



## How to Avoid Entrepreneurial Burnout with Lauren Parsons

Episode #42

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### Lisa Larter (00:01):

Welcome to, She Talks Business. If you're an entrepreneur, business owner, or aspiring mogul, chances are you want to learn more about marketing and mastering and monetizing your business. She Talks Business is where you'll learn all of that and more. My name is Lisa Larter, and I'm an entrepreneur, high school dropout, wiener dog enthusiast, and your host. Let's get started.

### Lisa Larter (00:24):

Well, hello everyone. I hope the first week of your happy new year is off to a great start and everything is tickety-boo. I am in Bradenton, Florida this week, hosting a beach house mastermind retreat with a bunch of amazing women in a mansion on the water. And I am really, really grateful to be spending this time with these women. This is the fourth or fifth time we have done this, and it is just such a really rich and great experience. I encourage you to make time in your life to spend time with like-minded people whenever you can.

### Lisa Larter (01:09):

So today we've got Lauren Parsons from Lauren Parson's Wellbeing on the show, and Lauren is an award-winning wellbeing specialist. If you go to her website and you read her list of accomplishments, it's a mile long. She has done so much work in helping thousands of people transform their lives. But what I really love about my conversation with Lauren, I mean, she creates tailored science-based workplace wellness programs and all kinds of really, really great stuff, but I love how she breaks things down and simplifies how to approach your life. And I love some of the shortcuts that she gives people so that they can have more free time. We have a really great conversation about some of the flags you need to look out for as an entrepreneur, so you don't end up experiencing entrepreneurial burnout and even some strategies



to mitigate or reduce anxiety in your life. So this is a really, really, really great episode.

**Lisa Larter (02:18):**

And health and wellness are not typically something that I talk about on the show because this program is called, She Talks Business; it's about business. But the truth is your energy, your health and wellbeing, your mindset, your vitality are all really, really, really important. What's the word I'm looking for? I can't even think of the word. I'm thinking about a foundation. Yeah. They're foundational to your success as a business owner. So, I hope you get extreme value from this conversation. It was delightful to have Lauren on the show and I'm going to start cooking things in groupings of four. Once you listen to the show, you'll know more. Thanks for listening. Enjoy.

**Lisa Larter (03:07):**

Well, hello, hello, hello and happy new year friends. It's hard to believe that we are already one week into 2022, and I am excited to be here with Lauren Parsons, who I met in Ottawa, Ontario, feels like a million moons ago, but it really wasn't. And I invited Lauren to be on the show, entitled Conversation with Friends, because her topic doesn't really fit. It doesn't really fit because I'm probably not going to do a whole season on how to thrive, how to really manage your energy and vitality. And let's face it, avoid burnout as an entrepreneur. So, I asked Lauren to come on the show and have a conversation with me about some of the things that she does to help individuals and organizations really develop healthy workplaces and healthy cultures and just be better at taking care of ourselves. And so you're going to notice something a little bit different when you hear Lauren talk. She's got an accent because she's from New Zealand. So Lauren, welcome. Good to have you here.

**Lauren Parsons (04:27):**

Kia ora. Hi. Nice to be here. Thanks Lisa.

**Lisa Larter (04:30):**

It's good to see you again. I think the last time I saw you we were both in Ottawa and it was right before you left to go to New Zealand. And I ran into you in a restaurant. We were both at this little restaurant, which is on a side street. It was almost like this anonymous looking restaurant in a house. And it

was so cool to meet your husband and your family there that day. It was awesome.

**Lauren Parsons (04:53):**

That's right. Yeah, it was. And now two years have gone, I'm back in New Zealand.

**Lisa Larter (04:58):**

I know. You planned your trip just in time to get locked down.

**Lauren Parsons (05:03):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Lisa Larter (05:03):**

Very, very wise. So talk to me a little bit about the work that you do and specifically talk to me about the linkage between wellbeing and productivity. Because what I hear entrepreneurs say all the time is, "I need to get more done. I need more time in a day. I'm so busy. I don't have time." Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But I never hear people talk about wellbeing. But I know for myself, if my energy is low, if I'm not doing things to take care of myself, then all that productivity can kind of feel like I'm carrying a bag of stones on my back. Talk to me a little bit about how you see the linkage between those things.

