like, almost across the board, when people come to me, that's one of the things that's hidden, right? "Like I don't even know what it would look like to slow down, because I'm terrified of stillness, like what would happen?" And it's like, okay. So that is an amazing indicator. If our feelings are just feedback and that feedback is always giving us insights to what still needs to be healed. You know, as the practitioner, it's like, there's some feminine energy that needs to be healed there, because we're afraid of stillness. And we're afraid as being in the flow. We're a little bit resistant to just having some downtime or, oh my God, getting our needs met and attended to, or even deeper, experiencing pleasure and joy. Then suddenly it's like, "Ah, okay. So what kind of a wounded feminine energy is at play there that we need to explore and then look at, where did that come from? What's the origin story?" You know, zooming out a little bit more looking at the overview of what your own origin story is, then immediately it's

like, okay, interesting. How foundational or fundamental is that story to your success now? And is there another competing story or conflicting story that's like, "f I don't have that pain and if I don't have that struggle, who the fuck am I, like, then what happens? If I release that narrative that I overcame what I overcame? Oh, shit. Now, now what do I do?" Right. And so all of that, like from like, from that like very brief anecdote about going to Disney World. That's the kind of like explosion of emotional health questions that comes up for me.

Leah: You're like, "Wow Leah, you have like 10 in three minutes. So we got a lot of work to do."

Leisse: It's not a fixing or a healing, as I said, like it's, so there's nothing more powerful than somebody bearing witness to your experience. So having the opportunity that I have to work with people and to meet women like you, who like they have this stuff. It's not a failure. It's just the next feedback of like, you've come so far that you're actually being invited to heal on an even deeper level. Like how fucking awesome is that, right?

Leah: Yeah.

Leisse: I get so turned on by this work because it's like, "Oh my God, I get to be the person who facilitates you busting through that ceiling. And who, who allows you or like helps create or facilitate that freedom to move on from the way it was and step into like courageously embody what is." It's so powerful and it's, um, obviously so passionate.

Leah: I love it. Well, let's talk about like, so you wrote a book and, you know, people write books for different reasons. You know, like songwriters, they'll write a song and it's, it's going to change the world, but really they wrote it for them to get their own thoughts and feelings out. So when you wrote this book, was it truly for you to, like, for your own self love and for your own work that you did? Or did you have a mindset of, "I have already done the work and I want to put this on paper so that someone else can get healing from reading this book?" Like, was it a mixture of both, or what did that look like, and who did you write it for?

Leisse: I'm really big believer that you can only, like the best books are written when you no longer need to write them. So I got to a place that literally, I wrote the book that I needed for so long. Like I wrote the, it's like a self-love manifesto. I wrote the book that I absolutely needed for so much of my life. And only when I got to the place of, I no longer needed that book, that's when I was able to write the book.

Leah: Wow. I interviewed someone one of my very first interviews and she said, "You know, you don't share your wounds, you share your scars." And when you said that, that's what it made me think of. It's like, you wrote this because it was no longer a wound. It was a scar. That doesn't mean that to your point, it doesn't mean that you don't still deal with self-doubt. It doesn't mean that you're not doing this work for yourself daily. It just means you have gotten to that place that it is a scar and not an open wound. Because, and I love that analogy, it's kind of disgusting, but like, you know, if you, if you have a wound and something that you're dealing with and you share it, then people can put sand in it. They can make it worse, but a scar, it can be sore, but you're not going to continue to do more damage. I love that.

So let's talk about the book a little bit. So you wrote it for yourself that you needed earlier in life. So who did you write it for now? Like when you were writing it, did you see a woman or did you see a person, and what is the reader going to get out of this book? Or what are they going to experience by reading it?

