

Ep #32: How to Have a Stress-Free Holiday Season



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With Your Host

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 am Brooke Keeling and I'm so excited to be here with all of you today. I can tell you that I've really come to enjoy this podcast because every week, I think about what is it that I could share with everything?

And so much of this makes me become so present in my own life, and oftentimes, some of my own struggles or problems or what's going on. And it makes me look at things so much differently. And what is the meaning of it? What am I making it mean? Where have I grown in many areas of business and life? Who are some of the incredible women that have gone before me that I learn from and implement from and grow from and how do I pass that along to you?

And so, today's episode, I was really thinking about, alright, we're coming up upon the end of the year, closing out yet another year, 2018, starting a new year, 2019; goal-setting, being grateful and looking at what we've accomplished, what this year has brought us and what we want to come of the year ahead.

And we've talked so much about business and goal-setting and getting focused on what you want to create for the end of the year, and I believe that that is so powerful, knowing that the year isn't over. And whatever it is that you have or haven't achieved yet this year, it's not over. And you have to keep going and realizing that every day is a blessing and how can you really finish strong?

However, I'm also a huge, huge, huge holiday person. And the holidays have always been a place and a time for me to really get grounded and

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have gratitude and reflect and spend time with the ones that I love. I also love home. I love being home.

And being able to decorate my home beautifully, it's something that literally makes my heart so happy. And so putting up my Christmas trees and spending time at home with my family and cozying up and reading books or playing board games and seeing the trees when I wake up in the morning and before I go to sleep, it's just a very, very happy time of year.

This year happens to bring a lot of change. And I believe that everything happens for a reason and it's the bigger picture allowing me to let go of the things that no longer serve me, let go of control, and also be able to be a bit more flexible with life, because I am very controlling about my business and my life and my time.

And this year, we happen to be moving houses and moving my entire family. We sold our house. We are moving December 14th. I have sold everything in my house aside from one chair and two mattresses. So I am going into a house that's twice as big as my house now with three pieces of furniture, December 14th, and my family, and that's it.

And in the beginning, it was a little bit tough for me because I think tradition and I think, like, oh my gosh, what am I going to do? How do I put up a tree? How do I get furniture ordered and delivered in time? And it's just not going to happen.

And so I'm just really kind of embracing the journey and it's kind of fun, because it's something that I've never done before, this time of year especially. And it's allowing me to really, really, really feel what's important this time of year – which is my family – and truly know that that's all I need is my family.

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My focus isn't on going out and buying all the gifts and putting extra work on my plate of putting a Christmas tree up at my house, then taking it down, then putting it up at the new house, then taking it down. I'm just likely not going to do that this year, which was kind of hard for me in the beginning. And we'll see if I end up doing that or not.

But oftentimes, I feel like the holidays can bring so much stress and so much anxiety and it can bring love and warmth and all of the incredible feelings as well. But what I have found, as I've grown up, is that you go through so many different transitions in your life. And when you're a child, Christmas is wonderful, for most of us that are fortunate enough to have family and warm homes and people around us that make those holidays so special to us.

And then you get older and all of a sudden, you get married and you're splitting holidays. Now, all of a sudden, two holidays turn into four holidays and schedules start to get discombobulated and you start to feel the pressure of splitting time equally and keeping everyone happy and not hurting feelings.

And you finally figure that out, or maybe you don't even figure it out, and then you add a family into the mix. You add a baby into the mix and then, all of a sudden, you are trying to figure out, what do you want your traditions to look like? And how do you still keep everybody happy and what does the schedule look like?

And there's just a lot – for me, there's a lot of anxiety that comes along with it. There's a lot of stress to just keep going, going, going at a time when I just want to be home in my own home with my family and the people that I love. So this has been, you know, a hot topic. I think it is for everyone.

I'm seeing a lot of people comment and hearing a lot of different stories of, you know, people not looking forward to certain things or dealing with

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family members that are tough or whatever it may be. And as I've grown and each year, as I grow more, so much of my growth and development is focused on business.

But it also very much is reflective on life, life itself, and how you show up and what you can learn. And this last week, I've received some really, really powerful messages from some women that I admire so much and I always feel like these messages, they smack you in the face when you need them the most, if you're open to receiving and feeling them. And my life has been filled up with it.

And there's so many powerful things. Michelle Obama was on the OWN Network this last week, I believe, and I watched some highlight clips. I haven't even watched the full episode yet, and I'm so excited to do so. But Michelle Obama, oh my gosh, what an incredible woman.