**Lauren Parsons (05:54):**

Yeah. I love that you've used those two words because literally my vision is to equip and inspire business leaders to find the sweet spot between boosting both wellbeing and productivity. Because I think often when we think about workplace wellbeing or individual wellbeing, some people think of that as a fluffy topic or kind of an add-on or something nice, like, "Yeah, we should just do that to tick the box." But actually, when we boost our own wellbeing as business owners and the wellbeing of our team, that directly flows on to effect productivity. And so for me, it's about helping to do both of those things because I love efficiency. I'm big on time management on leveraging our time. And I believe that everyone wants to go home at the end of the day, really satisfied, having kept goals, having been focused.

### **Lauren Parsons (06:44):**

And yet at the same time, we know that so many people are actually caught up in the overwhelmed trap. And especially as an entrepreneur, as a solo business owner, your health and wellbeing are critical because, it just goes without saying, without your health, you have nothing. You don't have a business. For most, not all, but for most business owners, as in, if you got up in the morning, you didn't turn up and your business ran without you, then yes okay, you have a business. But for a lot of us, if you are the main key essential deliverable in your business, if you are offering some sort of service or you're really the brains behind it all, you looking after yourself is so fundamental. And it is key, we're seeing rates of burnout going up. So yeah, for me, it's really critical.

### **Lisa Larter (07:30):**

Yeah. I know that my, today for example, I had a really busy day. I had a bunch of meetings and when I got up this morning, my immediate tendency was, I have so much to do. I'm going to jump in my office and I'm going to get some stuff done now, because I got up at 5:30. And then I had to stop myself and say, no, you need to stick with your morning routine. You need to sit and do a little bit of reading. You need to go out and do that walk that you do in the morning, because those are the things that actually give me the energy, the mindset, and the perspective to take on the day from a good place. And I recognize that when I don't do those things, I end up sometimes resenting my work because I'm not taking care of me.

### **Lisa Larter (08:28):**

I've been on your website, and I know some of the work that you do is with bigger organizations and culture is important and workplace satisfaction and all these buzzwords that we hear. HR wants to make sure you're sitting in your ergonomically correct chair and yada, yada, yada. But for small business owners that are that person that turns the lights on and off every day. And maybe they only have a small team of a couple of people. They're not thinking about culture and workplace environment the same way. I'm sure there's a list a mile long of things that you help some of your clients do so that the individuals inside of their organization can be more productive, and healthy, and well, and all of that. But if you were to take three things that you think every small business owner should do, what would they be?

### Lauren Parsons (09:28):

Oh, I love that question. I love tough questions, Lisa. Try and narrow it down to just three things. So, the number one thing that comes to me is mindset. I have five live well principles and they are to uplift your thoughts; to nourish your body with whole real food; to invigorate your body, your life, and your day; to strengthen your mind resilience; and to restore. And so the number one thing that really comes to mind is mindset. It's the things that we do and it is our daily practices and our daily routines that help to cultivate that, and a mindset is not just a one time thing. And I think what you mentioned before, like your morning routine for example, is critical. So what is it that you're doing in the morning when you start your day? It's like when you shower, you need to shower your mindset and choose how you want to show up for the day.

### Lauren Parsons (10:17):

Do you have a routine that helps you feel calm and centered to start the day? Do you do some learning or something that's going to inspire you to start the day? Do you set a positive intention to how you want to feel for the day? And I have this little five word saying, and that is focus on what you want. We all get more of what we want, and I'm sure you've probably expanded on this in different ways, and there's lots of teaching around that. And the more clarity you can get on how you want life to be, how you want your business to be, how you want your day to go, how you want to feel. How do you want to feel today? Do you want to be courageous? Do you want to be playful? Do you want to feel at ease? Do you want to be confident? Do you want to be patient? I think starting the day with a positive routine that helps to foster that positive mindset is really key.

### Lisa Larter (11:04):

But how do you do that? Because I hear you say that and I think, oh, that's so good. What do you want today? But then in theory, I'm like, all right, I crawl out a bed. I got to take the dogs out. I got to feed the dogs. I got to clean the dog dishes. I got to make my coffee. And so like, what is the trigger? BJ Fogg, I think, wrote *Tiny Habits*. And it's like, after you do this, then do this. It's like, what is the anchor or the trigger that you use to do that every day so that you remember to do it? Because I would never remember.

### **Lauren Parsons (11:37):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Great question. So if I may share a quick story with you, it was actually when we were living in Ottawa, Canada, that I realized that I just was starting my day on completely the wrong foot. So, and this story isn't easy to share by the way, but I found it's really powerful because people can relate. My husband would get up at five and go to work early. And mama bear was in charge of getting one preschooler and two school-aged kids off to school. And the school was one of these schools where you had a 10-minute drop-off window and if you missed it, you had to walk an extra half a kilometer through the snow to line up at the office like a naughty kid. So there was this big pressure on me every morning to be on time, right?

