

Ep #29: The Reality of Being the Boss



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Brooke Keeling

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Welcome to *Love Your Living*, a podcast for ambitious women who choose to have it all. Learn how to achieve the massive success you've been dreaming of in your business and your personal life. Here's your host, multiple six-figure business owner and a life stylist, Brooke Keeling.

Hey everyone, and welcome to the *Love Your Living* podcast. I'm really excited to be here with all of you today, and I have a lot to share with you. It's taken me some time to figure out what I wanted to share and how I've wanted to share it, but if you've been listening along, you know that I'm all about being real and open and honest.

And I'm going to get real today on, behind the scenes, what's been happening in my world over the last few weeks. Now, I'm not doing this for sympathy. I'm not doing this for you to sit and think, "Wow, that seems really hard..." or need to have empathy for me. I don't want that at all. I'm not one to share things for the purpose of receiving empathy. I'm just not that person.

And so oftentimes, I keep things in because I don't want a handout. And so the biggest reason that I want to share what I'm going to share with you today is that, oftentimes, when people that I listen to or I look up or I see them and things just seem so perfect and they share some of the things that aren't so perfect, it's incredibly powerful for me and I appreciate it so much.

And so today, we're going to get real. For the last few weeks, I've had so many incredible things happen. I've had some really tough struggles as well. So what has the last few weeks – few months – looked like? If you follow me on social media, you're probably like, man, life is good.

I'm in Montana and I'm in Charleston and Indiana and the Amalfi Coast; life is good, right? But what we don't always see is what's on the inside of that. and when you really stretch yourself and you start growing and focusing on

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the positive, you start to not dwell on the negatives; so we talk about the positive things.

But what's behind the scenes? So while all of this is going on, I'm traveling a ton, which I'm so grateful for the opportunity to travel and I love getting out of my businesses, rejuvenating, and it fills me up. However, I also really love being at home, and I need to be home in order to really get grounded again.

And so, when I'm in and out so much, sometimes it drains me a little bit. So while all of this is going on, I still have businesses to run. And in my business, I have some major shifts and transformations and decisions that I need to make. One of those decisions was letting a long-term employee go.

And this decision has been something that I thought about for months and months and trying to make something work, and always looking back at these times, you think, gosh. It was just something that should have happened months ago. And not because you don't have respect or empathy or you don't like someone, because that's why we keep people around, right?

But, we also have to put on our business hats as entrepreneurs and we need to make the tough decisions. And we need to be smart about how we're running our business and really being honest about what's working and what's not working and making those decisions from that place and knowing what's right in your business.

And so, from that, there's been so many incredible things that have been born. And I had three years with an employee that I had a lot of respect for and I watched grow and transform, and I wish them the best of luck at the end of the day. And as all of this is happening, when you have someone who's been on your staff for three years, you have to figure out all of the moving pieces.

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You have to start getting really curious about what the backend of things look like. And, to be honest with you, some of my thoughts through this transition are, when we have this opportunity to have people support us, sometimes we don't take that ownership of who's actually running the ship, like who is actually in charge of creating whatever it is that you want to create. You take that control back.

And for me, I really stepped into this strength and this place of pure confidence and knowing that although you can't do everything on your own, what you need is you. All you need is you. You're going to have people that come and go. You're going to have really incredible people on your team that you absolutely love and, at some point, they're going to go.

They're going to leave the nest. And it's something that I've learned that I have to really embrace and learn that it's all part of growth, because people change and your business changes and you have to be able to change and adapt with that.

And so it's been a really powerful few weeks in that sense, getting the right pieces in place and feeling how incredible it feels when things are actually coming together the way that I wanted them to; something that's been a struggle for so long just seems so easy. And that's when you really know that you're on the right path, right? You have to listen to your gut. You have to listen to your heart and you have to do the hard thing sometimes.

Now, on top of this, and talking about employees, as I'm going through all of this transition and trying to, you know, keep my business going and not drop any of the balls and train people and onboard people, all of that stuff, I am also going through another employee issue.

