E10: Creating a job you love with author and career coach Becca Carnahan

**Becca:** Hi, my name is Becca Carnahan. I am a mom of two kids, ages six and five, and I'm also a writer and career coach.

**Jacqueline:** Great, thank you so much. So please Becca, start by describing briefly your journey to where you are now in your career.

**Becca:** Sure. Thank you, first of all, so much for having me, and it's a pleasure to be here and talk with you about this. So my journey to where I am now as a business owner and author, a career coach started many moons ago. So I worked at Harvard business school for nearly 13 years. I spent most of my career in higher education. However, that wasn't where I always pictured myself for a very long time. I wanted to be in sports marketing. So my first job out of college, after spending four years interning in sports marketing wasn't sports marketing. I worked in sales for the Boston Celtics for a year. And then realize that I didn't actually want to work in sports. I wasn't even sure if I wanted to work in marketing. And wasn't sure what I wanted to do next, that led me to working in higher education because I was in Boston.

There were a lot of universities and I could use my marketing degree in some way. Worked at Harvard, starting an executive education in a marketing and sales tech, and customer service type of role began to take some classes to determine what I might want to get my master's in. How I could figure out what I wanted to be when I grew up? And fell in love with the idea of higher education in general, and that connection between school and life and what you actually did want to be when you grow up. How are you going to make that connection between your education and the rest of your life? So the career services, career development field, particularly within higher education became a sweet spot for me. And I worked in career professional development for about nine years, became a career coach, loved the work but a big inflection point for me came when my kids were born.

So my son Jack was born in 2015. My daughter, Nora was shortly thereafter, 15 months later in 2016. And as a working mother, I was driving about an hour and a half into work an hour and a half back home. Peeling into daycare on two wheels to get there on time. It was a lot and I started reflecting a lot on if I wanted to be doing that commute for how much longer when my kids went to elementary school. How was that going to look in terms of getting them on and off the bus? That was definitely a big question mark for me. But I also thought about what I wanted for myself too. And seeing my kids start to learn and explore and appreciate the world in their own way. I was like, you know what? I haven't taken a pause to figure out what kind of work actually gives me the most energy. What am I most excited about in my day to day? So did a lot of self-reflection and leaned on the career coaches that I worked with to do some of this work into eventually come to the realization that for me, it was a combination of writing and coaching. I loved writing. I loved writing for my blog that I was doing on the side as a personal project. Something to tap into something that was just my own. I love the career coaching work that I was doing. And then I really started to think about how I could combine both of those into a fulfilling career.

And it all came together. When I started talking with other moms, sitting around in the playground about what they were doing for work. And oftentimes it came up that they were at inflection points, trying to figure out what they wanted to do next in their career. And I was like, you know what? This is it. I want to use my experience in career development to help his other moms were pretty much like myself to figure out their next steps. And I can do that through writing and I can do that through coaching. And that is how I ended up building my business eventually leaving my full-time role. I still coach at Harvard, which I am very grateful for that. And I, I love that community there. But for the most part, I focused on my own business coaching and writing and serving other moms who are seeking more joy and fulfillment in their work, in their lives.

**Jacqueline:** Great. Thank you so much for that. And I think it's such a great example of a story of how we do need to think about ourselves as well, while we're also thinking about our kids and all the other roles we play in life. And that's something that I thought you did really well in your book. So tell us a little bit about your book.

**Becca:** Thank you for your kind words about my book. So my book, 'When mommy grows up: a guide to parenting yourself to a more fulfilling career' came out in April 2020. I was working on it for a long time. I started thinking about it probably three years prior and outlining it, pulling ideas from my blog. Thinking about new ways, really to come at this idea of career development and career change in a way that wasn't so stuck. This whole idea of career development. People look at it, they don't like writing cover letters. People don't like going to interviews. It's stressful. The whole job search process is stressful.

Let alone doing the work of figuring out what it is you actually want to do. That's scary stuff. I wanted to come at that subject from a place of humor and joy and something that felt relatable. So I pulled in stories from parenthood, a lot of toddler stories. My kids were young toddlers as I was writing the book. Some stories from my own childhood, too. And then each chapter is based on a lesson that we teach our kids. So things like use your words or make new friends. How can we use those same lessons and apply them back to our own career? So I start the chapters talking about funny stories about making sure my kids are using their words or if they're sharing with their sibling.