Leisse: it, it really is a compendium of everything I learned in a lifetime regarding self love and emotional health, and it feels like equal parts memoir, self-help, and honestly, like you're cozied up on the couch with a really good and trusted friend. It's such a beautiful book, because it actually does all those things. It's really funny. It's also really poignant. Like it takes you on an emotional roller coaster, because it's about the human experience as witnessed through my own eyes and my own heart and my own mind, like all the things. And what's so beautiful about that is that the human experience is profoundly isolating. And while we are social creatures, we are constantly looking to the group, like genetically, biologically to make sure we're not dead. Like we have to fit in so that we are alive, and we've evolved so far past that, that while we definitely have this deep desire for connection, we are having all of these feelings and we think we're having them in isolation. And then when we feel like we're having these challenging feelings like loneliness and self doubt, whatever it is, when we feel like we're having them in isolation, then we pile a bunch of shame on them. And actually like what this book does, it's like, "Hey, I see you. Like I too am a human. I too have felt this feeling." And I feel like it kind of blows the doors off of like, I love to say to people like, "You're special, but you're actually not special. Like, you know, like this doesn't make you special. Everybody's having the same emotional experience." It looks different in all of our lives and our own circumstances, yes. And it is the same emotional experience that we're having and sharing. So for me, this book is like, it's perfect for somebody who's going through that waking up process. It starts at the beginning of my own waking up and realizing, I had a perfect life from the outside in, I had a perfect life. And it hit me in the face when I was like, "Oh my God, how come this isn't enough for me?" I'm like looking around my seven bedroom

house and my good looking husband making me coffee are like \$1,200 coffee maker and my three little girls, and I'm like, "This is like this bougie perfect life. And what the hell is wrong with me that this isn't enough?" And I heard this download of a voice that comes to me in difficult moments, and it's like, "This is not enough for you, because you are not enough for you." And all of a sudden it was

Leah: Wow.

Leisse: Like, oh shit.

Leah: Wait. So you're saying you had a husband, three children, a big house, and you were not enough for you. What did that look like? What does that mean?

Leisse: When you constantly look outside yourself for validation, for the feeling of enough, for feeling love, which is what we are encouraged to do. Culturally, in most families, like, we were encouraged to like, "Oh, you know, have you met my son? He's a high profile lawyer. Oh have you met me? Here's the business that I have built. Hey, have you met my children? They're all high achieving. It's like, we attach ourselves to things beyond us. And when you get to this wakeup point, which COVID frankly has invited. everyone to do. And only not everybody has responded in the same way. And I get that everybody's circumstances are different for a lot of us. But we have been able to respond to this invitation and still some of us are skipping over that self-reflection and just going beyond, but we have these moments of invitation to be like, "What does this all mean? Like, what is my role? Why am I here? Like in the big picture sense? Why am I here? And who am I without this relationship, who am I without this business? Who am I without this family? Who am I without this accomplishment?" You know, what we were saying earlier, "Oh my God. Who am I without this pain?"

Leah: Wow. Wow.

Leisse: Really next level of clear on, "Okay. So that's who I am" Next step, "How do I love her? How do I check in with her needs? How do I get really clear on what would make her feel really good?" Right now, we are virtually never supported to do that in our lives. We are constantly pushed to take care of, and like seek. And like kids go to school, then, do you have any friends? Where your friends? Oh my God. It's like, "Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, dial it back." You know? Relationships, same thing. We are pushed towards relationships. Big time. We are pushed towards these like measurable outcomes of success. And we constantly overlook the internal metric of success, which is just like, "You know what, I'm good." You know, we're conditioned to

think we have to ride this emotional roller coaster of extreme highs and extreme lows. This inner metric of success is kind of feeling good.

Leah: When you said, who am I without my kids? Who am I without my husband? Who am I without this business? I mean, that hit me so hard because, you know, especially for entrepreneurs, and like, even if you're not an entrepreneur and you've got this bad-ass or high profile job, like really who are we without that? But then you add on the layer of, and I'm not yet a mother, like, let's talk about how you separate that. Like, what has that looked like for you and/or clients that come to you that didn't realize that they've attached that and they, that it needed to be separate. And then how do you even like acknowledge and see her? Because I'm like, literally, who am I without being the CEO of Her Story of Success?

Leisse: Well, and that is the work, right? Like that's what the work is.

Leah: Gotcha. It's digging into that and finding her, okay.