### **Lauren Parsons (12:12):**

And every morning I would start with the best intentions, Lisa, of the morning going smoothly. And literally every morning would descend into tears and shouting on all sides. Kids included, me included. And honestly, if they'd been a fly on the wall, seeing me in those parenting failure moments, I would be so embarrassed. But at one point when my own anxiety was getting so high that the night before I was thinking, how am I going to get through another morning without shouting at my kids? And am I going to walk home from school again in tears thinking, what am I doing to them long term? I realized that something needed to change. And I realized that it wasn't my kids that were the problem, it was me.

### **Lauren Parsons (12:50):**

What I did is I started to set my alarm 10 minutes earlier and I created a morning routine that only took four minutes actually. And I did this thing called habit stacking, which James Clear talks about in his book called *Atomic Habits*. And for the four minutes, I would put on an uplifting song, do a stretching/strengthening routine, just something really simple, really grounding. Focus on breathing diaphragmatically. Think of something I was grateful for from the day before. And it was during that, that I'd focus on, okay, what's my intention for today? How do I want to show up to today?

### **Lauren Parsons (13:26):**

So it's a bit of a long winded answer, but I feel like we need to understand what it actually looks like. So for me, that's what my morning routine looks

like and has looked like I would say 90% of the time from then to now. I'm not perfect, but it's great having this short routine that even in just four minutes, I can do something that will ground me. And for me it was the difference between night and day. From that point on, 99% of the time we all left the house like we all still already loved each other. And biggest thing was not just what that meant for my children, but what it also meant for me in the rest of my day. I wasn't then on a guilt trip for the rest of the day, and I could focus.

**Lauren Parsons (14:03):**

So I think, Darren Hardy talks about how you've got to bookend your day well. You can't always control what happens in the middle of your day, but you have so much control over, especially that way you start your day and the way you close your day and get ready for a great night's sleep to fuel the next day. So I would highly recommend anyone listening in, if you haven't already, cultivate and intentionally create your morning routine and put into it whatever fits for you. For me, it was those few things. And just see what a difference it makes. And it's like you said, you have to do that to set yourself for the success later on.

**Lisa Larter (14:38):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, it's powerful. I can relate because when I fall off of my routine of having my coffee, quiet, peaceful, time to read, go for my walk. When I fall off of those habits, I can feel it in how my day goes. So I think that's important. What else? I asked you for three and you started with mindset, then I cut you off because I was like, how do we do that?

**Lauren Parsons (15:04):**

Otherwise I was going to muddle on for on half an hour. No, that's great. So mindset and morning routine is really key. The second thing I think is managing your energy through the day. And this is going to sound super simple, but the thing is, I know that so many business owners don't do this, and that is to actually take your regular breaks throughout the day. And so again, the best practical way that I know to do this is when you have those chunks of time that are your own. When you don't have set meetings or client delivery work, I recommend using a countdown timer. And I have what I call my 101-minute productivity cycle, which is 25 minutes of focused work, and then a three-minute movement break. Twenty-five minutes of focused

work and then a three-minute movement break. Then a third round of 25 minutes of focused work and a 20-minute brain break, which is where you just go and you allow your brain to defrag. You allow it to store away all the knowledge and all the thoughts. And to freshen up so that you actually are ready for your next upswing.

**Lauren Parsons (16:02):**

Because we have this thing called ultradian rhythms that overlap over the circadian rhythms throughout the day. And they give us this 90-minute upswing of high energy. And then we have a 20-minute downswing. And I think relating to burnout, the challenge is that too often we try to skip that recovery phase of the downswing and the clear signs and signals that you get are when you're trying to just push through and work and get the report done or get the proposal done or get the marketing plan done. You just try and push through, even though you feel tired, distracted, irritable, emotional, hungry. You notice these physical symptoms that your body is telling you, you need to take a break.

**Lauren Parsons (16:45):**

And yet sometimes we can override that. My body's telling me that I can still go. No, I'm just going to get this done. And if I do that, my body will go, oh, my goodness, I've been telling Lauren she needs to take a break and she is not taking a break. So this must be like life or death. And so suddenly ding, ding, ding, ding, fight or flight mode kicks in. We actually shut down the prefrontal cortex, we shut down our decision-making ability, and we do get that hit of adrenaline cortisone. And so we feel like Superman, Superwoman, oh, I can keep going because I get my second wind. Now that is not bad in and of itself to do that occasionally, that's okay. But the challenge is I know entrepreneurs, business owners, business leaders who are constantly skipping that, who are not responding to those signals, and who are missing that recovery break and just pushing through and pushing through. And that is where we head ourselves towards burnout.