And then flipping it around to show a related career development framework or a tool or a strategy that's related back to that same lesson that we as parents can think about and use within our own career development, as we chart a new path forward as we think about the different options that are available to us. We're not stuck doing this one thing for the next 20, 30 years of our careers. So that's what I did throughout the book. I'm glad that you enjoyed it. And it was just a labor of love, certainly to write all these stories and combined my two big loves of writing and coaching. And most especially the humor writing piece of it.

**Jacqueline:** And that's what I felt in the humor was that it can be so stressful thinking about your career and it feels like such a big thing, but you have a great way of breaking it down into these baby steps and making them seem funny in some ways, because you realize, okay, I'm telling my kids this, I can also do it for myself, so it really worked. So let me ask about job crafting, because I think that's really what you did a great job of doing while you were at Harvard. And job crafting is basically where you make the job you have into the job you want, and it's been shown to really help with job satisfaction and burnout.And there's been lots of studies of it, for example, at places like Google to show that this approach definitely leads to a more satisfied work force and better team members. So describe a little bit how you did that in your job and how you started to make that progress to saying it's okay for me to be funny at work or it's okay for me to blog at work.

**Becca:** This whole idea of job crafting. It was something that I hadn't thought about a lot before actually doing it for myself. Because I thought I applied to a job. I did the work of the job and that's what you did. That was your job. And I think a lot of people will look at their jobs that way. And that's true. We certainly need to do the things that are within our job descriptions. However, there's also oftentimes opportunity to go above and beyond or to talk with your manager about how you're able to best contribute to that organization, which might be in a different way.

So the biggest thing for me was having that conversation and it was a bit of a scary conversation to go into my manager's office. And this is someone that I was very close with and still am close with and respect so highly. I knew she would be open to having this conversation with me saying that here are the things that I love to do, and those don't exactly line up with what I'm supposed to be doing. So what I told her was that outside of work, I've been doing all this writing and I love it. I would really love to find opportunities to, to bring some of that into my work here. And I was doing some marketing, some writing and, but not a lot. And I knew that I had set responsibilities within my job. And I told her that I am more than happy, of course, to continue doing those responsibilities. But as I got more experienced and was doing the job for longer, I was able to find more efficiencies, carve out some more time as part of my day to take on some additional writing projects, to work with our marketing department here and there, to brainstorm with other groups, get pulled into different meetings.

If I hadn't raised my hand and said, I want to do more creative work and share that with my manager and share that with other people in my office, they would have never thought to pull me into those meetings or to ask my opinion on this. I had to use an example from the book, use my words and explain what I wanted and needed. The same thing with coaching. I was coaching as part of my day job, but it wasn't a big part of my day job. I was doing a lot of operations, a lot of project management types of things in that work. So I needed to take ownership of my own calendar too, and say, okay, if I want to do more coaching, I need to put more blocks on my calendar for coaching.

I need to say, if I'm going to be doing more coach shadowing, to learn more and get more confidence that I needed to put it on my calendar and not schedule over it and make sure that I'm finding ways to do my other responsibilities efficiently.

Sometimes after work hours, to be honest with you. There was definitely times that I was working more than 40 hours in a week to, to get everything that I wanted to do done, but it was worth it because I knew it wasn't a forever thing. I was working towards a goal and I wanted to do these kinds of short sprints of waking up early staying up a little bit late to work on a writing project for my day job outside of my day job hours in order to get it all done and it was a hundred percent worth it. So when I think about job crafting for other people, I do think it starts with the self-evaluation piece understanding what kind of work gives you energy rather than draining from you? That's a big question. And then how can you relate that back to your day job? There might be something there that you haven't thought of before, about how you can contribute in a different way. And that can be a launchpad to an entirely new career, or it could just be more happiness in your current job and finding a new way to love the job that you're actually in, rather than needing to go find something different. So doing that self-evaluation finding the connection and then talking with people, having conversations within your organization to find out where your skills and your passions, your interests could be most well-connected to the goals of the organization.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that the things that you focused on the creativity and the coaching, they remind me about a book I read where they were saying those are those emotional skills, skills that we can't replace with machines in future. So those are the type of skills that we're going to need to develop, and that make us unique as humans, and they will be the career skills or future. So I think it's really important that we think about that. Organization can be done by apps, to be honest but the creativity and the emotional intelligence, you need to be a coach, that isn't replaceable. So I think it's really interesting that those things sometimes seem like soft skills that we don't focus on, but actually they are going to become the new career skills. So I love that you went that way.

