S3 E49 Creating social change to prevent burnout with journalist Katherine Goldstein

**Katherine:** So my name is Katherine Goldstein. I live in North Carolina and I'm the mom of three: a six and a half year old and almost two year old twins. And I am a journalist and I'm the creator of the Double Shift podcast and the Double Shift newsletter. And I also write for national outlets on issues of mothers, economics work and the forces that shape family life in America.

**Jacqueline:** Thank you so much for that introduction. And thank you so much for your time today. I know it's challenging. You mentioned you had the twins home napping. Is your son actually in school at the moment?

**Katherine:** Yeah. Miraculously there's school. It's a random Friday and somehow there's still school. I think so many parents of young kids this winter, it's just been really stressful with omicron and weather and all that, but yes. Luckily my son is in first grade in his public school, first grade where he's supposed to be right now.

**Jacqueline:** That's great. It does feel like a novelty, such a relief. Tell me about your journey to where you are now in your career.

**Katherine:** Oh man. Since your podcast, isn't three hours long. I'm gonna have to condense to say as succinctly as possible I was very much a high powered New York media executive. I was an all in, on lean in corporate feminist. And I really felt whatever challenges with work or family, there was nothing I couldn't handle. And, I figured having a child would be hard, but, I'd managed to figure everything out so far. It would be fine. So I feel like you probably know where this story is going. Which is that my experience becoming a mother was much harder than I expected, for many of the normal reasons, but then also for my specific reason, my oldest son had some health problems. He was hospitalized twice as a newborn, which was really traumatic. And, I was still back at work. After 12 weeks, which is in the US considered generous amount of time.

And I was not ready to go back and had a really rough time back at work. I then lost my job and I really felt everyone had the working mom thing figured out except for me. And I was just like personally defective. And you know, there was just something specifically wrong with me. And then I started to turn my journalistic curiosity towards the topic of working mothers. And, at this time when I first started to think about it, 2016 like there wasn't a lot of mainstream media thinking, exploring complex, social or economic or cultural forces in motherhood, it was really about tips and tricks and, personal essays by like very privileged white ladies.

And so I started to do more inquiry into these topics. I did an Neiman journalism fellowship at Harvard, and I ended up writing a big article out of that, about mothers and newsrooms. And, I became more and more fascinated by the subject and why it wasn't being covered with like journalistic seriousness and rigor. And then I ultimately created the Double Shift podcast that I've been running for the last three years, which was really like dedicated to challenging the status quo of motherhood and telling stories you haven't heard before, which has been its own sort of business journey. And we're about to pause the podcast and I'm gonna be focusing more on the newsletter and, back to writing for more national outlets. So that's the as quick as I could get at summary of the journey.

**Jacqueline:** I appreciate that so much. Our stories are never straightforward. They're often complicated and complex. So I very much appreciate when everyone can just summarize it because I think it's so important for women to hear these sort of ups and downs and turns. And also to realize we often start with feeling like it's only us that hasn't got it right. When I burned out for academia, it was the same. I was just blaming myself and my approach really was all about what had I done wrong? What could I do to change that? And it wasn't really until I started reading about working mothers and the barriers that they face, that I started to go, oh, hold on. This isn't just my problem. So like you turned your journalistic eye. I turned my research eye and said, what is going on here? And what solutions can we have?

**Katherine:** Yeah. I think the reason, especially in America, like there's a lot of social conditioning that goes into mothers feeling like it's our fault and feeling like this is a personal problem to solve. American culture is a lot about individualism and we promote myths that if you work hard, everything's gonna work out for you. And we don't talk enough about the systemic barriers that people face, whether that's race or class or definitely motherhood. I definitely think talking about this and explaining this, it helps people get a lot more of an aha moment about it, rather than just thinking everything is about personal decisions or personal failures.

**Jacqueline:** And I think you have a really important point there about the US culture. I've seen differences coming from Europe, but also I interviewed a parental burnout expert who had done research across the world. And she basically did find parental burnout was higher in countries like the US that have this individualistic nature. One, it makes you think it's your fault. Two, it prevents you feeling comfortable asking for help because no one else is, and that's not the model. But three, I also think it makes it much harder to come up with systems level solutions because the premise is, I pulled myself up by my own bootstraps everyone else can do the same. So I do think it's really challenging to think about systemic change in a country that is not focused on that as a culture.