Leisse: Some of it is, it's identifying subconscious beliefs or limiting decisions along the way and figuring out how do we, how do we release that? Some of it is generationally passed down. Some of it's past life stuff that we just, we keep hanging on to, until we interrupt the pattern and heal it. I shared on Instagram the other day, this story of, I just, I went for a walk in the woods.

Leah: I saw that.

Leisse: This is so cool. I'm actually writing another book and hosting a different podcast about like, this experience, because these experiences happen to me all the time, where I'm like, I asked for a message or I ask for a sign, or I'm really sitting in reflection. And then like, I go to the woods in small town, Canada, and I meet this guy and I have this conversation. He's like a 76 year old man. And we ended up just talking in the forest and he was telling me how, when he was a kid growing up. They used to line up all the kids in the class from smartest to dumbest?

Leah: No.

Leisse: Oh yes. And he was always at the dumb end, and then that conversation goes ever so slightly into, but you know, this dog that I'm walking, it's actually my son's. And I just wanted to take the dog for a break because, you know, they're renovating their house because they live in this \$4 million house in this super swank neighborhood in the city of Toronto. And he is, after all, the SVP corporate at this major bank. I'm just, I'm an observer, right? Like I'm just bearing witness to the experiences. Cause I'm just like listening to all this information. And as the conversation goes on, it's like, his son

has this education and this degree and this degree and this accolade, and he was asked to be the president of the bank and he turned it down. And his daughter, in the meantime, this is like international business lawyer, or a facilitator in the Hague. Like both of his kids are exceptionally high achieving when you look at it on paper, I have no idea what they're like as people, but on paper, they've got like all the check marks, right? And to me it's like, but how fascinating is this? They were raised in a family by a man who was told he was constantly the dumbest kid, and he didn't get to graduate high school. So some of those stories, even when they come to us and they manifest in, "But look at me, I own a bank. Like I run the bank." "Cool. Who are you? Take you out of the \$4 million a year salary. I want to talk about who you are. Like what makes you tick? What lights you up? What brings you joy? What, why are you here? Like what do you have to learn? What do you have to teach?" Right? So it's that work that we start to strip that stuff away and we do inherit that generationally, even if we're never told we inherit it, it is a pervasive message of like, well, it was this way for me there for when I have kids, I want to make sure it's a different way for them. And that's just, that's part of the human experience, too, that learning and growing.

Leah: I think it's so fascinating. And let's talk about scaling your business for a moment. So I'm very interested in hearing that, because to me, like you're a coach, you're an individual. How do you scale your business when you work with individuals?

Leisse: Are you a fan of *The Office*? The American version of *The Office*?

Leah: Love it.

Leisse: So, you know that episode where Jim is about to go on the golf course and he's like, "I'm going to do something I have never done before. Try." I had a freelance job up until February. I didn't make a ton of money, but I made like a bit of money. And then I've coached on the side.

Leah: What was your freelance work?

Leisse: Oh, social media management.

Leah: Oh, that's why you're so good. Like go follow her. You'll be like so impressed. Okay. Keep going. Sorry. Freelance and social media.

Leisse: Yeah. So, and it was just like this really stable job, but it also demanded my time. And so when I had clients, I had clients, I didn't do any marketing, they kind of came to me because they felt a connection. I was very comfortable with that. Right? And I still had like, amazing clients. February came. It's a very long, complicated story, but basically we were all let go overnight without any notice, without any pay. And it

was like, "Oh my God, I'm a single mom." March hit. Suddenly COVID was here and it was like, "I have to recession proof my business, I guess I better start really trying, like I got to double down on my own marketing efforts." And so I did that, and in doing so I raised my rates, I got really clear about what specifically I could offer and who specifically I could help. Because I help humans. My marketing is about who specifically I can help in the best, most effective way. Right? Scaling for me, all of a sudden looked like not only really focusing on who that was and growing and scaling my marketing efforts. It also meant like I had online courses that I just never talked about, so it meant like getting a Facebook team in place and really starting to focus on building a newsletter and creating more options to work with me that wasn't one-on-one.