**Becca:** It was a good fit for me. It was exactly those. And I wasn't purposely thinking of it as these are going to be the skills of the future. Although I wish I was thinking that way. I think that would be very forward-thinking and I'm glad that was brought up in the book that you read. I'm glad that you brought it up now. For me it was really based on self-reflection and where I find myself in flow. Where did the time go by the fastest? Where was I? Not like checking the clock or getting distracted and doing something else. That was the work. So I wanted to make sure the time that I was spending away from my kids, away from other parts of my life, if I could find a way to create a job, whether that was in my old day job or in my business, that the work I was doing, like 90% of the time, somehow got me to feel like I was in flow, that I was contributing in the way that I was meant to be contributing to the world. That was the stuff. I want that for other people too. And whether that is a very technical skill or it is a soft skill, quote-unquote soft skill. Whatever that skill is that you're able to contribute that makes you feel like you're adding value in your unique way. That's just amazing to me and I feel like we just need more of that.

**Jacqueline:** And I think you were brave to talk to your manager about it. But I also think it helps to realize that as managers again, I'm a book nerd, I learned so much from the books I read, like Kim Scott's Radical Candor. That's basically what she was saying. If, as a manager, you're not interested in the professional and career development of your employees you don't deserve to be their manager. And even if that management path means they move on, that's how you develop good relationships, trust with your employees, is that you're really interested in them. And then they will serve you as employees in the way you need. But if you want to be able to give this radical candor, this radical feedback, you have to put your employees interests first. So I think that's a really good reminder to us that it is okay to talk about career development with managers. And to be honest, that's what they should be doing with us. I agree it takes bravery to do it. But maybe we can normalize it more. So it doesn't feel like such a big step.

**Becca:** I would love that. I was working in a career development office. And if we weren't talking about career development, something would be very wrong there. But I don't think it has to be unique to higher education. It doesn't need to be unique to career development. These type of conversations can benefit all types of organizations because I'll tell you I was so much more productive and impactful, I think after having those conversations and after sharing my different skills that I wasn't bringing to the table before. When I was able to contribute them. And still now to this day I write a lot of the articles as a freelance writer, as a contractor for Harvard business school. They're one of my biggest clients for writing. That never would have happened if I hadn't raised my hand. And those skills I like to think are adding something to Harvard business school. And I think that can happen in, it could happen in manufacturing or consumer goods or healthcare. There's so many different industries where your unique talents can make a difference.

**Jacqueline:** So one of the things I think is really impressive about your journey is that you didn't burn out and make this choice. You, you took it upon yourself to realize, okay, I'm spending time away from my family. I want that time to be meaningful. And now you're running your own business as well. And that comes with its own burnout risk. So tell me a little bit about how you go about putting your own needs first. When we are a mom that's so hard. So what habits do you have that help you do that? And do you think about it as burnout prevention or it's just something that you were able to catch yourself before anything happened?

**Becca:** I will say along the way since having children or even before having children, there was definitely times where I was crying on the kitchen floor to be like I am overwhelmed. I wouldn't say that I was ever officially, felt that I was completely, that I was experiencing burnout. In a way that I know other people have. It's something really difficult. But there was definitely times that I was very overwhelmed and needed to just to have a good cry and be like, all right, press the reset button. And that's still gonna happen to this day. So I think allowing myself to feel the emotion of it to not try to push it down. So I've tried that before of pushing down the overwhelm and just instead, just acknowledging it, and no, I am overwhelmed, right now, what are the steps that I can do, to take to fix that?

If the first one is sitting down on this couch right now and having a good cry well, yup, okay, check that off the list. We did that. And then one thing I think that has helped on the home front of helping to keep burnout at bay is thinking about what I could outsource looking at my time, seeing how was I spending my time and where could I find extra pockets of time? So this seems like a really silly thing, but I wasn't doing grocery delivery. And a few years ago started to have groceries delivered and ended up being about the same cost, honestly, because I wasn't spending as much money walking to the grocery store and picking up random things or having my kids pick up stuff off the shelf. And it saves so much time that I was able to on the weekends, do some writing for my business or spend some more quality time with my kids so that I didn't feel badly if I had to go up and work for a little bit. So that's just one little example, of finding something that I could outsource so that I can take my time back.

