

Bold(her)

Behind the Mystique: The Real Entrepreneurial Journey

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Lisa Bragg:

What do you do when you lose your job, best client or make a spectacular fail?

Well, our guest today, Jenny Blake decided to reveal it all.

((Music))

Welcome to Bold(her), helping you make your next bold move, brought to you by BMO for Women. I'm your host, Lisa Bragg.

Before we talk with Jenny, I want to set her up a bit. She's amazing. She worked in Silicon Valley at Google, then as a career and business strategist with several award-winning books including *Pivot: The Only Move That Matters is Your Next One* and *Free Time: Lose the Busywork, Love Your Business*

((Music))

Jenny Blake, I'm so excited to have you here. I wanted to bring up right away your awesome Substack, which anyone can subscribe to, but it's called *Rolling in D 🤯h* and it's *Divine disaster diaries from a breadwinning business*. It's doh as a d'oh, like as in Homer Simpson, like you stub your toe. What's the foundation behind that?

Jenny Blake:

I started *Rolling in D 🤯h* the day I lost one of my last biggest favorite corporate clients for licensing. I licensed the IP from my second book *Pivot*, and this was in the summer of 2023. I had already gone through so many losses and changes during the pandemic, and a lot of them financial. This felt like the last straw. This was my easiest client, my biggest client, my favorite client. When they ended the licensing contract because of budget cuts of their own that they needed to do to navigate, there were already big layoffs in tech.

There was a Silicon Valley bank failure in my backyard where I grew up. I didn't know what else to do. I had been pivoting. I had been trying to be agile and optimistic and still take smart risks and try to read where things were heading. At this point, I was so exasperated that all I could do was start writing, and I tried to muster the courage to publish some of this on a Substack called *Rolling in D 🤯h*. As you pointed out, D-O-H with a face bomb emoji for the O, *Divine disaster diaries from a breadwinning business owner living in New York City*, that my husband calls *Sex and the City* but for money.

I have to say, Lisa, has been so cathartic. I've published over a hundred personal essays now. They're all confessions. They're none of them make me sound very good. Of course, I was worried that I would lose all my clients and all my credibility and tank whatever reputation I have left. Instead,

what I'm finding are so many people week after week say, thank you so much. I feel less alone. This has been my hardest year in business for some people in a decade of being self-employed. One person is in her 80s and said it's her hardest year in business. That is what gets me over the vulnerability hangover, is knowing that it's resonating, and it's just a way to share the less shiny because I feel like a lot of content, especially for small business is the shine, who's doing what well. I just felt that no one was saying what was happening on the private phone calls that I was having with business owners.

Lisa Bragg:

Yes, because we want it to be shiny. I'm guilty of even saying, "Watch what you say when you're in the wound, wait till you have a scar," or that kind of thing too, because it's so hard for that vulnerability hangover. It's like, "Oh my goodness, I put that out there," because it's pretty permanent when you put anything out there into the world now. I think what the joy that you're bringing to people is that we're not alone as we're going through this.

Self-employed, it's often a lonely journey, but even in corporate, it is a lonely journey, especially if you are working from home or you're the only person or whatever it is. We're on these paths of our own, and often it's a rollercoaster, but we only just want to go to the woohoo part, and you're taking and allowing it to be comfortable with saying that, you know what, there's a failure story here and a pivot along with it. Do you feel like you're the Pied Piper of it now that everyone's more and more willing to be authentic and share?

Jenny Blake:

I wonder about that. Certainly, I try to give space for that in the comments. I don't know, *Rolling in D* ♀h right now, it's not trying to be a business, so it can be more of an outlet, personal expression as a writing. I still do have *Pivot* and *Free Time* are the two main bodies of work that I focus on in terms of actual client work, but it has been really fun. Some people have sent me links. "You inspired me to share more about my journey," and they're sharing that publicly.