And that issue – it's not been the first time that I've gone through this, but I have a past agent that is feeling that she deserves more money, which, if you are a business owner, if you have employees, if you have independent

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contractors, if you have contracts with people, this is something that, if you have not been through, you will go through; I promise you.

And it is mind boggling to me sometimes and it's frustrating and you feel like you are just being taken advantage of and just rolling over and giving more and more and more, especially after you feel that you've already given so much. It's your baby. It's your business, and these people that have worked with you, all of a sudden, feel so entitled to things that I, in my mind, don't feel that they should be entitled to.

Now, of course, there's this part of me that is like, middle fingers, get the F-off my front porch, I'm not paying you a dime. But, at the end of the day, as an employee, usually, you either hire your attorneys and your staff and you go to court, or you write a big fat check.

Now, if you employ people or if you have independent contractors, I want you to know that the court system is always in favor of employees. And so literally last week, I was going through a stack of papers on people claiming unemployment – which, don't even get me started on that whole scenario – and I had papers from being served by a past employee that wants thousands of dollars from me; thousands of dollars that is not even my money that I collected.

So there's that, okay. That's always like a stab in the gut. And it makes you angry and mad, but it's part of the process. This is part of what we signed up for. And I'm not the only one. I know that I'm not the only one.

So I have a friend that literally just went through this a few months ago. And this is her story; it's just crazy, you guys. So she paid for her entire staff to go to a Tony Robbins convention. She has an incredible high-end boutique that specializes in high-end facial treatments, microblading, you know, all the beauty care that you could possibly need.

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Incredible woman, very successful business, and wants her staff to grow and grow with her and she wants to give back to them. And so she presented to them they could all go have the time off and she paid for them to have a ticket to go to a conference; a conference which I went to. I paid on my own; it's not cheap.

She had an employee come back to her and state that it's illegal for her to tell her that she needs to go to something – which she didn't tell her; she offered to pay for her ticket and give her time off to better herself and grow as a human being and as a businessperson.

Not only that, but she came back and she sued her. And after going through this whole ridiculous situation, I met with my friend last week and she said that she ended up paying thousands of dollars to just be done with it. And this is absurd. This is just absolutely absurd to me. The amount of insurance that you have to carry, the paperwork that you have to go through, the things that you need to be mindful of as a business owner, you need to educate yourself.

If you don't have contracts in place, go and get them. If you don't know where your insurance is at, please go and talk to your insurance agent and get proper insurances in place to protect you, because one case like this will literally put you under.

I have another friend, same scenario, got sued for something, employee won. So the court system is always going to be in favor of employees. And, unfortunately, as employers, we want to do so much for people and we want to give and have compassion. And I literally told the girls in my office that sometimes, I feel like a heartless bitch.

And my emotion is gone with a lot of this. And it's not because I don't care or have compassion with people; I'm just over it. And you can't have that

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emotion when you're having to deal with these types of business issues. You need to be strong and you need to protect yourself.

And so again, going back, I had an entire week last week where I was like, Chance the Rapper song on replay, "F-you F-you F-you F-you." That was like my national anthem. I'm like, don't, you're not getting a dime from me.

And then, of course, I have a call with my attorney that says, look, I just had this pretty much exact same case and what happened is we took a year to go through the court system and something that could have been settled for \$10,000 got settled for \$40,000. So not trying to scare anybody that's out there and in business, but this stuff is real. And the bigger you grow, the more you're going to have to navigate these tough times and the hurdles don't get smaller; they're going to get larger.

The problems become bigger problems. And I've said this before; your problems that are hundreds turn into thousands. You just keep adding a zero as your net-worth grows because that's the reality of this. And so make sure that you're protected.

You know, it's not easy to get contracts updated either. Last time I went through this, I had one contract updated. Now, I'm realizing that I have to get another contract updated. And it's a couple thousand dollars just to have that reviewed and updated.

So you have investments that you have to go through in order to protect yourself and it's not just a walk in the park. And sometimes people think that it's just so easy and you're just over there collecting the money and life is so good.

There's tough times that you have to go through and being able to step out of this and being able to step away from some of the anger and the resentment that I've had, I've been able to – in the last few days – say,

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“Look, this is happening to me for a reason.” I’m cutting a check for X amount of thousands of dollars versus three times what it could be maybe in three years.