**Lisa Larter (17:40):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). For sure. So you also talked about nourishing. Food is an interesting thing when you are an entrepreneur, especially if you work from home, because I find that food can be a distraction. And it's easy to skip a meal, forget to eat, but I also think that sometimes I find myself wandering

into the kitchen when I probably just need one of those 20-minute breaks. And it's not really that I'm hungry. It's that I've just worked enough. So what types of things do you help or do you advise people to do on the food front?

**Lisa Larter (18:19):**

I've started doing this really kind of, I think it's a weird thing, but I am not a big breakfast person. I'm just not hungry in the morning, so I usually have lunch mid-morning. And I don't place a high value on lunch because I'm just having lunch in the middle of my work day, but I place higher value on dinner with my husband. And so I'm always thinking about what are we going to have for dinner? But I've started just eating the same thing for lunch every day. Because it's easy, and it's fast, and it's efficient. And so I'm curious, what do you tell people they should do when it comes to nourishing themselves?

**Lauren Parsons (19:01):**

Well, I think the number one is I don't actually tell people what you should eat. I think that that is so important. You have personal choice and I think it's important we don't label foods as good and bad. I'm all about a permissive approach to nutrition, which can feel scary for some people. But I think the biggest thing is eating more real food and eating mindfully. So those are my whole philosophy of nutrition. Five words is eat real food and eat mindfully. And to answer, your question was linked to what you're saying, having routines and having a similar or the same lunch every day, there's nothing necessarily wrong with that. Obviously, we do want to make sure we have variety throughout the week and throughout getting the whole rainbow, getting all the different phytochemicals and vitamins and minerals by getting in that full rainbow of different reds, and purples, and blues and, not blues maybe, but greens and oranges in terms of getting those nutrients on board.

**Lauren Parsons (19:55):**

But the key thing that I talk about is eat more real food and people might think, well, surely that's what I do, Lauren, but so much of what is available in our food landscape now is so highly processed. And often when we are busy and we're pushed for time, those are the options that we can easily opt for. So there's a whole, I could talk for hours on this essentially, but some practical tips are things like create your own library freezer. Create your own little library in your freezer of meals that you've pre-prepared, so you've

actually got your own takeout just to take out of the freezer. Now, a lot of people will cook a bit extra when they cook, but what I have recommended is systematically quadruple batch cook, like cook four or more of a meal, get two big pots, go and cook up a really big chili, or cook a big casserole, or a soup, or a curry, or whatever it is. Then actually freeze three or more so that you have this library of go to meals in your freezer. And it's no longer boring leftovers, it actually just simplifies your week.

**Lauren Parsons (20:52):**

And then you can menu plan, I menu plan for the week. And it's literally defrost this night, defrost that night, defrost that night, oh, I'm going to cook on Thursday, and then defrost, defrost, and I'll cook again on Sunday. So I only have to cook two nights a week. This is a huge time saver, huge money saver. And you can obviously make a really nutritious version of a whole lot of things that you could think of as convenience food, but you can make this really beautiful nutritious version by amping up the nutritional value in them. And I think just that preparation or a little bit of prep for the week, like maybe just learning how to make a great vinaigrette in a jar so that you can throw together a salad in seconds.

**Lauren Parsons (21:30):**

I have this sensational salad blueprint and it can just be even a single ingredient. Just grate some carrots and have a carrot salad. Living in France, we learned that very simple approach to food and I just have a beet salad or slice cucumber salad, just delicious. Just focusing on one main ingredient. And again, time saving. So I'm kind of known as the time saving queen. Now on the exercise front, I talk about snacking on exercise, which is my whole philosophy around could you just commit to four minutes a day to move your body and fitting in those micro movements I mentioned in between your work. It's going not to just help your physical health, but really energize and really boost your mental health and shift your mood. Because as soon as we move our bodies, it shifts how we feel, the physiology affects the psychology.

**Lauren Parsons (22:16):**

And I'm jumping back a little bit, but I think those two things go together and you are right as well, what you said. Sometimes we get a bit distracted or maybe we're trying to do something that's a bit tricky. Maybe we're going

around and around with our sales copy or we just getting stuck because we've got to do something that's uncomfortable. So we just go to grab a snack and perhaps you could just go and take a walk around the block or have a dance party and shift your mood and get ready to come back and focus.