I think one of the messages of *Rolling in D* ♀h is, because another thing, when you mentioned the word failure, I feel like even on business podcasts, whether in corporate or in the entrepreneurial realm, sure, people will talk about failure and be vulnerable, but only when they're back on top again. It's like, "Oh yes, I had two cents in my bank account, but now I'm earning \$10 million a year and let me tell you how I did it." I just felt like, what would it be like if we could have the failure conversation before we know all the answers, before we're through the other side?

Also, I don't have to tell you or anybody listening to this, what is failure really? Everything is a moment in time. I remember seeing a meme, I think the website is Visualized Value. "Failure is the frame, not the picture." That if you look at an investment chart and you put the frame where there's a dip, it's going to look like the chart is going down. If you just move the frame over in the bigger picture, you might get it on a surge. I feel like at least we can just describe what does it feel like when you don't have the answers or when you feel down or when you're unsure.

What happened to me the other day, I yelled to the universe, I'm 13 years into running my own business. I said, "What do you want from me? If you want me to get a full-time job again, I will." I didn't say it with my actual vocal cords, but I was thinking it. I'm like, "Give me a sign. Give me a sign. Do you want me to get a job or not?" Two days later, I heard from somebody I had trained 15 years prior at Google who reached out about an event in Northern California. It was three weeks away.

Then she said, "By the way, I have a colleague who has an event in Southern California." I will tell you, Lisa, these dates was a trip I had already planned to see my family because I didn't go for Christmas in Northern California and in Southern California at the exact same time. Out of the blue at minute 11th hour and 59 minutes, I got at least the sign that keeps me going one more month. I don't seem to be getting data much farther out than that. I do think that that's what this time is asking of so many of us, to really sit in the discomfort and the uncertainty. As some people have adopted the mantra, "Survive till 25."

Lisa Bragg:

It's about getting comfortable with being uncomfortable over and over and over again. In another podcast, we talk about that there's all these poly crises. We're in another crisis and another thing. Yes, it's really holding on as long as you can and sitting in that discomfort. I think it's that honesty of knowing that a lot of us are uncomfortable as we go through different pivots and also clients maybe rolling back on expectations changing on what we used to do. Well, things are changing so fast with technology, with how we're thinking, and security is an illusion. Is that part of it too?

Jenny Blake:

I certainly think we've all had that pressure the last few years. We've all had to adapt so many times. There's the before time and there's the time we're in now. I do think the time we're in now has not felt nearly as sturdy or steady as it might have for a lot of people, let's say in 2017, '18, '19. You're coming from media, you've seen so many changes there and just what the media landscape looks like. My most recent doh post is called *Decorating my House of Cards*. The point I'm trying to make is that I also think sometimes even when we feel secure, anything can change at any time.

It's not necessarily that more is crumbling now. Maybe it's more visible to us. Maybe for some people they are going through a phase where a lot is in a crumbling mode rather than a fun card building mode. I really appreciate what Buddhists say, which is nothing is permanent, personal, or perfect. If we can drop the notion that any of those three things needs to be true, we can just acknowledge, okay, what's happening isn't personal. Even if there's a layoff, I have several friends who had worked for companies for 10, 15 years and were part of recent rounds of layoffs.

It's utterly shocking when you've been somewhere for that long, but they're going to be okay. They're going to bounce back. The same thing for those of us who are self-employed, losing a big contract or having things. I've had a lot of friends where just things don't seem to get as much traction right now. Filling events, filling courses, filling a client roster, it just feels slow. In the slow time, I think usually if we can step back from the anxiety and the worry about it, there are gifts.

It is a time to reflect and recalibrate and even think about, well, what is this time really giving me? Maybe you need to take care of a family member. Maybe you just need a break. Maybe a new creative spark is going to come in. Another metaphor I use is when the tides roll out, what washes up on the shore? What can you see along the shore if you're not going and trying to chase the wave so far out into the ocean?