**Katherine:** Yeah. I think talking to moms who are in their, I guess generationally millennial moms of which I am one, I think that there fortunately is starting to be some change because I think some of us have had the experience of having kids in difficult work environments and looked up and said like, how come nobody made this easier? Why is this still so hard? Weren't the second wave feminist, weren't they supposed to have taken care of all this for us. And then realizing like that's very much not the case. And I think I do feel like there's a lot more of a mindset of this was so hard for me, how do I make it easier for other people? Rather than just saying well I suffered, so you should too. I definitely hear a lot more stories about that. And I feel like that is definitely a lot of the activism that we see in the US around changing workplace policies and also, getting policies like paid family leave at the federal level is much more sort of awareness that like, things are not gonna get better for anyone if we don't make it better for the people who come after us. So I definitely feel a little hopeful that some of that mentality is changing.

**Jacqueline:** Okay. So let's really start to get into that. We can follow up later with any experiences you have around burnout or that you have come across in your research, but let's focus really on this difficult question of how do you make social change? So in terms of what you feel like you've learned in the last few years I always see journalists as social advocates and feel a lot in common with them in terms of I have this public health perspective and really wanting to help people with that. And I see journalists from that perspective. So I think you've already come into it with that lens of how can I share information that's helpful? But what have you learned as an advocate in this space about advocacy that you didn't know before and that you think is really important for people to be able to understand?

**Katherine:** Yeah. I think, one of the big things that I've learned is that a lot of times when we look at all the social problems that we face it's very easy to feel overwhelmed or like, how can I ever make such an important change because there's so many issues? Or, I've already called my Senator. My Senator isn't gonna do anything or my senator's already supporting this and it just can feel overwhelming to make change. And I really believe that small changes are actually really big and that making changes in the local community and the community level are really important. And sometimes people think oh if this only affects my school district or, my county or my state then it's not a big deal. And I really think that, like that kind of activism and getting involved with causes or, your workplace alone, really makes a big difference.

And you know what I have seen in my reporting over and over is that groups of women getting together and making a case together, not one individual person on their own following their own path without any support. getting a community together, to focus on an issue and sticking with it. And, social change takes a long time. And I think sometimes we feel like in our culture, like if you're not seeing results in a few weeks or a few months, it's not worth it. But I've seen groups of women get together and make really effective cases for better paid family leave in their workplaces. And, being told there's absolutely no way this is gonna happen, and then getting really comprehensive, amazing policies in place. Not being willing to accept no, getting a community together and finding whatever the issue is that is most important to you. It could be related to schools. It could be related to environment. It could be related to universal pre-K or paid family leave. And just sticking with it, cos social change happens on very long timelines and so it's worth sticking with things.

**Jacqueline:** Thanks for that. One of my previous guests had challenged me to do a behavior change guide around advocacy for communities, for safe spaces for communities. And so I was working on this behavior change guide, really reminding myself of all the advocacy things, cos my research had been around advocating for age friendly communities. So I had taught older adults partly how to become advocates. And then I came across your episode again, I had listened to double shift, but when I re-listened to that episode, you had on advocacy around paid leave I was like, this is fantastic. It's such an amazing example. We need role models to see that the women that you featured on the episode made change and then now have created organizations and the tools kits that they have online are really important. But I think some of the things that I was putting together in that guide to advocacy was all about you've gotta think of the long term game, because it requires persistence. You can't burn yourself out doing this because it will be a slow process in some ways.

**Katherine:** Yeah. I think one of the things that was so inspiring about that episode, we aired an episode in 2019 about a group of women at the New York times who advocated and got better paid family leave, and then about a year later, I started to hear from other listeners who'd heard that episode and then advocated and got better paid family leave cos they heard the episode. And we actually made recently a follow up episode about that because I think that it's just really important to see for people to have role models and examples and understand change really is possible.