And maybe it’s a blessing in disguise. Maybe it’s a time for me to say, “Okay, I need to update certain language. I need to take a review of where I’m at contract-wise and be smarter about certain things and protect my business even more.” So seeing it as a, “What is so great about this?” it’s tough to do sometimes, but I really truly believe that every obstacle that you encounter in your business is an obstacle that is making you stronger and allowing you to build the muscle that you need in order to get to where you want to go.

And I have really big dreams and I am just getting started. And in order for me to get to where I want to go and become the business owner that I want to become, I have to go through these things. And someday, I’ll look back and think, “Oh my gosh, remember when...” or, “I’m so grateful that that happened.” I always have; always. But it’s hard in the moment.

So those are a couple of big things happening specifically in my business. That’s not the day to day operations. You know, we still have to get all of our content out and we still need to serve our clients and I still need to produce and I still need to show up and give everything that I possibly feel I can give to my team and the show goes on.

But I also had a lot of things that I was dealing with personally as well. I found out several weeks ago that I was pregnant and went through a portion of the first trimester. I ended up having a miscarriage. And so dealing with that while you’re also dealing with all of these other things, you think sometimes, oh my gosh, when is it going to break, right? Like, how am I going to get through this?

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I think that a lot. And what I can tell you is that you will always get through it. You're strong enough. Now, I've been through this before. I have a lot of empathy and sympathy and love for anybody that has gone through it. It's not easy. It doesn't ever get easier.

For me, I'm incredibly sick. And so weeks of being sick and trying to just get your mind in a place where you can function and show up and the long hours and the long days, they don't stop. You have to keep going. My respect for women during this time is indescribable.

It's when I really truly understand and feel and know just how powerful we are; just how much strength we have within us, how much we can really handle. It's incredible what we're able to do. It, for sure, isn't easy, and our bodies go through so much going through something like this; your hormones, your emotions, the sadness, the sickness, the endless doctor's appointments that you're trying to squeeze in while you have resentment for what's happened.

It's a lot to manage emotionally. And this is where I think sometimes, as women, we really do truly have to have compassion for ourselves. For me, I keep going. I keep myself busy. And at some point, you have to realize and allow your feelings to show up.

You have to realize that gosh, shit sucks right now. There's a lot of stuff happening right now that I'm having to deal with. I'm going to get through this. I'm really busy. I have a full calendar. I don't feel well. I'm sad. I have a speaking engagement that I have to show up for, even though I don't feel like it. I have a team that's counting on me to show up even though I don't feel like it.

And then you have that conversation and you say, "But you got this. How lucky am I to be able to have such an incredible team? How fortunate am I to be able to be part of such an incredible event where I get to meet some

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incredible women and do something new for the first time and challenge myself. How fortunate am I to have employees, even though you get the shit that comes with it too sometimes? How fortunate am I to be in a place where I get to surround myself with people that I love? How fortunate am I that I have these lessons that are allowing me to become the woman that I want to become?”

It’s all part of the journey. And knowing that and having some compassion and love for yourself along the way is huge.

Now, there’s some really big messages that came to me over the last few weeks, and that’s what I wanted to share with you guys today. So yes, running a business is not a walk in the park. It’s not all roses every single day. There’s really crappy days. There’s really crappy weeks. There are days where you just want to have the middle finger to a lot of people, right?

And I had these days. I had a lot of resentment a few days ago and I was angry, and I was mad, and I felt personally attacked and I felt like I needed to dig my heels in and I needed to fight back. Now, I really was trying to figure out, how do I work through this? What’s the best decision?

Do I need to stand my ground? Is that what’s going to make me a strong and empowered woman and smart business owner? Or do I need to be able to say, “I’m the bigger person, you win, you must need this more than me. You don’t get to have any more of my time and my energy because I’m moving onto bigger and better things.”

Now look, that’s a hard thing for me to do, because when we feel like we’re being attacked and we feel like we’re being taken advantage of, we want to attack back. Now, at this exact same time, I literally have had a book on my bookshelf for a while. It’s called Judgment Detox by Gabby Bernstein.