Lisa Bragg:

We're running, running, running and we're missing all the other opportunities and those seashells along the way that we can take a look at. I think when you wrote *Pivot*, there was a really good line that you made at that point. You developed the saying, and *Pivot* is her book, that's the only move that matters is your next one. You write, "If change is the only constant, let's get better at it." All of your work just flows together as it should. There is a red thread to all of it.

I bet you didn't even realize it when you're writing it how now looking back, it's like, okay, here are all the things that really do make Jenny of today. It's like, if change is the only constant, let's get better at it. How do you help people with that?

Jenny Blake:

That phrase came because I didn't feel very resilient to change, to stick with our ocean metaphor. I felt like everyone else was traveling the world in a cruise liner and I was in a rickety little raft because every time a wave would happen, I would just get rocked so completely. Part of that is being a highly sensitive person in the world. Things just affect me. I was having a hard time adapting to change. Yes, I wrote *Pivot* to try to unpack the process.

The crux of the *Pivot* method is don't start from scratch. Start with what's already working, even if it's 5 or 10%. How can you double down on that? How can you inquire what a success look like, even if it's three or six months from now? Then there's a gap. Just like with Google Maps, you calibrate what's your current location. You press the little button, the little blue dot spins to where you are right now. Those are your strengths. That's what's working. Then you put your destination. Where are you trying to go?

Even if somebody doesn't know exactly where they want to be, generally speaking, what does your ideal day look like? How do you want to learn? How do you want to grow? What impact do you want to make? I heard the question the other day, what strengths come so easily to you that you don't even notice, that seem to be difficult for other people? Then it makes sense to look around and say, okay, based on these two brackets, what are some skills, people, and projects that I can connect them dots and run some small experiments?

Pivot is all about, at the end of the day, what is one small thing I can do? What are three small experiments where I have no clue how they're going to turn out? Because that's the thing. I think people put pressure, especially career-wise and even business, to know the answers before taking action. They often don't have that information. How do you set up concurrent experiments that will inform you which ones have a momentum of their own? For me, whether it's writing a book or a podcast or Rolling in D 🤖h, they're experiments.

They're part of a *Pivot* portfolio. I have no clue how they're going to shake out, but a good experiment will teach you three things, three Es. Do you enjoy this? Can you become an expert at it? Is there room to expand? If you work at a company internally, can you expand this as part of your role more broadly in the organization? Even if you're self-employed, it's like, do you enjoy it? Does it bring you joy? Do you want to get better at that thing? Is there room to expand in terms of the scope?

Lisa Bragg:

I really like that because an experiment allows it to be a little bit distant from us. Then it's like, "I'm going to try this new thing. I'm going to try this experiment. Within this experiment are these things that are going to be risky. I'm going to give them a try. I'm risk-aware instead of risk-averse in them. It's okay if I head down "the failure path" because it's all the things that I can learn after the fact. I think that's such great advice that you've given us. I know you have such a great North Star yourself. Whenever you do your podcasts, that you had a long podcast series that you just put on pause and kudos to you for putting things on pause. I think that's an amazing gift to give yourself as putting on pause, but also that you have such deep values and you share your values regularly with people.

How does that impact your business when you are saying, "Here are my values. Here's where I stand."

Jenny Blake:

For me, it's also alignment with an internal compass. It's not like I have five words sitting at my desk I see every day. Sometimes I think people might think that's the case with values. I've done those exercises in the past. It's even squishier in the sense that if it's not aligned internally, I can't, and I won't do it. When I've tried to do that in the past, it's not just pure entitlement. I promise. When I've tried to do that in the past, I get sick. My body doesn't respond well to forcing myself to do things or work in a way that just doesn't work.

I've only learned it the hard way. I've become very disciplined and committed to making sure the work I'm doing is in alignment. It's an integrity, it's heart-based, it's for the highest good of all involved. For that reason, I'm also stubborn. It means that I am willing to suffer a little more, let's say financially, or sit in the uncertainty for longer because I don't want to rush to a solution that isn't aligned. That's how I would say it shows up. With the podcast, for example, talk about simultaneous success and failure. I podcasted for nine years. I produced over 700 episodes.