**Jacqueline:** And from my behavior change perspective, role models are so important. It's not just oh, somebody like me can do it. But also that basically then you do get the confidence that it's possible. And you start to see in their examples. Okay, what are the skills that they needed to get this job done? The details you had were so helpful,

**Katherine:** Yeah, I definitely recommend people, checking out those episodes, but also just knowing rather than one squeaky wheel of someone complaining, getting critical mass of people saying we want this change, I think is super effective in corporate environments. And right now, given the labor shortage and the sort of change in dynamics with, worker power, like I feel like now is an amazing time in a lot of industries to be advocating for better policies cos people are so desperate to find and retain workers. I definitely would love to see and hear more stories of people getting great policies in place to take advantage of the free market when it advantages workers right now.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that was one of the parts of that episode. The more recent one where you are really acknowledging that there has to be economic incentive in this, there has to be some capital market forces driving it. And I think that's the whole point. When we think about society, we do have to acknowledge those changes because for example, when a woman tries to negotiate for a higher salary and a man could go away and get offered a higher salary and bring it back that doesn't happen for a woman. That's the economic forces. Not to mention getting penalized for negotiating. So these forces are so important. So I certainly agree in terms of using those opportunities, but I also think what you said there is, why are our CEOs not advocating for paid leave, for example, from the government, from the legislation, because it's gonna benefit them as companies if the government's paying for this.

**Katherine:** Yes. So I recently wrote an op-ed for Time, which was just basically our personal stories about paid leave are not getting federal paid leave done. And so we need people with power, AKA business leaders and CEOs to start advocating for us and to make the purely economic case, because the economic case is very much there, both in the short term for the economy and the long term. Again telling Joe Mansion, stories about people suffering, his constituents, how much they need paid leave because this poor mother had to leave her baby in the NICU. Isn't working to make this happen. Just trying to leverage pressuring our own corporate leaders or business organizations to fight for this, I think is just another way to think about it . I'm just so frustrated that we are now, two years into this pandemic and we still don't have some very basic social safety nets in place.

**Jacqueline:** So I think having more women leaders in governments gonna help. Have you got any thoughts about that?

**Katherine:** Yeah, I think I am really interested in women running for office. And I think it was very interesting to watch the 2018 phenomenon of more women and mothers running for office than ever before in the US. I do think that it makes such a big difference. We interviewed a Candidate for North Carolina house state house back in 2018 during that sort of historic election. And she said there are very few people who are making policy in North Carolina who actually know what it costs to have kids in daycare. And so I feel like having more people with that lived experience is so important around family issues. And we've made progress, but really not enough. And there's so many social barriers for mothers running with young kids running for office that I definitely am hopeful that, we'll continue to see more and more of that.

**Jacqueline:** And you touched on there some of the big and difficult topics that you have talked about in the last year in particular. How did you decide what to focus on and which topics do you think have been most impactful? It sounds like you're really do get to hear back from your listeners to know what's changing their lives. So how have you decided what to focus on and then which have been the biggest impacts.

**Katherine:** Yeah. So, one of the hardest things about having a carefully reported podcast is that it takes a lot of time and energy and money to make. And so there's so many things we never get to. We just don't have the time and the ability to cover all the things we're interested in. So there is a lot of, narrowing things down . What I would say is that we try to look at holistically what are a range of kinds of topics we wanna cover? And we also, for the show make a lot of effort to be sure that we have very diverse voices, racial, geographical, different socioeconomic classes. The overall mix of like the voices we wanna highlight also helps drive our decisions about what to cover.

But I think a lot of it has to do with, what we feel like our listeners are struggling with, but also what we feel like people need to hear. But in terms of the response we get, I think that when Angela, my co host and I are the most candid and vulnerable about our own experiences is when we get the most feedback from listeners. But it's also interesting, cos I think it's really important to highlight a lot of stories, not just stories like ours, so we really do a wide range of stories. For example, we actually made an episode about the business of making the podcast and what the different difficulties were. And we got a ton of feedback on that, cos we talked really candidly about money. And people are just craving women and mothers being honest about finances. So you never really know what's gonna strike with people, but we've also talked about our own mental health journeys. And I think that really resonated with people. I think, vulnerability, honestly, when people feel like there's a vulnerability with our guests that they connect with, even if their life experience is different, that's often what really resonates.

**Jacqueline:** And I definitely really appreciated both those episodes. You had the one about taking medications was really hard to hear and think about as well. I'm not personally taking any medications, but I have so many people I know who do. So I shared that episode with them because I thought it was just such a good discussion about it.

**Katherine:** That's curious. What did you think was hard to hear just like that people are struggling or tell me more. I'm curious now to talk to you as a listener about it.

**Jacqueline:** It's so funny. I remember I was walking, how you can remember what you're doing when you're listening to a podcast and I was walking around a park with my dog at the time. It's so hard. I find it really hard to hear when other people are suffering. I think that's what it is. And I think that's part of my struggles as a mother too. I don't want my kids to suffer in any way. And part of me doing this burnout mission is because I don't want other moms to suffer what I went through. So when it's that raw, I just feel this pain of shared suffering that I wish would go away.