**Lisa Larter (22:41):**

That's great. I love the idea of quadrupling what you're making because I do that when I make a bolognese sauce, a huge pot of sauce. And of course I do that, I freeze it. And I also do it when I make butter chicken because I make it from scratch. So I always quadruple the ingredients so that I end up with all this extra sauce, but I haven't really considered doing it with other things and that's such a smart thing to do. And then you can portion it in lunch sizes or meal sizes for the family, which is fantastic. It's a really great tip.

**Lisa Larter (23:17):**

I think that there's a lot of entrepreneurs that are potentially suffering from burnout. And I don't know that they recognize it. What are some of the signs of burnout or what are some of the warning signs that people should pay attention to when they maybe need to make some lifestyle changes so that they're not working all the time, but they are actually having a life that allows them to thrive? I mean, you talked earlier about, before we started to record, we talked about avoiding burnout so you can thrive by managing your own vitality and energy. I don't know, there's an expression, "you don't know what you don't know until you know", and so sometimes I think we don't know that we're on the verge of burnout until we know. So what should we pay attention to?

**Lauren Parsons (24:14):**

Yeah, well, there are actually three red flags of burnout in the clinical definition, and that is exhaustion. And so this is not just tiredness, but this is deep exhaustion where you feel like your batteries just can't charge up again. So that physical exhaustion is number one. Number two is cynicism or depersonalization. And that's where you start becoming cynical. You lose your motivation. You might feel like you lose your sense of purpose or passion. You just feel a bit unmotivated to even do what it is that you do. And this can happen there for entrepreneurs and for people in the career. And the third one is an increasingly lower sense of achievement. And so it's

this downward spiral that we see where people feel like they're just working really hard, but they feel like they're not making headway. And so those three things together combine to create that burnt out state.

**Lauren Parsons (25:09):**

And it is something that we need to talk about because I believe there are too many people that are just pushing on and trying to put the mask on and I'm fine, the fine mask, and push through. And we really do need to pay attention to our physical wellbeing, where are we at in terms of our energy levels? How's your sleep? How's your temperament? How are your relationships? All of these things obviously interplay as well, but we need to look out for those signs and signals. And I think the thing that makes us love the work that we do other than obviously meeting amazing needs and helping amazing clients, is that sense of achievement and purpose in what we do. And taking those breaks and having that time out and away from work is really the key thing that helps us come back and dive into work with that more passion and energy and vitality.

**Lauren Parsons (25:59):**

And that's why I talk about, in a day, have these focused blocks of work and then have those breaks. Also throughout your year, plan ahead the breaks that you're going to take. Have many breaks or have long weekends regularly planned so that you are regularly recharging and checking in and just get in touch with how your body is feeling so that you notice those signs well ahead of it becoming a point where you've got to take like six months or a year off. Nobody wants to experience that.

**Lisa Larter (26:26):**

No, for sure. I'm also seeing an increase in anxiety in the workplace. And I have a hypothesis and of course, I'm just a lowly high school dropout. I'm not a doctor is what I'm trying to say. But I have a hypothesis around anxiety, that anxiety is actually being caused by our inability to focus. I mean, I know there's people that clinically have anxiety, but I am seeing, I mean, I am 51 years old. I have employed people my whole life, whether it was working for a corporation or working for my own business. And in the last, I'm going to say 5, 6, 7 years, I've seen more people talk about anxiety than I've seen in the 20 years before that.

### **Lisa Larter (27:26):**

So I have this hypothesis that some of this anxiety is being fueled by our addiction to technology and the constant screens, the constant scroll, the constant comparison, the constant desire to make ourselves look good. And I don't think that that is helping people in the workplace either. I remember one time walking over to one of my team member's desks to help her with something on her computer, and her phone was sitting on her desk and her phone was blowing up with distractions. And the exact same notifications we're all coming across a computer screen. I was like, oh my God, what are you doing? Like how can you actually do focused work when you have all those pings coming in all these different places? What is your perspective on that? Because I think anxiety definitely gets in the way of feeling like you're thriving.

### **Lauren Parsons (28:29):**

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Absolutely. And I actually think that you are spot on. I really firmly believe that the growth in social media and particularly smart phones, the fact that we are constantly connected, and we have this whole generation of young people that have never experienced life without this. Now I can remember, it was 21 years ago when I got my first cell phone, I was at university. And I can remember being overseas on exchange and trying to learn how to use this thing called email. And that's not that long ago. So in this very short space of time, the world has changed so incredibly that it's just hard to picture life without just having your smartphone there, without looking things up.