I was doing 14 a month for two years. I really thought podcasting was my zone of genius. I thought, "This is what I've been working toward my whole career. This is the thing I love. This is the thing that sits at the intersection of everything I adore, books, connecting with people one-on-one, deep conversation. I love being on voice only. I hate anything video related. I have a personality for podcasting." I thought, I'm going to go all in. I'm going to treat this like my full-time job for two years and see if I can actually make it the primary way that I earn a living."

I invested tens of thousands of dollars. I committed 80% of any given week to trying to reach for this dream. Do what you love and the money will follow. The money didn't follow. Some money did, but the podcast always cost more to produce than I earned. Finally, by the time I paused it, as you mentioned, I realized, "Okay, I tried to make this my "full-time job" and it didn't work." I could blame the market. I could say podcasting is very saturated, which it is.

Even some of the biggest networks and shows were doing these massive layoffs because they couldn't even get their numbers to pencil. I felt less bad when I looked at what was happening in the industry. It's a case where I'm so proud of the relationships. We won several awards. I'm so proud of the content we produced. At the same time, I can say, I failed on the do what you love and the money will follow. It didn't for me and that's okay. I learned, but I also maybe just got a little more jaded about some of these phrases.

That's why I like unpacking them now in these essays because, well, let's explore what that means. If you love coding AI bots, you can absolutely do what you love and the money will follow. If you love something that is notoriously challenging to earn a living at, then maybe it would be a good thing to define success in a way outside of money, which of course I tried to do. Sometimes we still have these far off hopes and dreams and not all of them are going to happen. That's okay.

Lisa Bragg:

That's okay. We do need to make money. That's the end of the day. You do need to have something to-- You're in New York, I'm in Toronto, we're all over the world. We have to sustain a living for ourselves. That's where I think it's been so top of mind and so many social media feeds are giving

that to you. I think even some educators started down that path instead of saying, "Here, go into a trade, go and do these rock-solid jobs."

It was really this like try anything phase and unrealistic. Then we're also sold by so many influencers on here's the secret sauce and here's the model. That might've worked maybe 5, 10, 15, 25 years ago when no one else was doing it. Now markets are saturated. Things are happening in a different way. People are consuming content or doing their job in a different way. The paths, it's really, I feel like that puzzle was all mixed up and jumbled again. There is no one path for any of us at all anymore.

Jenny Blake:

I really appreciate the advice of, what would success look like no matter what? No matter what the numbers, if I had nobody listening, what would I consider successful? I often thought about that too. I know that's what usually keeps me going on any given project. It's not really what it's earning, but like you said, that's sort of a reality. I don't know, for me, I feel like the universe talks to me through money. When I don't have a lot of it, I'm meant to learn something new. I'm meant to really pay attention and wake up and do something differently.

I've just come to have that type of relationship with it, where for me, money is the way I learn. Because when times are really flush, I'm not learning, I'm just coasting, I'm just grabbing it. It's like, it's all falling off the money tree and I'm just running around catching them, but I'm not creating the new thing. I am somebody, if I'm being really honest with myself, I like creating things. I like going from zero to one. I'm not a great marketer. I'm really not great at growth strategies as well as evidenced by my podcast where, oh, I'll throw a bunch of ad money at it and then I'll get the numbers up and that's not my strength.

Anyway, I just wanted to say that going back to when the financial tides recede, I think each of us can inquire and just say, "Okay, the times that I've learned the most were the times that I was shown what new and next thing I was meant to do. How did the universe god, Cosmo, how did it talk to you? What is your signal?" Again, mine are health and money. Those are my alarm clocks, but for everybody listening, it might be something else. There may be a pattern. If you look back to these pivotal moments in your own life, how that alarm bell looks and sounds for you.