**Katherine:** Yeah. No that's really interesting. I think that is also fine line from a journalistic perspective of vulnerability and letting people connect with the realness of what is difficult in life, but also having people feel like there's something meaningful and redemptive out of it is hard. I definitely know if there's a podcast, I really like, and I see their doing an episode on, losing someone to gun violence. And I'm just like, I just can't do that right now or whatever. But I think it is really interesting, like how we, as podcast, especially, I do feel like people feel like they go on a journey with you because listening to someone's voice is so intimate.

One of my favorite pieces of feedback on our show is that it helps people feel less alone. And that to me is part of that is some, I would say it's also strategic vulnerability. I think sometimes people think oh, you must just talk about everything. And you're open to talking about anything, which is not true. There's lots of things I do not talk about on the podcast, but being really strategic about how my own struggles or suffering or difficulties how that might help other people to hear it, I think is something that I think about and try to be intentional about.

**Jacqueline:** And I think one of the things for me too, was getting to a place where I could talk about these things, but also was still going through it to a certain extent. I didn't wanna be so far out of the other side that I forgot what it was like to be in it, because I think most people, when they are listening, they're struggling. And I think sometimes when we look at celebrities or influences, and then we hear about their struggles with their career post success, it just doesn't feel real or makes sense anymore.

**Katherine:** Yeah, I think that's also a great analogy for the struggles of new motherhood, like cos a lot of times they're so intense and then you get out of it and you it's very easy to quickly forget, and then also forget like what you needed and what are the systemic changes that you needed. And to have people who are still close to it, And all sorts of advocacy fronts, not just saying oh, thank God my kids are in kindergarten I don't have to pay $30,000 for daycare. I'm just never gonna think about this again. Like really is helpful. And so I do, I totally agree that, staying in touch with what is difficult and like being honest about where we all are on our journeys is really powerful for listeners and audiences . I feel like there's so much about our celebrity culture and stuff that's all about like overnight success and like basically nobody's an overnight success. So it's all about, there's a lot of journey that usually goes into any kind of outward signs of success.

**Jacqueline:** And I think one of the things I thought actually the Men in Black came and zonked us so that we forgot what it was like to be. I have so little recollection. My husband's always saying to me, you don't remember that you don't remember that I'm like, No, my brain has definitely blocked out so many of those early day experiences.

**Katherine:** Yeah. And that's actually biologically adaptive. So part of it is like we forget so that human species will continue and we'll keep having more children. But it's also interesting because there's actually um, research. I don't wanna quote too deeply in case I get some aspect wrong, but grandmothers actually have really good impacts on outcomes for babies. And a lot of it has to do with having that additional layer of knowledge and support for whatever people do or don't remember.

**Jacqueline:** I remember reading a book that perhaps what had created the ability to even move through hunter gatherer phases of human development was the grandmothers being able to provide support.

**Katherine:** Oh my God. We get plenty of support from our mothers. I'm thinking about during all these crazy Omicron situations. I know people who literally are having their mothers drop everything and fly to help them with childcare. I still feel like grandmas are the complete unsung heroes of this pandemic. Even though, there's so much difficulty with people being isolated from caregivers, maybe I should just say grandmas are the unsung caregivers of the society. So yeah, I just think there's so much there in terms of how we've gotten, where we are because of grandma's.

**Jacqueline:** My work previously focused a lot on older adults. So I have, I've had a lot of conversations with older women who are grandmas and who have worked and back to what we talked about earlier. Nothing's changed that status quo when I realized their jobs 50 years ago, and their experiences working mothers was not that different from now, but they can also really see it through their daughters. And it does, it gets me back to that sort of question of what are we gonna do? How do we change this? How do we have more impact? Because again, they were working and trying to have impact in their day as well.

**Katherine:** Yeah. It's such it's such a thorny question and I think part of it is that again, like change does not happen overnight. Good public policy doesn't just materialize out of the sky or come from a vacuum, like good public policy is also about culture change. And one of the things that does make me optimistic is I would say that the role of fathers in caregiving and the transparency about fathers wanting to be caregivers wanting paid family leave has really changed dramatically. I would say with the generation having children now, especially in the last even five years. And through my research and reporting, I feel like mothers and women and marginalized people just saying something isn't working, doesn't always result in change. But once you start getting men in positions of power, who are saying something isn't working is when you start to see more movement.