Leah: Ah okay.

Leisse: I launched the book in the middle of the pandemic as well. It hit like bestseller status. So all of that happened at the same time. So all of a sudden I went from having a freelance job and a couple of coaching clients when it felt good to do so to really, like, really establishing myself, which I've done as like a top coach in the industry and really attracting the people that I need to work with while also running a podcast, doing the book, I developed a product line, like all that stuff while still being like a solo parent of three girls. Right. So it's like, it's grown a lot. My website. I hired somebody to do my website in the spring and I already I've outgrown it cause like, I went back to do a masters. Like yeah, offerings have changed. It's so tight. It's so focused. But everything that I had been doing, like I outgrew so quickly, that it's just a matter of playing catch up with myself.

Leah: I'm proud of you. I mean, I met you at the beginning of March. You just blew up, and I was just like, "Oh my gosh, that's super crazy." But the other thing is like, what did that look like hiring people? What did that look like, as you like, "Okay, I need to grow." Cause there's always that chicken or egg, like "I got to invest, but I don't have a lot." And being a mom of three, that kind of gets scary. So what did that look like when you started to really scale and grow?

Leisse: It was kind of insane because I'm such a lone wolf. And I really pride myself on being a lone wolf. And like, again, this was part of my own process and how do I detach from overcoming my own story? Right? Cause the story was like, are you kidding? Like, do you know what I've overcome? And it's like, "Okay, how do we let go of that and just be present with who you are." But yeah, the first thing I did was hire a VA, which was amazing, because there's stuff that I'm really not good at doing, and I don't want to be good at doing it. And so I have made a commitment to myself to, in

order to serve the people I want to serve in the best way I can while still being present in my family and being present in my work, and oh my God, taking care of myself, I only do the things that I'm really good at. And so it was a matter of trusting somebody enough to be like, "I don't want to do this research. Can you figure out how to make Instagram shoppable?" And it was like an hour later, it was done. You can buy stuff on my Instagram. It's like, "Oh my God, that would have taken me a week to put into place." Right?

Leah: Yes.

Leisse: And hiring a Facebook team too. And that's not like, I'm not sure I'm going to continue with that, but certainly for a few months,

Leah: Well seasons.

Leisse: Yeah. Right.

Leah: Understanding too. Like you there's, there's seasonality of running a business and the things that you need today, you might not need tomorrow. What you needed a month ago, you might not need in six months. So I love that. There's so many things, and I'm like, how do you start getting products? Cause I need to do that. And I'm like, as a business owner, there's just like, Oh my God, there's 5,000 things you need to do a day. And it's like prioritizing. And how do you like, which one comes first, and focus on my email marketing. And then you're like focusing on social media and then you're focusing on content and like just all of these different things.

Leisse: When you're very clear on what your values are and what your intentions are as a person, that shapes your business. And when your businesses is shaped in that same way, that's when you can make really like strategically informed decisions on what serves you best so that you can serve best.

Leah: I love that. Hmm. So what you're saying is I need to work with you. That's awesome. I love it. And I did want to say, I love that even on your website, you have the people that talk about you. You know, you do have an entrepreneur, you also have a public health nurse. So this isn't just for entrepreneurs. This is just for, I think the word "ready" is coming to mind, like women that are ready to do the work, to go deeper, and to make that investment, like working with you is not free. It's not, it's not cheap. Right? And so that's one of the things that, you know, I do talk to a lot of consultants and a lot of, um, different types of coaches. And that's always the number one, you have to be ready and willing to make the investment. And not in a like, "Oh, I know I need to do it." That is not the time to do it. It's in the, "I am ready and want to, and am excited to do this work."