Other things that I think I do now to just take care of myself are blocking off time in my calendar. I'm not blocking my calendar of meetings back to back, because I know I don't like to have meetings back to back. I want to have some space on my calendar to go take a walk or to write for an entire day if I'm feeling a little energy depleted and need to embrace my inner introvert just sitting and writing for a day. So I'll just put a block on my calendar and say no, this is a writing block. That's what I'm doing that day. So setting up those meetings with myself even if it wasn't a meeting with a person I think that has actually also really helped to give me a sense of control. Cause when I feel it, when I feel in control, I feel like I'm less likely to burn out if that makes sense.

**Jacqueline:** Yes. And I think control is a major part of burnout and that's maybe why some moms end up leaving their main job to go into a career, run their own business where they are in charge, because control is, it is a huge element when you lack control and autonomy over your job, that definitely does lead to burnout. But I also just to think about your calendar, I've really noticed that with coaches that you basically say, here's my calendar, find a spot and you determine when you make those hours available. And I think if we did that so much more often with everybody. I was trying to encourage my husband, he runs his own business, and struggles with, saying I don't have time to do this with the kids. And I am like nor do I. Like my time is also limited. I think again, from books, like Fair Play, I've learned that each of us, our hour is an hour. No matter what we get paid, it still has the same value because it's still an hour. And somehow the mums have limitless time and the dads have limited time. So I was trying to say look, I know other people who have clients, they just post certain hours that they're available. And I know in his situation it's not coaching and it's not as simple as that, but I do think sometimes we make ourselves available all the time to clients and actually saying to them, here's when you can speak with me is such a great way of controlling your time and controlling those interactions.

**Becca:** Exactly. And that was the lesson I had to learn over this past year too, that I didn't use originally when I was starting my business. I've had the business for a couple of years now, but when I took it more full time, I would go back and forth over email with people to find a good time to meet. And it took up a lot of time sending those emails back and forth, but I also found myself saying yes to being like, oh can make that work. I'll figure something out. We'll move things around. Instead of when I just put my availability out there and said, okay, no I'm available between nine and two. It's easier for me to do that on a calendar with technology than it is for me to say that out loud. And then just to put it out there, more often than not, people are able to make it work and find a time within that time range that works so that I know I have my buffer period to finish anything last stop before I go pick up the kids from school. It has worked exceptionally well for me to take control of my calendar with those tools. I do for sure have clients that if there's something going on with them at with work, their work schedule or their family, do I have evening calls here and there. Yeah, I do. But by setting it up in advance and having these time blocks advertising, this is when I'm available most people, they are able to fit within that time range. And then if I need to be a little bit flexible outside of that I don't need to be flexible outside of it all the time, which I think is helpful.

**Jacqueline:** And actually talking about this now makes me think I really need to do the same. There's me recommending it for my husband, but I didn't do it for myself. And with each of my guests, I tried to think about a behavior change that you recommend for mums to actually start today. So I might use that one. Okay, how will I set up my calendar so I can stop having these back and forth emails and that I can really put limits on when I'm available. And let other people work around it. Cause I think that's one of the great things I remember when you and I first started chatting about your help to coach me. You said boundaries, you said that word boundaries. And it was so important for me cause I've struggled to set boundaries, but you made them sound just like practical things you do, which was so great. There was no emotion tied to it. It was just, oh, you just need to set a boundary around that, like a boundary around your time. And again, I think these tools help us set those boundaries without it being this big emotional process of letting somebody down.

**Becca:** Exactly. It's a tool for me. It's definitely the tool because I tend to be more of a people pleaser. I want to help. I want to help people. I want to figure stuff out with them. But since I know I have a more difficult time doing that without having some technology that helps me do it. I lean heavy on the tools. So I use Calendly. I'll shout that from the rooftops for whoever is looking for a tool or a platform for their calendar. I think it has made a world of difference for me. I could feel it actually. I could like physically feel it. When I started using Calendly to set up my calendar and set those boundaries for myself. Which is why I recommend it to clients. I test things out and if it works, then it, hopefully it would work for someone else too.