And she talks about growth. She talks about people saying that she's never had it hard. She talks about young people, especially women, young people just in general I suppose, you think back and you think, gosh when I get to this point, it's destination. Our goals, our life dream, it's a destination.

And I've talked about this before with goals because you set this big goal and you think, okay, when this then that. When I have the house of my dreams, then I'll be happy and I'll be fulfilled. But that hasn't happened for me. Every time I set a crazy goal and somehow or another, I achieve it, I'm onto the next goal.

And that's part of growth. That's what makes life so precious and beautiful, that you're always growing. If you're not growing, you're dying. And Oprah said every year gets better, so rather than having this mindset of your life is almost over, you hit this destination or you're fulfilled, it's always something that you can grow into more.

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And during this episode, she also talked about showing up and learning to love herself. And she said, I love myself. I love this woman sitting right here. And that has allowed her to show up as this strong courageous woman and it's allowed her to fail and still love herself. It allows her to give love to other people.

It allows her to give love to her family. It allows her to go after her goals and be grounded in who she truly is because she loves who she is, which is so powerful.

She also talks about her marriage and marriage counseling. And you can take this into your marriage – you can take this into any relationship, friendship, family member. But she said, you enter counseling – which if any of you have done any couple's coaching or counseling or whatever – I have, this is exactly what it is – you show up and you start telling your story and you expect the third party to take your side and say, yeah, that's it, it's all his fault, it's all their fault.

And the reality is it's just not. The reality is that we have to take back control of our life. We have to take back control of what we want. We have to stand firm in what we believe in and we have to love ourselves and we have to realize that our partners, our families, our friends, they are not going to be able to give us what we need in order to make us happy, to make us feel fulfilled and loved and happy in life.

We have to do that for ourselves and it's not an easy journey. It's not something that you learn overnight, but it's being open to seeing that and knowing that and knowing that no one person, no family member, your kids, your parents, your spouse, they will not make you happy. You need to find your own happiness and fulfillment.

And you're going to bring that into every relationship, and your relationships are going to thrive when you are able to find it; such a powerful message

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any time of the year, but especially as we go into the holiday season, when maybe we have different relationships in our life that can cause stress, whether it be, again, a spouse, a family member, a mom, dad, sister, whomever it may be.

I also randomly started watching a documentary this week. And it wasn't anything that I even had – it just kind of called for me. And it was Lady Gaga's documentary, *Five Foot Two*. And I've never been a huge fan – I mean, I think she's great and I think she's super creative and I've never not liked her, but she's not Beyoncé to me; let's just put it that way.

But I started watching this documentary and it was the same message over and over again of Michelle Obama. And it's this journey that Gaga has been on over the last five years, she's kind of disappeared. And she's known for being eccentric and known for showing up in all these crazy outfits and doing, you know, what no one else is going, and it's a big surprise how she can show up.

And she tells her story about that time period in her life, but she's also telling a story of the last five years, of struggle and pain that she's gone through and why she's kind of disappeared from the public eye, which I didn't even really realize. But she hasn't been around. She hasn't been producing new music. She's kind of taken a hiatus.

And so she went through some medical problems and she's healing from that and she went through depression and she's had issues within her life, like everybody else. But oftentimes, celebrities and people that are in the public eye, you look at them – just like Michelle Obama said – and you think they don't have any problems. You think everything's so easy for them.

And Gaga said, "This is the first time in my life that I've felt beautiful. This is the first time in my life that I've felt good enough. It's the first time in my life

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that I love me.” And that’s the journey that she’s been on and it took her five years to get to that place.

And it’s not that she’s there and she doesn’t have any more work to do; it’s just that it took her time to figure that out. She said in her industry, there’s so much power; so much power in producers and managers and people that are working with you to create you. And she said, especially as a female artist, there’s a lot of powerful men. And the way they talk to you, you don’t even notice it in the moment, but the way that they talk to you all the time creates this sense of not enough.

She said you constantly hear the, you wouldn’t be where you’re at without me. You wouldn’t be who you are without me. You wouldn’t be successful on your own. You wouldn’t be Lady Gaga on your own. And it’s just ridiculous because as I’ve seen some of these messages and heard from these women and I follow people that inspire me, that I love in business and in life, that are bold, that are confident, that are out there doing them, that are seeing massive success, women that are making seven figures, multiple seven figures, that are shape-shifters and changing the world are these women that are out there being them.