Leisse: That's also a catch 22, because when you're on the other side of that, and you're looking back, you're like, "I actually would have paid any amount for that experience, because you cannot put a price tag on what I do on the value I just received." When you're looking at it, it's like, "I'm sorry. You want to charge me what? Like, how much is it to work with you?" Because you don't yet have the experience unless you're somebody who's invested in yourself before of like, "Oh, if she's pricing it like that, I know it's worth it." It's like, we're talking about work that is bringing you home to yourself that is giving you and facilitating and growing and supporting that level of inner peace and contentment. And frankly, then I'm like, "Oh, it's a bargain, like, I should probably raise my prices again. It's like, that's such a bargain, because oh my goodness. We are talking about learning how to be incredibly comfortable and successful. For who you are, period."

Leah: Yeah. A couple different things. One, I look at it as, I see what I'm wanting to build and think about, the same person that digs the foundation and sets that foundation is not the same person that is hanging your light fixtures. You know, when you look at like where people are, when they're ready to hire you, to me, they could hire you in different areas. Like I hired and spent literally, Leisse, the most amount of money I've ever spent in my entire life, when I was an employee knowing that I wanted to become a CEO, because I was like, "I am not a CEO yet. And I have to do the work to become the person that is the CEO, so that I can quit my job and do that." Right? She's a coach. There was a lot of dollars that I spent that literally the most ever. And I'll tell you, it was, it was worth it 10 times over, because if anything, maybe what I needed out of that was the confidence to know, "If I've invested into this and I've done the work, I'm ready to be a CEO." Does that make sense? Like just sometimes the doing the work.

Leisse: That's the kind of decision a CEO would make. And so that's what I mean, it's like, if you can see that beforehand, it's a gift. You can always see it after the fact, but it's like, okay, so what would my higher self, what kind of decision would she make? How would she show up? How would she handle it? When we can get quiet with that? It's like, same thing. Again, I hired somebody in April to do my website, and by September I hired somebody brand new to do it and spent like an exorbitant amount of money on it, because I was like, "Hang on a second. What does the next level vision of me do?" Does she worry? Does she Google how to make Instagram shoppable? No, she does not because she's too concerned with how her clients are doing and what she's building here and now, right. She doesn't do that. It's like, okay. Right. She doesn't do it. Yeah. And same thing with the website. It's like, I know, I know what my future looks like professionally. And it's like, my current website doesn't support that vision. So like, I gotta find a way of supporting that vision.

Leah: I will say too, for you listening, like sometimes you might need to do something to show yourself you're ready. Cause what I did before I spent the ungodly amount of money on my coach, because I've struggled with not believing that I'm disciplined or like I'm not a disciplined person. So it's like, you know what, I'm going to sign up for a much less amount for a, it was called Fit Females at the gym that I go to. And it was like 5:00 AM, three days a week. And you do 6:00 AM the other two days a week, a week. So it was like literally working out. Between three and five days a week. And it was for six weeks. And I was like, "When I do this, then I can show myself that I'm ready to make the investment, the dollar investment. And it will give me confidence that I'm ready to do the work, because I've done this thing for a set amount of time." Does that make sense? So like, if someone's like, "Ooh, am I ready to work with Leisse?" Either like, hell yes, I'm ready and I'm ready to sign up. Or it's, "Okay. I think that I am, I know I need it, but I need one little thing to show me that I'm ready." Do you have any like guidance or like, if someone's like, I think that I'm ready, but I'm not quite sure. Is there something that you would encourage them to look up or get your book or what is it that they could do before they're ready to like invest in themselves with you?

Leisse: Book a speed date with me.

Leah: Ooh what is this? Tell me, tell me.

Leisse: Usually people like people go to my website or they go to my Instagram or they read the book or they listened to the podcast and they're like, "Okay. Like, I'm kind of sold. Like I already know that she's the right person for me, because you can't fake that." Like I either am the right fit for you or I'm not, period. There's not, like there's not a lot of gray area. So what I encourage people to do is they book like a 15 minute speed date with me, and it gives us chance to be like, "What are you specifically looking for? And how can I specifically facilitate you getting there and is that a right fit?" And then it's like, "Will you accept this Rose? Like, is this a good fit for us to go forward together?" And from there, people can work with me for six months, or what I've really started to encourage people to do more now, which is a technique from my master's training, is that we do a breakthrough day and we take eight hours, and it feels like six months of coaching condensed into one day. Because we have so much access to the subconscious mind, it feels, like six months of really of therapy and of coaching in an eight-hour day. And for the clients that I serve, who have so much on their plate, who yes, a six-month mentorship is great to have that level of support, particularly in navigating a transition, that level of clarity and have a couple of follow-up calls after the fact it's like, it's kind of a no-brainer. It's like, "Oh, I need

that. Like, I just need that, because I know I'm stuck and I have to be able to get to my own next level and I need to kind of get there, like right now."