### **Lauren Parsons (29:13):**

And so, I don't want to sound like the negative technology person because I love technology. It wouldn't allow us to connect like this. And I couldn't do about two-thirds of my work this year without being able to present online. However, I think it's a double edge sword that we need to learn to wield very carefully because it's causing us to be highly connected online, yet disconnected person to person. More people are lonely. Vivek Murthy, who was a former US Surgeon General, he stated that, "In this century, the biggest epidemic we would face is a loneliness epidemic." And I believe that that's true. There are people that connect with other human beings in their day-to-day interactions yet they feel deeply alone and disconnected.

### **Lauren Parsons (29:52):**

So yeah, I actually speak on this topic. I've written a short book on the six things that technology is driving, that we are highly connected, yet disconnected socially, that we are overloaded with information, that we are distracted, that distraction of alerts. Just switch them off for goodness sake. Please switch all the alerts off and put the phone on silent mode. Put the phone on airplane mode during the day and just go 1970s style and just focus and be present. It's affecting our sleep and it's making us less active. So this is a huge area, Lisa. And I think you're right, that it really is driving anxiety.

### **Lauren Parsons (30:27):**

The whole comparison game, particularly in social media science, I know it is highly addictive and I know this not just for myself. Last November I took Facebook off my phone, and I missed it for like a week. I kept going to push the icon and it wasn't in that same spot on my phone where I was looking for it. But I realized that I had just been scrolling mindlessly when I was with my children and that precious afterschool window of time to hang out with them. And I had to think to myself, what am I doing? So here I am just sharing all my parenting failure moments with you guys. But I share because you might relate, right? This is real life. It's addictive and it's designed to be addictive. They are designed to be no stopping queues, so we just keep scrolling.

### **Lauren Parsons (31:09):**

And it is a really key thing that if you can, for example, have periods of time when you use offline mode, that you turn it off, that you charge your phone in a different room, that you do not risk looking at it overnight or being the first thing you see in the morning. For so many clients that has been life changing for them. I've had people that have messaged me about going, "My time is mine." When they've stopped checking their emails first thing in the morning, and they've just focused on being with family.

### **Lauren Parsons (31:35):**

Because here's the key, I think we just need to be more present. And you may have heard that phrase before, but when you think about it, if you can be fully focused and present when you are doing your work and then be fully

focused and present when you are with your loved ones, that's the biggest gift you can give. And when we try to do a bit of both, which a lot of people have been struggling with through lockdowns and parenting and homeschooling, and I've been through all of that so I can relate. That is just the toughest thing because we do a poor job of both of them and we just end up feeling dissatisfied, overwhelmed, and guilty.

**Lisa Larter (32:08):**

Yeah, absolutely. I can relate. I took Facebook off of my phone, oh, must be six months ago because it was when I was still in Florida, so it was before we went back to Canada for the summer. And I picked up a journal in my office, I flipped to a page, and I read something in my journal where I was kind of not feeling very good. And I was frustrated because I was busy, and I was lamenting about how much time I was spending on social media. And I just read this page; this random page in my journal. And I had this aha moment that nothing had changed. I realized that I needed to do something radical if I was going to change how I was feeling. And that day I took social media, I took it all off my phone.

**Lisa Larter (33:02):**

And like you, the first week I found myself, it was actually... I took it off my phone and I challenged myself to go a week without it. And by the end of the week, I didn't want to put it back on. And it's interesting because I actually have Facebook back on my phone right now and I don't use it. I put it back on my phone because I needed to do a Facebook Live and I, no, you know what, that's not even true. What happened is my password changed and I couldn't access Messenger without reinstalling Facebook. I had to go through that process to get Messenger back. And I have found that now I'm not checking it the way I used to. I have now changed my habit that I check Facebook on my computer. I don't...

**Lauren Parsons (33:55):**

Yeah, exactly. And that's the thing, I'm not saying don't use any social media platforms, it's just use it intentionally. We know that there's so many studies in the empirical research that shows the link between anxiety, depression, and social media use. And this is especially important for us as parents to, I think, be aware of it for our children, for our teens and tweens coming through. Just to let them know, because it's very likely going to be a part of

their lives and they need to know how to navigate that and how to have healthy boundaries around it. Because it's that comparison game. It's just look at other people's highlight reels and you come away feeling worse.

**Lauren Parsons (34:30):**

And I get that there can be amazing positive things on social media, like I'm on social media, so I may sound like a hypocrite, but I actually schedule those posts in advance, and I spend very little time just scrolling. Because I just find it is so life draining. And there's so many other things you could commit that time to, to watching an inspiring Ted Talk or hey, listen to a podcast like you are. So, preaching to the converted here.