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I absolutely love *The Universe Has Your Back*. This is her second book, *Judgment Detox*. And I decided, for some reason, that I should dive into it. And it literally could not have been a better message and a better book for me to open up and start reading.

She started this book at the time of our last election, and it really goes into judgment of other people and judgment of ourselves and judging our judgment of other people and what it creates in our lives, what it creates in our world.

She says, “When we feel attacked by someone, our response is to attack back. We feel justified in fighting back and defending ourselves from attack.” And this is exactly what was happening in my own life, in my business.

She also says, “When you’re in harmony with love, you receive more of what you want. So when you shift your energy from defensive judgment to free-flowing love, your life gets awesome. You’ll attract exactly what you need. Your relationships will heal, your health will improve, you’ll feel safer and more secure.”

When we reconnect to that power of love and we release this sphere of judgment and attack and negativity, we make this shift. We begin to vibrate at new frequencies. And when we change our frequencies, our family, our business, our life, it reaps those benefits. The energy that we put out is the energy we get back.

And so really acknowledging when you’re in that place of anger and rage and attack back, that’s not what we want back in our life. That’s not what we want more of. And so how do we become these strong, empowered women, with also respecting who we are and what we believe in? In this case, in my cases, some of the things are out of my control.

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How someone responds and acts, their behavior, that's out of my control, and it's not really any of my business; unless I'm writing out a check for thousands of dollars, then I guess it's my business. Unless I'm paying unemployment, then I guess it's my business.

Regardless, that's what they're going to keep showing up in their life, and I don't think that's what people get. I see it. I see it with this specific person. I see it with everyone that I've had. You see the cycles, what they decide to go after. You go and sue someone, you're living in scarcity. You're going and fighting a battle. That's not a battle that I choose to fight. I'm going to move onto bigger and better things.

I'm going to advance my life, focus on the positive things. I'm going to be smarter. I'm going to work with my attorney to tighten up my contracts. I'm going to figure out where I have loopholes so that I'm protected the next time. I'm going to learn from the lessons and I'm going to move on.

That's what I had to choose for myself. That's what I needed time to choose. And a lot of these messages that I received in this book, Judgment Detox, is absolutely amazing. She bases a lot of this off of the election period and how divided our country was, and still is actually.

You know, "I'm not going to be friends with you if you voted for this person." It just creates more attack and separation and divide. Same thing with the #metoo movement. If we can't see that, it's right there in front of us. We're not coming from a place of love; we're coming from a place of attack, which just creates more attack and divide.

So there's other ways of solving some of these problems and these solutions, even though we feel like we're being personally attacked. And I think, as leaders, as business owners, as people that are really trying to build and grow their life, we have to remember these things because yes,

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we're going to get caught off guard, and yes, we're going to feel taken advantage of at times or disrespected.

But we have to be able to come back to that place of love and grace. At least, that's how I want to be showing up as; standing my ground, respecting myself, respecting my business, being smart and educated, but also not getting caught up in the drama, not feeding someone else's emotional energy.

Judgment Detox, it's a great book. I could read you every single page in this book, and I think you'd have incredible lessons. And they're all lessons that I really have to think about. And I question them as well, you know. It's like, "Oh gosh, is this right for me? Is that really respecting you?"

But if you read the whole book and you apply it, you'll understand the concepts that she's teaching and it's incredibly powerful. The Universe Has Your Back is also one that I always go back to when I'm in times where I feel like shit's hard or I feel stuck or this just feels like a lot of negative stuff, because it allows me to realign. It allows me to take a step back and say, "Okay, where's my focus right now?"

And usually, when I ask myself that question, my focus is not in the place of growth and positivity and how am I going to make this work; my focus is on all of the things that are going wrong, all the things that are bad. And then I just get more of that.

So a really great book, a really great read. It was extremely powerful for the place that I'm in right now; allowing me to move forward and really understand what was going on.

Now, the other conversation that I got so much out of, if you did not catch our podcast episode last week with Susan Hyatt, go back and listen to it. It's a really great podcast episode. She talks about her journey. She talks

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about just what it has looked like for her, going from starting out her career to building a seven-figure business.