**Jacqueline:** So what are some of the main problems or patterns that you see in your working mum, clients?

**Becca:** There's a few things. Everyone's going to come at this from a difference perspective, different needs, et cetera. The few things that come to mind. One big one is confidence and you might've thought I was going to say fixing their resume or interview skills. But they'll even say this to me very flat out, is that I am feeling like my confidence took a hit over the past few years. Because of X because of Y because of something that happened at my job, because of something that happened at home. And I need to get some confidence back so that I can go after what I want to go after. So that's one big one, and we do some exercises and things around that. If that's something big for them another is accountability.

And they know in their head sort of what they need to do. Because with career development, none of this stuff is I'm not pulling them a book of brain surgery here to like here's this very specific type of like surgery we need to do to get your career. No, a lot of it's self-reflection it's research, it's networking. It's personal branding. People might know that on the surface, but they need someone to be with them to make sure that they follow through for themselves. So a lot of my coaching happens within coaching programs where there's accountability built in where I'll be following up as part of my 12 week program. We have calls every other week, but then I will follow up via email and be like, how's the thing going with the action items that I gave you after the fact? Having that additional little push from someone outside can be helpful. And then in the calls and the action items themselves give someone the time, but also just push to focus on themselves. Because as moms, as you well know, we don't often take that time to focus on ourselves. But if someone else is going to follow up with you and make sure that you did take the time to follow up with you to focus on yourself maybe you will do it. Those are two big things, accountability and confidence.

And then another one is just clarity too, of getting to this point where I have focused so much of my time and energy on my family. I've been putting my head down at work. And then I get to this feeling of feeling a little bit lost and along the way, did I go down a path that was just the path that made sense at the time, but it wasn't what I really wanted to do it. Wasn't what I was feeling excited about doing. So now I want to find some more clarity around what this next chapter of my life could be. So I focus on a lot of those things, in addition to the very tactical networking and resumes and cover letters and all of that.

**Jacqueline:** But I think that's so important for mums to hear lack of confidence, feeling lost. Struggling to keep yourself accountable and then beating yourself up for that. Those are all things that I experienced for sure. And I have learned along the way that so many mums experience. I'm not exactly sure where it comes from in terms of part of the motherhood experience. But it definitely is. Especially if you're, you've been successful in your career and charging through with confidence. And I definitely got that sense from you and your book. You always driven and knew where you wanted to go. And then suddenly you do come to this point in your life where you don't seem to have that natural confidence. And for me, that's why I think the book was so helpful too, was I felt like I was regressing to childhood in terms of just feeling so lost and incapable. And so your approach in the book to mothering me back into a place of confidence. It is what I needed, because I really felt like, hold on, I didn't need these skills before, so I felt like I hadn't developed them. How do we get them back?

**Becca:** Yes. Yeah. I needed it myself too. And I like to be open about that. This isn't just me trying to give advice to other people. These are things that I had to really sit down and think about it. And the best way I processed them was to write about it and to build those connections myself. And come to terms with the fact that I needed to share what I was good at, just like my kids need to share their Tonka trucks, like things like that. That might seem very simple. I needed that reminder and wanted to be able to share that with other people too.

**Jacqueline:** And so how often are mums coming to you experiencing burnout and what do you wish companies would do more often for mums?

**Becca:** Not everyone will necessarily say I'm experiencing burnout. But I feel like a lot of them are. They might use words like I'm just exhausted. I'm feeling overwhelmed. I can't see myself doing this.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. I felt like I was having a midlife crisis and I was at first, okay with that, I talked about having a breakdown or a midlife crisis, but actually when I started reading about burnout, I realized, oh, that's what I had. And so I do feel more comfortable in that space saying those words. And again, you really helped me come to terms with saying, okay, I didn't feel comfortable in the space of being a burnout expert. but you helped me realize I can be a burnout survivor and that has some expertise with it. Again, the imposter syndrome of being a researcher in public health and people thinking well burn out is public health. Actually I was a very specific type of expert in a certain public health area. That really constrains me in what I want to claim as my expertise. But you helped me realize that yeah as a survivor, I have expertise. So that was helpful, but I do think people don't necessarily understand what burnout is. So they don't necessarily self-diagnosed as that. But yeah, it's exhaustion it's when you have cynicism come into the work and when your productivity starts to go down. And I think a lot of people feel that. And I even took a three month leave of absence. And then actually, when I came back, the cynicism came in very strongly. So it made me realize, I can't continue to work here. But yeah, I just wanted to share those definitions. So people realize, yes, it's is exhaustion. And we often experience it, but we put it down to something else, midlife crisis or whatever.