**Lisa Larter (34:53):**

Yeah, absolutely. So, we talked about a lot of really good stuff here and I think what I'd really like to wrap up with is, as entrepreneurs we have a lot of bad habits. We have a lot of habits. We have a lot of behaviors, things that we do that we've just fallen into the habit of doing, because at one point we needed to push through in order to get to the next stage in our business. And at one point somebody told us we needed to be on social media. And so, we've developed these habits, we're not bad people, but we've developed some bad habits over time. And changing habits is hard to do.

**Lisa Larter (35:41):**

So if you had advice, we're going into a brand new year. So, if you're listening to this show right now, I want you to think about yourself and I want you to think about one or two habits that you would really like to change or modify between now and this time next year. And Lauren, I want you to tell us what advice do you have for people in terms of making those habit changes so that they can have a healthier, happier, more thriving vitality in life? I know that's just a terrible sentence, but we all want to feel vital and alive. We want to feel energetic. We want to feel happy. We want to feel joy. We want to feel motivated and inspired. And I think that some of those bad habits are the things that prevent us from having what we most want. But I think that habits are hard to break. So how do you help people break them?

**Lauren Parsons (36:44):**

Yeah. Well, two things come to mind. One is to picture how you want life to be and picture all the things that help you to feel that way. So you alluded to

it, how do you want to feel day to day? Often we set goals then we achieve the goal and we go, oh, that didn't really make me feel the way I wanted to. So I think reverse it; picture how you want to feel, picture how you want life to be and how you want to feel. And then think about what are the things that help you to feel calmed, feel joy, and make them a daily non-negotiable. Come up with even just one daily non-negotiable of something that you are going to do to look after your wellbeing.

**Lauren Parsons (37:18):**

And I think of it like a rollercoaster, like the months and years ahead are going to be like a rollercoaster. They're going to have ups and downs, but if you picture sitting in the seat on a rollercoaster just before you take off, if you've been on one before, can you picture that moment? You sit there and you lock down that safety harness and the person comes along, and they check the safety harness and you know it's locked in. And the only thing that makes the rollercoaster fun and enjoyable and exhilarating is that your safety harness is locked in place. So your safety harness over the months ahead is your daily non-negotiable. What is one thing you're going to do every day?

**Lauren Parsons (37:51):**

For example, I have three. One is my morning stretch routine that I've mentioned before. Another is to have four second hugs with each of my loved ones. I aim to do that every day. And I aim to get out for a walk or run, ideally for 30 minutes, every lunchtime. So I'm getting sunlight to the region of my eyes. And even if I don't do that, I aim to just least walk up and down the driveway a couple of times. So those are my three, I'm greedy. But even if you just pick one, have a daily non-negotiable. And actually, do start just one because that's the best way to form that habit.

**Lauren Parsons (38:22):**

And then the other side, the motivation piece, is rather than picturing yourself doing whatever the habit is. Like, let's say you want to go running, rather than picturing yourself being out there pounding the pavement and your lungs are aching and your muscles are sore, you're hot and sweaty. Instead, picture the satisfied feeling of completion that you get as you come back up the drive and you just feel elated. And you've got that euphoric feeling of I've just done that, and I feel so energized. You know that you're

going to feel that way, but often we focus on the wrong thing. So you've got to focus on the satisfied feeling of completion.

**Lauren Parsons (38:56):**

And you can use this for anything, like getting your tax returns done and sent in. Focus on how great that's going to feel. Reorganizing and decluttering your office. Focus on how that is going to feel. Think about how it feels once you've made that phone call and had that courageous conversation.

Whatever the thing is, picture on the end result, how that will feel. And that'll be the thing that gets you out the door and gets your shoes on. And before you know it, you're running back up the drive going, "I feel so good."

**Lisa Larter (39:24):**

So that is all really great, but that to me is creation of new habits. How do you eliminate the bad habit? What is a practice or a recommendation that you have for someone that wants to eliminate something they're doing that is a bad habit that they haven't been able to ditch?

**Lauren Parsons (39:45):**

Okay. So I think the key thing is rather than just eliminating, you need to replace, you need to think, okay, instead of doing that, instead of maybe you're realizing, "Oh, I'm having a bit too much wine in the evenings." So, you choose to replace it with a glass of sparkling water. Maybe with some, a tonic in there or with some lemon or something like that. Because it may be that you really like the feeling of the unwinding and you feel at the end of a stressful day, that's what you need. And you go for the glass of wine, but rather than just doing nothing, replace it with this beautiful, refreshing tonic water. Find something else to replace it with.