And that's just the cold hard truth. I do think that most people would agree from a systemic level there's a lot more engagement on a macro, not a micro level, a macro level, a lot more engagement from fathers on some of these issues. And that also makes me optimistic. Maybe not that we're getting paid family leave this month, which we deserve, but that there are some culture changes afoot that are important and powerful.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that's really important to bring in. Obviously I focus predominantly on working mom burnout, but I really think we have to think strategically about this. And I was just thinking that most recently, in terms of making change through supporting men who have been full-time caregivers to be in positions of policy making and decision making, whether that's in a company or in government. But I agree. I think we have to realize that we are not necessarily having the impact we want to have. But that we can think about helping others who we know strategically could help us through the door.

**Katherine:** Yeah. There's actually really great data that, men actually taking their full paternity leave can have huge impact on their involvement with their kids' lives at, up to age six. They're find that men who take paternity leave are actually more involved with their kids when their kids are six. And in the workplace level, it actually decreases discrimination against mothers in the workplace because if fathers have and take full parental leave, it less becomes a thing of not wanting to hire women because they're gonna be more likely to be out. And it also that caregiving experience can also help them shape better workplace policies. And so I think that's a tangible sort of micro way that we can affect more culture change is making sure men have parental leave and also demanding that they take it. I think it's the most feminist thing that any man can do is take his full parental leave.

**Jacqueline:** And I understand the social expectations that make that difficult. But again, I think from our understanding of behavioral framing and what changes people's social norms. It's gotta be a default. If you have to opt in, it's not gonna happen. But if you actually have to take the step of saying, I don't want this thing that I'm being given that definitely starts to change how people take leave. So I would say the default is important.

**Katherine:** Yeah. And also, I think culture change starts at the top. So prominent leaders taking parental leave is really important. Studies have also found that paternity leave is contagious. It's like the best contagion out there. Once, one person, especially someone in a position authority of power takes leave a lot more people will do it. Being brave to be an early adopter on that is really important.

**Jacqueline:** Exactly. That's great. So what are your plans going forward? But how do you hope to continue to advocate for working moms?

**Katherine:** We've let listeners know that we're putting the show on an indefinite pause. And I think there's a lot of interlocking reasons that went into that decision, personal financial and also having to do with where I think I can have the most impact with my work, because a podcast has really taken up so much of my time. And it's a really tough industry. So yeah, I think so right now, my plan is to focus on a newsletter that is going to be about the forces that shape family life in America. So casting a really wide lens to a lot of the topics around motherhood that I'm interested in. And we have a wonderful Double Shift member community, and we're gonna continue to spend some time thinking about and growing that we have member hangout.

We are gonna do an audio newsletter. So people who like to hear things via audio it's not exactly the same as a podcast, but there's gonna be that option. And then we're thinking about other ways for the community to support and get to know each other. Because I think we're all, looking for and craving different forms of community. I think there's a group of women and mothers who are craving connection with people who wanna talk about getting angry and making social change and you know, Systemic issues and like how capitalism fits into it, rather than like sleep training tricks or like lunch hack strategies, which is so much of what mom media and mom groups are focused on a lot of the time.

One other thing that I have been really interested to observe as we've gotten to know our member community is people are coming from all over the world, but a lot of times they're from small towns and they are looking for people who they feel share some of their values and they live in Rural Iowa, or, some place where they feel like it's hard to find people who necessarily have some of the same ideas about motherhood. So I love the idea of being able to help people build community and use some of our virtual tools from all over the world to, help people feel more connected. So those are some things we're working on. I'm gonna be doing more speaking and more writing for national outlets. And I'm excited. It's good to have new chapters. And I feel like that is one of the burnout combating elements is like letting go of things that aren't working for you, even if they're working for other people. And thinking about what gives you energy?

**Jacqueline:** I think that's so important. I can totally agree about how much work goes into a podcast. And mine was not at the professional level that yours is at in terms of all the research and the bringing in so many different voices on such difficult topics. But it is a lot of work, so I'm really glad you are being strategic about that because I think it's really important if we want to be moms on a mission, we have to think about where can we have the most impact?

**Katherine:** Yes, I think everyone has to make those choices all the time.

**Jacqueline:** So again, you brought it a little bit back to burnout there. So what are the things that you do to help prevent burnout? And is that based on having a particularly difficult period of burnout or just that you've always had this ability to know it was coming and manage it?