No one else has made them and when they let go of who I need to be, how I need to show up, how I need to please, watching what you say, trying to please everyone, you don’t get anywhere from that. When you find massive success, when you find happiness, when you find fulfillment in your life, it’s this dance of becoming who you are in your core, at your heart, and letting go of what’s no longer serving you; letting go of caring about what people think about you, letting go of how you think you need to act, letting go of trying to make other people happy, because you cannot.

You have to create happiness for yourself, and those people need to create happiness for themselves. And when you bring that love and happiness into a relationship, that’s when it’s going to thrive. But letting go of what no

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longer serves you opens up the doors to greatness. That's the story that I think is so powerful and incredible.

I was telling my husband about it. You know, we're not huge massive Gaga fans, but I have so much respect for her saying that she's finally in a place where she loves herself, where she feels beautiful, where she feels enough, feels good enough. This is someone that has won all of these awards and accolades and is incredibly successful and still she doesn't feel good enough – didn't feel good enough – and now she does.

It's an incredible documentary. I recommend you guys take a peek at it. It's a journey that I feel like so many of us have to go on. And when you're open to going on that ride, it truly is when greatness unfolds and where you find your happiness and your love for yourself.

I also started reading Iris Apfel's book this week. And again, the exact same message came up over and over and over again. She did things because they felt good, she followed her heart. She didn't care what people thought about her. She just said yes to the things that lit her up and she just kept doing it; consistency, consistency, consistency.

And what I did not know about Iris Apfel is that she did not really become an icon famous for her work until she was almost 70 years old. It wasn't until the early 2000s when her work really started to take off. And at that time, people were saying she was an overnight success. And her comment back to people saying, oh my gosh, where did Iris Apfel come from? She's this overnight success.

And she's like, yeah, an overnight success that took 50 years to create, because she was working on her business, on her life, on her design collections; everything she was doing for 50 years before she became known. And then, all of a sudden, she was known everywhere. She said, "I never expected to be..." and she just listed off all of these things; a cover

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model at the age of 78, on the side of a bus, getting an award, known for her design, have a movie made about her that receives an Emmy nomination, I believe.

But she got there by loving herself and staying true to her heart and really knowing who she was, which I think is incredible. And when I look at all of these women that I look up to in business and in life, it's because they are showing up authentically; truly authentically. Not using that word to be cliché, but being real, following their heart, doing the things that make them happy.

Part of the fun about that is that you don't get to know that overnight. You get to explore those things. And you hit one goal and you keep going, like Michelle Obama says. But especially this time of year, the most powerful messaging that I took from all of these women and these messages that have kind of flooded into me is that you have to do you first.

We go into the holidays and we're trying to please people and it's all these external things and stuff and holiday parties and schedules and obligations. What we need to remember now more than ever, going into this, is that we are in control of what we want in life, and you need to take care of yourself. You need to take care of what it is that you want that's going to create happiness in your own life, what traditions you want to create, who you want to be around. What's going to create love in your life? And what can you let go of?

I think emotions get high, especially in families, and they do for me. I have my own struggles that I have to get through during the holiday season. And what I've realized over the past years is how much I let certain outside things, external factors or people, affect me. And if you follow me on Instagram, there's a quote that I absolutely love that I've been carrying with me over the last week and a half.

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It's by Oprah and she says, "There are only two types of people in the world; those who bring energy and those who drain it away." And I realize that for every relationship, not only do I have to be accountable for the energy that I bring, but I also have to take responsibility for the energy that I allow from others.

This is so powerful, especially this time of year. Maybe you don't have any stressors during this time of year, but the majority of people that I know, they do. And as you get older and you transition through these different phases of what family looks like and creating different transitions for your family, it does get stressful. But really understanding that whatever you bring, you're responsible for the energy that you bring into a relationship, but also are responsible for what you are allowing to affect you in a relationship; what energies that you're allowing to come in.

And that's a big one for me because I feel so deeply. And so being able to put a shield up and protect myself from receiving all of the negative energy or allowing people to drain me; allowing things that aren't okay with me. And that's what has been such a big takeaway from all of these women is really stepping into who you are and being proud of who you are, setting expectations, and being able to do what you want because it's your life.

Spend time with the people that you want to spend time with. Set boundaries and expectations. Don't allow the season to get away from you, the business, the craziness, and take some time to reflect and really enjoy what this season is all about.

One of the biggest things that I've told myself over the last week and reminded myself is, regardless of anything else this time of the year, no one will take away the gratitude and the love and the time that I get to spend with my daughter and with my husband. I won't allow negative energy to affect that.