Lisa Bragg:

Yes. I think taking the time and sitting in self-reflection is so needed. Less like me, you're walking past a tall downtown building and the ice falls off the side of it and almost hits you. That was one of my wake-up calls, big time wake-up calls. In downtown Toronto, people don't always stop and people stopped. For me, it was like, "Okay, this is beyond I'd been ignoring things. It's time to now really reflect on my past and then really set some clear intention on my future." I think it's really sitting with yourself and getting honest and thinking about things a bit more.

Jenny Blake:

What change did you make after that happened?

Lisa Bragg:

I realized I needed to start owning my IP. I was ignoring all of the whole thinking about bragging rights and writing a book and moving forward with my own IP. I was really just sitting in the joy that my content company had given me in the past, but was no longer giving me. I realized I needed to make

some massive changes and start owning my own intellectual property and with the book that I wrote. One thing can be that thing that changes your trajectory, but I had been ignoring it for a long time.

Jenny Blake:

Wow.

((Music))

Lisa Bragg:

We're sharing all these things and that we took time and did some self-reflection, but that sounds like one of those airy things. It's like way out there. What are some practical tips on how we can get into self-reflection? What do you do?

Jenny Blake:

I finally picked up my copy of *The Artist's Way*. This book is 30 years old now. Many of you have probably heard the name. You might even say, "Yes, morning pages. Yes, artists dates," and do them from time to time. Well, I had purchased this book in 2008. I think I had the 10th anniversary edition and I finally did it properly for 12 weeks. I would encourage everybody listening to do this. Even if you don't consider yourself an artist in the definition of the word, it's a process for creative unblocking.

It's true that the two core practices are morning pages every day. I end up typing mine on my remarkable and a weekly artist date. The morning pages really do shake loose thinking because it's three pages. Of course, she insists longhand. I type mine because that's the only way I did them. It's amazing what surfaces every day. The artist date is you and you alone. No partners, no pets, no kids.

You go do something fun and something joyful.

It's not like, "Oh, what does a cultured adult go do for an artist date? I should go to the museum." No. What would you find joyful? Is it disco rollerblading? Roller skating? Is it I did a ceramics class, and those are so fun. I feel like anybody can benefit from this process for creative unblocking and rediscovering you at your core, outside of your job, your family, your responsibilities. It doesn't have to take too long, but it is 12 weeks because it's like a snowball. The awareness accumulates throughout that time.

There's prompts at the end of every week. The other one is a book called *Storyworthy*. What I love about *Storyworthy* is it gets you to be an observer every day in your own life. He calls it homework for life where every day you notice what was different today than other days. What was a five second moment of transformation where a shift happened? I had an aha moment. I love this process too, because again, even if you're not a writer, it gets you to say, and remember your life and be present for your life, but also building that awareness muscle.

I guess I'll add a third, which I would call serendipity signage. You can ask a question like I did in my frustration. "What do you want from me?" You can say like, "What's in the highest good," or "I'm debating this decision. I'm asking for a sign here," and you go about your life. It's amazing. If you just tune into your own intuition, it is a muscle, even if you haven't worked it in a while by asking these questions, sitting with inquiries like these and having some fun with it and saying, "What signs do I notice?"

Whether you believe in a higher spiritual power or not, your intuition will still activate of what you notice. Noticing a falling sheet of ice. You Lisa made a connection to what that meant in your life, or a connection was made for you. I love big magic, Elizabeth Gilbert, because she just says these things have lives of their own. These are gifts. We can receive the gift of insight and awareness. You don't have to make it happen, nor do you have to meditate every day, twice a day, 20 minutes. I'm sure that would be great if we all did that, but I'm getting tired of that advice.