Leah: Ooh I love that. I do want to just kind of wrap up on where people can find you. And I know that you've listened to my podcast, so you know the last question I ask is always, um, how do you define success today? So I'll give you just a second to think about that when you're telling us where we can find you and how we can connect.

Leisse: Leissewilcox.com is the hub. That's my website. It's about to be brand new and shiny, but like right now, it's the hub. I'm on Instagram every day. And between the two of those, @leissewilcox or at leissewilcox.com, that is the best place to connect.

Leah: I love it. And then at least how do you define success for yourself today?

Leisse: Being able to identify what feels good and acting on it.

Leah: That's beautiful. Well, I appreciate you. We're definitely have to have you back when you start working with couples, anyone that listens to me know that knows that I'm passionate about being a wife and being a great wife and just loving that experience. And so I look forward to sharing your information again, when we dig into the couples. And we just have so much more to talk about, we didn't even touch on, you have had breast cancer, you went through a divorce and have come out this beautiful, amazing woman. And it's not about your children. And they're like, your identity is not wrapped up in your children, but I will say I am excited to see the women that your girls become, because they've had the opportunity to learn from you and to witness your own growth, and also your own grace. I am so excited to see your girls when they get to see their mom give herself grace. I think that's one of the most beautiful things that you can teach your children. And that's something that I'm focused on teaching mine is just learning how to give yourself and others grace. And so I think that it's beautiful.

Leisse: Thank you. And what comes with having, like sometimes it really annoys them that they have, like, "We know just let us complain about something," but they also, they just get to be themselves. Right? And all three of them are unconditionally loved and accepted. And I have identical twins. So there's like a lot of narratives about how twins are supposed to be the same. No. Like all three of the girls are so, in this environment, they are so loved and appreciated for whom they are just because they're them.

Leah: I love it and I love you. You're amazing. Thank you so much for being my guest today. And I'm just excited to share this with my beautiful audience.

Leisse: Thank you so much.

Leah: Thanks for tuning in! At Her Story of Success, we are on a mission to help women-business owners, leaders and professionals build your tribe and reach your next level of success by connecting you to one another, equipping you with resources and empowering you along your journey. We would love for you to be a part of our tribe and further this mission by sharing this podcast with a friend or co-worker you want to help succeed.. And you can stay up to date with all of our episodes, blogs and events by signing up for our newsletter at Herstoryofsuccess.com.

The Her Story of Success podcast is produced by women and for women. Our Executive Producer is Claire Bidigare-Curtis, and our Production Coordinator is Bronte Lebo. And I'm your host, Leah Glover Hayes. Talk to you soon!

Sponsor: This podcast is sponsored in part by Piccolo Marketing, providing outsourced marketing professionals for business owners. Piccolo Marketing was started by fellow woman entrepreneur, Anna-Vija McClain, and they have become our go-to resource when it comes to comprehensive marketing strategies and execution. So Anna-Vija created Piccolo Marketing Mentor for people like me, as the outsourced VP of marketing to chief marketing officer, depending on the size and needs of your company. How we use them is more like a VP of marketing, and the thing I struggled with is the processes and checklists, the project management of marketing. I felt like I was wearing a lot of hats and juggling a lot of things, so she helps us with the both long and short term marketing strategies, and then providing my team a roadmap and insights that we can go and execute on. Piccolo Marketing Mentor has helped thousands of business owners just like you and me develop our strategies to improve our marketing machine, which is how we get qualified leads and make sales. So to learn more about Piccolo Marketing Mentor, you can visit them online at piccolomarketing.com