**Lauren Parsons (40:21):**

The other thing that comes to mind is, Shawn Achor talks about the 20-second barrier. I don't know if you've heard of that. Here's this really quick story that he was telling one of his millions of followers that he wanted to practice guitar every day and yet he wasn't doing it. And he was like, "Oh my goodness, I'm a positive psychologist. I've been telling people I'm still not keeping myself accountable." And he realized that there was this 20-second barrier, because his guitar was in the hallway cupboard in its case. So he had to open the cupboard and he had to open the case and get the guitar out. So

he bought himself a guitar stand and put it in the lounge and from that day forwards he played the guitar every single day.

**Lauren Parsons (40:57):**

So, what is the 20-second barrier that is stopping you from starting the habit? Or what is the 20-second barrier that you could put in place to prevent the previous, not so great habit that you've had that you want to stop? It might be again, if you want to go to the gym, you just lay all your gym gear out so it's there in front of you. You have to trip over it to start the day. Or perhaps it's with the food, you put the food you want eat less of in the opaque containers at the back of the fridge and put the foods you want to eat more of and the clear containers at the front of the fridge and on the bench. So there's lots of ways to shape your environment to make it easier to do the habit you want to do.

**Lisa Larter (41:36):**

I love that. I love that. I love the idea of replacing because I can relate to that from a health and wellbeing perspective, because years ago I had to stop eating gluten. And the only way that I was able to maintain a gluten-free diet was to find replacements for all the things that I didn't want to give up. So I love that idea. And the 20-second barrier is just fantastic. Either eliminate it or create it. It's just, it's brilliant. I love that.

**Lauren Parsons (42:06):**

And you can use that for anything, the task you're procrastinating in your work, just anything. Yeah.

**Lisa Larter (42:11):**

Yeah. It's funny how little things can add up to more joy in our life and more ease in our life if we just think about it. When you talk about cooking and making four times the size of the meal so that you can freeze some. And my dogs eat raw food and it used to be like every other day I would have to open this raw food and it's kind of mucky and yucky. So then I thought, well, the raw food is good for three days. Why don't I just take out two packages at a time? And now I only have to do it half as much. And so I think sometimes there's just like these little shortcuts that we need to find in life that give us more time. And then I think when we have more time, we

actually have the freedom to be more intentional about how we want to live our life. And so this has been a great conversation. Thank you.

**Lauren Parsons (43:05):**

I love it. And I'm feeling like I'm sure there's so many more ideas out there. So people listening, and I'm sure you have a way to comment, if you're listening to this right now, I would love to hear your ideas and I'm sure others would love to hear your tips and ideas. Comment below and I'll make sure I come back and visit this post when it's up and live. And I would love to hear from you and hear what are some of your ideas of something that you were doing, or maybe what's the 20-second barrier you're going to start or set up or what's something you're going to try? Just comment below and I'll make sure I reply to you.

**Lisa Larter (43:33):**

Yeah, yeah, for sure. And if you're listening to this, if you go to the show notes, we will have Lauren's website there, it's [laurenparsonswellbeing.com](http://laurenparsonswellbeing.com). But I will have all of the information on her there so that it's easy for you to find her and find her on social media where she doesn't really hang out. So that you can continue...

**Lauren Parsons (43:56):**

But I do reply to all my own comments. I do all my own commenting. Just so you know.

**Lisa Larter (44:02):**

I do too. It's like one of my things, if you're talking to me on social media, you're talking to me. You're not talking anybody else. My team may post things for me, but if you're talking to me, you're talking to me. Thank you so much, Lauren. What time is it in New Zealand right now?

**Lauren Parsons (44:15):**

It's actually 9:20 in the morning. Although I know it's afternoon your time, right?

**Lisa Larter (44:20):**

Yes. So thank you for getting up early to have this conversation with me and thank you for sharing all of your great ideas and strategies for creating a happier, more joyful and energetic life. I really, really, really appreciate it.

**Lauren Parsons (44:36):**

Such a pleasure. Thanks for the opportunity, Lisa.

**Lisa Larter (44:39):**

And I hope 2022 is a great year for you.

**Lauren Parsons (44:42):**

You too, likewise. And to everyone listening in. Thanks so much.

**Lisa Larter (44:45):**

All right. Thank you everyone for listening to this episode of She Talks Business. I hope you walk away with some healthy, happy strategies for the rest of the year. And we will be continuing our Conversation with Friends next week. Bye for now.

**Lisa Larter (45:01):**

Thank you for joining me for this episode of She Talks Business. If you enjoyed the show, you know the drill, leave us a review, tell someone about it and join the conversation on social media. Thanks for listening and until next time remember, done is always better than perfect.





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