Lisa Bragg:

That's a great permission slip to give us is we don't have to meditate all the time with it. I think that's a really good one. I think there's so many options for it. I used to do a lot of work in education, and it's a thing called Minds On. It's where as the educator, you prime your learner to start thinking about the content and thinking about what we're going to learn so that they can start to make personal connections or connections to texts or connections to the world, whatever it would be, but you start priming the brain.

That's what you're saying is that we don't have to sit and reflect on our whole lifespan and look at all the red threads that carry through everything. It's saying, "Hey, where am I going next?" and allowing your brain to start making those connections for you. It's a Minds On, it's saying, "Okay, universe, what do you want me to do?" Then connections start to be made. If you don't want to call it that thing, it's like a Minds On activity to get your mind primed for the opportunities that could be ahead. I think that's something for us.

You are so amazing at coming up with, you should work in branding all the time. If you wanted a side hustle, which I know you don't, but you wrote about tinyphoria. Also, you said a serendipity one that I just forgot, but it was really good. Tinyphoria was one that you had recently. What does tinyphoria mean??

Jenny Blake:

Oh, that is really funny. You found that one. There's serendipity signage. Then one day I got really angry. It was around Christmas, and I saw this ginormous iPhone 15 ad above the Apple store in the meatpacking district of Manhattan. Maybe it was after Christmas. I was already feeling pitched from traveling [unintelligible]. Then this billboard says newphoria, and it's a picture of the iPhone. I just got so annoyed. Why does everything have to be new? Just this capitalist materialistic culture of new, more, shiny. I wrote a post. I just ranted about this idea of newphoria.

I said, what if we went the opposite way, oldphoria, tinyphoria, soulphoria, what would it look like to honor those values and not just the new and not just the shiny. In free time, I say, stop sailing the sea of shiny shits. That's another one of my needs, that shiny shoulds are shoulds but they're shiny. It seems like, well, everyone else is on social media. I should be on it too. Everyone else is doing this, or here's a credential that would look good on my LinkedIn profile, but has no intrinsic connection to who I am or where I want to go. Those are the things I think we can also give ourselves a permission slip to drop or at least examine with a more critical eye.

Lisa Bragg:

I think so many of us feel we need that next credential. I actually was walking by one of our major MBA schools and I'm like, maybe I should get mine. It was a fleeting thought, but I was like, "What am I doing? I don't need that." It's just another thing that we would put on our LinkedIn. I know it would help with more thinking, but I already have a lot of that thinking. I'm already inquisitive. I have case studies. I'm not dismissing anyone who has an MBA, but we don't all need the next certificate is the

point. We don't need another course necessarily. It's probably already within you. Sometimes we use it as a place to hide too, is to getting another one of those things. I don't know. Do you find that too?

Jenny Blake:

Especially with education, I would say, what would that degree get you? What doors would it open on the other side? Because as you're saying, sometimes graduate school, it's a pivot in progress. Everyone there is mid-pivot because they're trying to go from one thing to another. I really love school. I did a semester and a half at Union Theological Seminary, and I loved the assignments.

The syllabus was just brain food, all the reading materials. There were aspects of it that I loved. Then there were other parts that I didn't love as much.

My business ended up taking off. This was in 2019. I'm so glad I took a leave in order to go catch all those gigs before they went away. I would say, are you doing it because you should, because it will look good or because it will genuinely open doors or because you genuinely will have fun going back to that sort of inner kid or the artist's way, would it bring you alive to go be in a classroom again and have that permission slip?

I know for those in corporate, sometimes there are executive programs that are really energizing and they do infuse new ideas and relationships and possibilities. That's what I would be asking. Then the question is now, is there another way to go about those things without spending \$200,000? For me, I remember when I was working at Google, I thought, "Oh, I should get an MBA." That's how they move up the ranks at Google. I asked myself, "Well, what would I want with an MBA?"