**Becca:** No, I'm really glad that you explained that in the way that you just did. Because I find when I'm working with coaching clients, that if we can find the right words to explain things, whether that is the right words that help them see oh, I actually am passionate about this. Even if I'm not passionate about, I don't know, playing water polo, I'm passionate about helping people in this specific way. When we can find the right words to describe something clicks.

**Jacqueline:** And passion can be an intimidating word.

**Becca:** Yes. Yeah, exactly. And people might look at burnout and be like, no, maybe I'm not burnt out because I don't really know what that word breaks down to. But when you explain it and oh, you know what no, this clicks for me and now I can take steps to come back from this because I've can look at things that are specific to burnout and okay, how can I now address this within my own life? So thank you very much for breaking that down. And I think a lot of the women in some way or stage that I'm working with have experienced that to some degree and oftentimes the way it's comes up is that they just need to find something new.

So we like, okay let's break down. Not all the things that you don't like, but what are the things that you do? What are the things that you want to spend more time doing? What are the things that make you really happy? Then what are the themes that tie those together? And then we can go back and talk about the things that people don't like to o and what they want to avoid in their next role. But I like to start from the positive side. Like, what do you want from a culture? What does a good company culture look like to you? What does a great day at work? If you could have an ideal day at work, how would you be spending your time? Who would it be spending your time with? How can we craft this ideal job description, even if it's just imaginary right now and then match that up with potential paths forward.

And then to your question about what can companies do to help that? I think part of it is having open conversations around career development is a big one. Having your managers be well-trained in talking with folks about their fulfillment and work and how can we help them tap into their best potential at work. Having managers who are well attuned to understanding that people have work and life needs, so that people can talk to managers about things that are going on, that they don't have to feel like they need to be someone different at work than they are in other parts of their lives. They can, if they need to be able to take sick time to take care of someone. They can have that conversation with their manager and then hopefully there's policies in place to take this to a bigger level. Policies in place that support people having a work-life balance. Support people being able to take care of their loved ones or take care of themselves from a physical and mental capacity. Those policies need to be in place as well as the training of managers to have those conversations and to point people to the right resources so that they can work together successfully.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that if we can see that being a mom is part of career development, right? The two aren't unrelated. Again you show a fantastic way of integrating them. And I know others for example, I'm going to be interviewing Amy Henderson from Tend lab and she really emphasizes skills you bring as a mother back to the workplace. Yeah. Again, if we can see that career development is being a mom is part of our career path like a strength in our career path, then it doesn't seem like it's this separate thing that shouldn't be talked about in some way.

**Becca:** Yeah, absolutely agree. And this is not to say people who are not parents are any less capable or are strong in the workforce. But I think that we all have our own unique skills and experiences that we bring to work and parenthood, motherhood helps to develop some of those skills. I talk about empathy and creativity and problem solving. And being flexible, adaptable and there are a lot of skills that are certainly honed after becoming a parent. There are a lot of things that you're doing on a daily basis that have sharpened up some skills that you can use in the workforce. And if we're welcoming that at work and letting people bring their whole full selves, not just letting them but embracing it because it's part of who they are as a professional. And that can add value to the company. Our organizations are going to be better off. We're going to create solutions to problems that are out there in the world. And this sounds very blue sky, thinking very high level on this, but I just think if more people embrace what they're great at, more companies ask those questions and then supported those people as whole people. Then the organizations that make up our society are going to thrive and then the people will thrive as well. I think there's this big circle of people supporting each other as whole human beings that can make people happier. And if we can be happier that's that for me is a big goal in itself.