She gives great tips to all of us on how to view certain things, a lot of which I'm talking about today, because we all have these struggles. In addition to that podcast last week with Susan Hyatt, she had a great podcast come out with a friend also of mine, Kara Loewentheil, who is a mindset coach. She was in my mastermind group this year.

She took her business from \$250,000 last year to over a million this year she will make in revenue. So she also talks about what the journey has looked like for her. We always want to know, when someone gets there that we admire, we want to know, how did you get there? How did you take your business from \$250,000 to a million? What did it look like?

And her secret is not a secret. I've heard it many times. Her secret is just that I never gave up. I lost a lot of money. I invested in things that did not work. I hired people that did not work. I did a lot of things that did not work, but she kept showing up and she just kept telling herself, I'm not giving up; I'm going to do whatever it takes.

And so it wasn't an option for her. It wasn't like, "Okay, if I fail this many times, then I can just quit." She just kept going. She kept going and she kept trying things until eventually they worked. And that's what this business thing is all about. That's what entrepreneurship is all about.

You have to be able to figure out what's working, what's not working, and keep going; keep going when it's not easy, show up even though you don't want to show up, when you're sad, when something happens in your personal life. Yes, you can be sad. Yes, you can cry. Yes, you need to acknowledge that feeling and that emotion, but then you need to keep working and you need to keep moving forward.

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And when you spend \$30,000 on Facebook and it's a total loss, guess what, you keep going. That happened to her. It happens to everybody. Just because one thing didn't work, she hired someone that was like, "This is a done deal, it's going to work, marketing plan, everything, you know, this is the tried true tested method. If you do this, you're going to be successful..." invested all of this money; didn't work.

But she never gave up. And those are the qualities that you have to have if you want to move forward, if you want to do big things in life. And now, she's not stopping. She hit a million dollars. Is she stopping? Absolutely not. She's got big goals for this next year. She's going to continue to grow her business, revise her business, try new things.

And it's really fun – this is what I absolutely love about our mastermind group as well – you get to see the behind the scenes of it. You get to see and hear what people are going through at the time. You get to hear what challenges they have.

You get to hear when they come on and say, you know, we meet each week and they say, "I don't know what to do. I have two months of zero revenue. Should I change up the system? Should I do this? Should I do that?" That was Kara this spring.

And now, she's seeing all of this success because she stayed the course and she kept trying things, and that's what we all have to do. Just because I'm going through issues with employees, doesn't mean that I'm just going to back to being an independent person; an independent business owner where I do all of the things.

It's just a hurdle. It's just challenges that I have to get through and that I learn from to take me from where I'm going to who I want to become. So you can catch that episode a well. Kara is incredibly brilliant. She has a podcast called Unf*ck Your Brain. She previously was an attorney in New

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York City before she dove into being a life coach, and she is just so smart and she has so much knowledge to give.

So check out her podcast too, and just know that we are all on this road together. And when you see these massive success stories, when you see these Instagram accounts and whatever, you're looking at someone's perfect life, just know, it's not perfect. We all have to go through the shit to get to the other side. You have to wade through the discomfort in order to get to the big things in life.

And keep going, find some support, know that you have love all around you. I think about that a lot. Who are these incredible women that I am so fortunate to have in my life that are walking on this journey with me, and what would they say to me right now? And they would give me love and encouragement and support, and that's what you need during these hard times.

So, know I'm sending you lots of love, know that you're not alone, keep going. You are unstoppable. I hope you guys enjoyed today's podcast. If you did enjoy the topic, like I mentioned, go back, listen to last week's topic, interview with Susan Hyatt. It was an incredible interview. And check out Susan's interview with Kara Loewentheil on her road to success as well. And we'll see you all next week.

Thank you so much for tuning in. we'll see you next week.

Thanks for showing up and listening to this week's episode of *Love Your Living*. If you're ready to create a business and life you love, or simply take your already pretty incredible life to the next level, head over to loveyourlivingonline.com/balance to download our five-step guide creating more balance in your life.