I would want to become an author, be self-employed. Then I thought, "Okay, well, how can I become an author, maybe without the MBA route and start my own business?" That's the route I took. Never to say never, but nowadays I go, like you Lisa, I'm sort of peeking over at MFA programs for nonfiction creative writing. I go, unreal to go pay whatever, \$100,000, \$200,000, to do what? There's no jobs on the other side of that, that would pay that school money back. That makes less sense.

Lisa Bragg:

I think it's asking again, how do I, what will that get me? Where will it go? It's asking some of those deeper questions to see what do I really want?

Jenny Blake:

Yes. Is it just cool points in certain hoity-toity literary circles? Probably. If I'm being really honest with myself.

Lisa Bragg:

It's nice to have, but sometimes it's really like, what do I really want from that? Getting deep and asking the same question, get an answer, ask the same question again. What do I really want? Then ask the question and then you find out, maybe you didn't even want to go to school or do something. You actually wanted more community or it's back to some of us, we were really good at school. Love the rigor of it. Love that rubric that told us how to get those gold stars. We missed that because it was the structure of it. Now in this world, that's really free-flowing and we don't know what's happening next. I think sometimes it's like, "Oh, I would really like to hand in a paper and someone give me a mark," but I know how to get that mark. It's like that structure, I think sometimes is a little bit of the lament for a lot of us is why we go after that next certificate.

Jenny Blake:

In my case, going back to small pilots or experiments, maybe I can audit a class or you can, there's just so many ways to scratch that itch where it doesn't have to be a full-time thing.

Lisa Bragg:

I just love the way your brain thinks. It's like, what's the alternative to that? There's something else over there that I can think of. Now you have your Substack, which everyone should go and subscribe to. You have your two books. What's your latest thinking though? I know you're putting these personal essays out online, but what have you been thinking about as you've walked around New York in the last few days? Is there anything really getting at your heartstrings and tapping your brain?

Jenny Blake:

The biggest theme of the year has been simplifying, doing less. You mentioned putting the podcast on pause after nine years, my private community on pause. Mostly right now where I'm showing up is on Substack. I have three *Pivot*, *Free Time*, and *Rolling in D 🦉h* and *Free Time* and *D 🦉h* are both for business owners. Whereas *Pivot* is for anyone who considers themselves high net growth. That's my focus is how do I make those three-- Right now, that's the only place that I'm doing what I call ongoing public original thinking.

Of course, other than guesting on podcasts like this one, how can I make those more memorable, more remarkable because it is noisy out there. In addition to simplifying, part of the goal of doing less is to do the things I'm already doing better. Until I can answer that or make them better, I shouldn't be adding more. I still do client work. I still do speaking. I still do some one-on-one on the free time side, but I'm still in a mode of figuring out of the ways I currently express myself out loud, how do those need to grow and evolve?

Now that I have the space to think about that and focus on that. Nothing too new, nothing too shiny. Of course, working on a next book is always shiny in my world because I'm such a bookworm, but those really don't pencil either. It has to be for the love of the craft by the time I get to that type of project again.

Lisa Bragg:

You were mentioning high net growth, and right away, I went back to our original conversation about failure because if you consider yourself a person who wants to grow in extreme ways, then you have to also embrace failure. Do you find that with the people who follow you specifically for that content, that they are open a little bit more to failure, or are they still really like no perfectionism is the way?

Jenny Blake:

If I say in *Pivot* that if you're high net growth, you don't have FOMO, you have FONT, fear of not trying. I don't even think most pivoters in the true sense of the term would use the word failure. I just think there is no such thing really. It's a moment in time. It's just a temporary blip. Decisions are data. It just keeps things moving. Maybe if you close your company or on the personal side, you get divorced, but is that a failure or did you succeed for all the time that you were doing it? Did you succeed because you're now making a tough decision?

Did you succeed because you're now following a newer, bigger expanded path that you couldn't see before? Yes, I guess I just have a funny relationship to even the word failure and including the word success. I tried to scrub the word success from *Pivot* as much as I could because I think it's so subjective. It's so personal and I have no interest in financial success, career success, or otherwise if

it's at the expense of myself, my health, my family, other people. That's where *Pivot* is high net growth. *Free time* is about high net freedom. You'll notice, of course, money can facilitate those things, but it's a means to an end. It's not an end in and of itself.