**Jacqueline:** And again, it makes me think of the book Humor Seriously, which is all about bringing humor into the workplace and the benefits of doing that. So for example, if you have somebody who's a musician, then have them come in and play at meetings or, bring all parts of you to the office. And I think one of the ways I discovered more about what was unique about me, including the time I spend with my children, that makes me unique was through improv comedy because I would be stepping on to say stage at my improv comedy classes and bring something ridiculous that had happened to me that day. And I remember somebody saying, how did you pull that out? Oh, that was my whole day today with my daughter. And so it wasn't anything difficult or unusual for me. To them it seemed crazy. And I was just like, oh no, this is my life. This is my day. And so you forget how just each experience you have is unique and forms you uniquely. And when you bring that to another place, especially in concert with other people, that's what I love about improv. It's like you build the cathedral together, brick by brick. You're not trying to build it on your own. The end product is so much more interesting.

**Becca:** Yes, exactly. That. Standing ovation over here for that.

**Jacqueline:** So actually I'm going to throw in this career question that just came up over the weekend. And so again, if you can answer it great, if not, no worries, but essentially I was chatting with another mom this weekend about podcasting. And we're both sort of mission-driven podcast is in terms of, I'm interested in working on burnout. She's interested in autism. Cause her adult son is autistic and both of us were talking about, we don't really have a business solution exactly. And one of the things we love doing is curating information for others. And it made me laugh because, I'm quoting books all day today, Tara Mohr's book talked about that saying have your own ideas, don't curate other people's ideas. And it also reminded me back to my career tests that I had when I was 17 said I should be a librarian. So if curating information is part of my superpower how'd you make money from that?

**Becca:** Curating information? I think that I've actually had a couple of clients who have had that as a superpower and have thought about building businesses around that. One of it around special needs children, creating a newsletter and then eventually looking to how they can build that into more doing like workshops or consulting type of work, coaching work. So I think coaching is one of them because you can provide a resource and then build a business from there. From a technology standpoint, if you're able to, if you're a really good researcher and are able to curate a lot of great information, how can you infuse that with a technology solution that would help people access it?

I think if you were to look at it in terms of an existing job, maybe not going out and having your own business or creating something new. I think about people who work in research types of roles. Those roles exist. I know within higher education but certainly within marketing types of roles, to being able to curate a lot of great information and then sharing that either with an end consumer. Or using that information to create something new to contribute to further research. I think there are lots of different ways, that you could use that superpower. You combine it with what are you really interested in curating information on? And then could you build a website that has income streams around products or coaching or advertising around that?

Or could you contribute to an existing business? That already has those types of needs. You're just, you're filling a need within the organization. I think a lot of people will come and say, okay, now Rebecca, should we talked about my skills? I know what I'm good at. How do I match it up? And so we need, sometimes we need to think creatively and think about how can you match this up with something that makes you money? Everyone has bills to pay and some people starting their own business doesn't make the most sense for them. They need to work for an existing organization, whether for healthcare benefits or et cetera. So you need to do that match work. Figuring out what the skills are and then matching them back to roles. And some of that's in having conversations with a career coach, perhaps but also people who do that type of work to understand what skills that they are using on a daily basis. And if that matches up with your superman powers.

**Jacqueline:** And even that finding that superpower and embracing it it's such a challenge sometimes. But hearing other people declare theirs, that, that really helped me as well.

**Becca:** Oh, that's a big one. Yeah. And it's why I'm actually looking towards doing a little bit more group coaching coming up this fall, because I do think there is a power in hearing other people come to important realizations about themselves standing in their own confidence that they didn't have it before. Showing someone that like, yeah, you know what? These are the skills that I had. This is the kind of value that I add somewhere and I'm going to stand up and own it. That's inspiring. So I'm trying to incorporate a little bit more of that, which is exciting into my coaching work on.

**Jacqueline:** That's great. Yeah. And I definitely have benefited from group parenting coaching where you see moms share the solutions they found, that you hear that you're not alone in those worries. And then sometimes you also go, okay, no, I'm not worried about the dishes in the sink when you see someone else's and you're relieved that's not your thing, which is good too.

**Becca:** Exactly. You support each other through the things that are hard for you by offering solutions. You walk away from those conversations feeling okay, no, I feel good about this. I feel really good about this now. And that's a good thing.

**Jacqueline:** I'm so glad that's going to be your next adventure and you're always moving on. So thank you so much for your time today. It was such a pleasure to speak with you. And as I say you're such a great example of a brave mum.

**Becca:** Thank you. That means a lot. And I'm touching my heart right now. You can't see me. It means a lot to me. And thank you so much for having me here on your podcast.