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So energy is one thing, but also establishing what you want in your life and being clear about that and not having sympathy around the things that are important to you is also a big deal. I have a friend that I was having a conversation with – and mentor – and we were talking about the holidays and we were talking about things that were happening or planning.

You know, we already have family texting and calling about this schedule and that schedule and are you going to be here for this. And I was saying that I wasn't really looking forward to certain things around my holiday schedule, and she's a different phase in her life. Her kids are already grown and I'm at the beginning where I have young kids and we're just starting to figure out what all of this looks like and how do I create my own traditions and how do I not make people feel bad and what is okay and what's not okay.

And really, what's okay and what's not okay is totally up to you, but she was saying to me, I am in the process of booking an extremely expensive vacation for my family so that I do not have to go to this other thing. And we were joking because we had similar stories about this and I said, but it shouldn't have to be this way. And she said, you're right, it shouldn't have to be this way. And then we joked again, of course, and said we shouldn't have to buy expensive shit to be able to do what we want to do to have an excuse.

And it's very true, you shouldn't have to. We should be able to say this is what I want, this is how things are going to be, and be respectful of that. and however someone else takes that or if you have a relationship that's a tough one in this scenario, it's not really your problem; it's theirs. But be able to create the things that you want and let go of the things that are no longer serving you.

If you guys have heard me talk about – I get real woo-woo at times. And I have an incredible woman that I absolutely love and I follow and she's done

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tarot readings for me over the last couple of years now and she's just great. If you don't follow thetarotlady on Instagram, she's wonderful. She pulls a tarot card every day and she also does really great readings.

But she sent out a little note to her people and I'm going to read it to you because it was really kind of validation for me. She says, "This time of year, most people are sitting around the table with their families. They're enjoying holiday time. Their schedules are full of holiday fuss. Me, not so much. I began opting out of the holiday fuss. I still celebrate, but on a small scale. Instead of hustle and bustle, I prepare a quiet meal for my husband and myself. The kids come for dessert. Christmas is strictly kids and us. No more rushing about, forced family obligations, spending way beyond my budget or eating until I burst. I have simplified everything down, way down. It's so peaceful and it's my idea of holiday heaven. You may prefer something different. Perhaps you might like a giant affair with extended family and all of the trimmings. Or maybe you like to go out of town to somewhere exotic and skip it altogether. It's all good. This year, do you for the holiday season. Find what makes you merry and then do it upright."

So my question for you, my friends, is what makes you happy? What do you love about the holiday season? Maybe what don't you love about the holiday season? Can you let go of something? Can you create a new tradition? Can you find something that gives you joy and peace?

I had a conversation recently with a woman that had lost her husband after 40 years of marriage and the holidays are really tough. And she said, I just don't think they'll ever be the same. And you know what – that's okay. They probably won't be the same. And it takes time to heal through those really tough times.

But what's something that you can do that gives you joy and peace and gratitude? What's something that you can do to make the holidays what you want them to be? Maybe it's creating something new. Maybe it's letting

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go. Maybe it's letting go of the pressure to buy all the gifts for all the people. Maybe it's letting go of the pressure to please everyone on your family and make everybody happy so that they can see you. That's been a huge one for me and allowing me to get back to a place of the holidays that I really love.

I have big families and we grew up, on both sides of our families, very close to our families. So it's a tough one to try to navigate through. It has been. And so for me, it's really what can I let go of and how do I get back to a place that I really love the holidays and taking some of the pressure away from it?

What schedule can I say no to? What obligation can I say no to? And know that it's about me creating that happiness within my own life and it doesn't mean that I don't love people. It doesn't mean that I don't care, but you do you.

So for all of my friends out there that have any stressors around this time of year, let it go. What do you need to let go of and how can you create an incredible holiday season for you and the people that are right there beside you that you love so much, or just you? Make it special and do you.

And again, if you don't follow Theresa, go and check her out because she's absolutely wonderful; thetarotlady. I hope you all have an incredible holiday season and really find gratitude at this time of year and give love to people that struggle this time of year and do something nice for the less fortunate.

Grab those stickers off of the Christmas trees at the grocery checkout line; something small. It makes your heart fill up. Last year, we provided a holiday for a family in need in our local community and we bought their kids gifts and we were able to also buy them food for a holiday dinner. And I can tell you that that gave me more love and gratitude and fulfillment than any other gift that I purchased for anyone.

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So go do something nice and give and give love and do you. Do the things that fill you up and enjoy the season. It's a beautiful season. Enjoy the last 30 days of 2018. Do it up good. We'll see you all next week. Happy holidays.

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.