The same thing with all the career accolades in the world. What are they worth if you're miserable when you get there or if you're postponing your happiness till some punctuated moment in time? We've all heard from people who win an Oscar or Golden Globe and they say they come home and their kids were yelling and screaming and fighting or the dog had digestion issues. It's so humbling because the award itself is not the memorable thing. That's really one of my continuous threads as well is just how do we find the thing that is nourishing and energizing on a day-to-day basis and not just waiting for it as some reward at the end of a finish line that keeps moving?

Lisa Bragg:

Yes, that finish line, it just keeps moving. What's your legacy? What do you want to be? I say to people, we always think, "Oh, well, we only have a certain amount of time, but if you had 130 years, so you had lots of bonus time, what are you going to do? What are you going to think? What are you going to say to your nieces and nephews or children or great-grandchildren under that tree? What are you going to say to them?" It's like realizing that it's not about, "Well, in 1995, I did this. In 2022, I did that." We're not going to say that. It's really about all the bigger themes that really made our lives. I think we spend so much time though in the minutia of the moment instead of thinking sometimes of the bigger picture.

Jenny Blake:

Yes. I just saw a funny meme the other day. A woman was trying to be in the moment only to realize it was connected to all these other moments. It's like, yes. Then some moments were our most enlightened, wonderful patient selves. Then other moments were just frazzled and frustrated. It's all okay. It's just really not to be Pat or I don't know, I don't want to get into platitudes, but I think I have found it cathartic and encouraging talking to people about the mess, the difficulties, the challenges, the frustrations. I don't know.

There's just something that feels real about those moments and that feels alive. It means that we all have the joy and privilege of figuring out the "failures" or the works in progress. There's another, this is the sort of platitude but I do love it, which is imagine your 10 years ago self would probably be blown away by the problems that you have today. Probably couldn't even imagine the good fortune of where you are today, what problems and decisions and questions you're facing. I like looking back that way and saying, "Oh yes, that's true." My 10-year-old self would have no clue. I'd be where I am right now or your 20 years ago self.

Lisa Bragg:

Yes. It's the same thing. What would you say to your 12-year-old self? It's like those kinds of questions or that thinking. She's really would be like, "Wow. You've done all these things." You just don't realize how far you've come there. we just don't realize all of it. Jenny, I just love our time with you. You and I can talk for hours and we will again soon, but is there any sort of closing inspiration, thought, anything that you can walk away? Because failure is such a heavy topic and I know we danced around lots of things today, but is there anything else that you'd like to impart on our listeners?

Jenny Blake:

I'll share two things. One, a long-time 'friend-ter,' Penny Peirce said to me, intuition works on a need to know basis. You will know in the moment you need to know and not a moment sooner. That gives me a lot of comfort when I feel uncertain and unsure. I will get a clue when it's time. Lisa, I love that you brought in tinyphoria today. I would just encourage all of us to celebrate the tiny.

I'm not one for the go bigger, go home mantras, go tiny. What is the tiniest next step that you can take? What is the tiniest little spark that you can light within yourself? Even if it's reading two pages of a book in the morning, because that's for you and that's your time. I would just say, well, let's all embrace this idea of tinyphoria and try to find the joy and the accomplishment in the teeny tiny and see where that leads.

Lisa Bragg:

So many great things for us to think about and try. I appreciate you being so open with us. Thank you, Jenny Blake. Please check out her books and her substack.

(MUSIC)

I'm Lisa Bragg, and this is Bold(h)er, helping women make their next bold move. Brought to you by BMO for Women.

Join us for our next episode, Marlene Morrison Nicholls' business experience is a page turner. Here's a hint, family was involved but then a dramatic twist at the end.