**Katherine:** Yeah. I think that I've dealt with some levels of burnout in my career for a long time. I was an early employee of the Huffington post when like internet news was really taking off. So I was there for some of the start of the 24 hour, like nonstop internet news cycle. And so I feel like I've been, dancing around some of this burnout feeling, since I was 26 years old. But I think In terms of managing the show we've always built in hiatuses where we often are still working on things, but having things that are cyclical, not just it's always gonna be the same.

It's always gonna be like this all the time is helpful to have different paces and knowing when there's an intense period that there's a set ending for that period is really helpful. But yeah, I think it's hard because I think especially people whose work is mission driven the line and the feelings around burnout are really complicated because I would say I'm very much as dedicated as ever to my mission.

And in some ways, like I was burnt out on doing the podcast in its current form. Although I love the podcast and I still have a board full of ideas of things I wanted to do for the podcast that I didn't get to. So sometimes I think it's important to delineate what exactly isn't working rather than I'm birthed out on all work. You know what I mean? Or all paid work or something a lot of times things are more complicated and nuanced in terms of what actually isn't working. And sometimes it's just one element of someone's job.

Sometimes you need a total break from things. In terms of like other kinds of management, my husband and I both give each other personal retreats twice a year to get away and, do whatever we want during those times. And that has been really crucial for my mental health during the pandemic. And also, gives you a sense of like rejuvenation with work. We're all burnt out on what's happening in the world. The world is just like such a dumpster fire. We're all burnt out from that. Sometimes when I'm feeling really down, I delete all the social media on my phone and don't look at the news for a whole weekend. And then I'm like, oh things are much better. I have no idea what's going on. And then that helps. So those are some small strategies.

**Jacqueline:** Yep. And I think that personal retreat one is really important. I try and share that, I remember taking a whole week off of parenting to help me focus on thinking about preventing working mom burnout. And my brain changed. It made such a difference. And when I share that story, or if I even just give advice, like moms need to take a proper break more than a bath . And I was still at home, but I started to go to coworking space, it was the end of the kids' holidays. And I was like, Hey, I've done the past 10 weeks. I'm now not doing this last week of the summer holiday. And yeah, it took a while to work out how to ask for that and how to get it. So tell me a little bit more about your agreement to get retreats? And what does that look like?

**Katherine:** I just wanna touch again on this, the amount of resistance I hear to this idea speaks volumes about our culture. So many people, when I mention this look at me with kind of wide eyed wonderment, and they're like, oh, I couldn't do that. And I really wanna challenge people to examine what that's about now. Some people are single parents. Some people don't have support networks that allow them to do that. But I hear this from a lot of people who have completely competent partners who have financial resources to do it.

And they think they can't. So that is, I think, very worth interrogating. And if someone's listening and oh, there's no way I could do that. Stop right now and interrogate why you think that is? Yeah, I've been doing it this whole time with baby twins and a young kid.

So I think, one of our agreements actually right now is that we have to do it during the week and not the weekends, cos the weekends is so intense at our house that one of us can't manage all three kids totally alone. So fortunately I have some flexibility in my schedule and my husband's job actually has unlimited vacation cos he works at a tech company, which is quite a blessing. We do it during the week. And so that's one of our compromises, but we've just decided we're not giving each other birthday presents anymore or fathers and mother's day presents and this is just what we do instead. We don't expect the other one to plan what it is that we wanna do. I'm not waiting for him to surprise me with the perfect cabin. I actually love like looking at cabins on Airbnb. That's like relaxing to me. So we pick out where we wanna go and what the circumstances are and we just support each other in doing that.

**Jacqueline:** That's fantastic. We need these role models, for sure. Yes. So I hope someone who's listening to this will book a personal retreat. It really helps. And like you mentioned, there's so much resistance. So what would be one of the most important things you think companies and moms could actually start doing today?

**Katherine:** So I think for moms, the thing that I'm really focused on right now is basically in capitalism, our most precious commodity is time. I really think for moms finding their community and investing in a community, whatever it is, if it's reconnecting with college friends or finding some moms in your area that feel like you can really trust, finding help, finding your people and connecting with the community, I think really helps with so many of these domino issues to not feel alone and to have people you can turn to because we can't survive American motherhood alone. So to me that's really important. So that is the most simple and the sort of behavior around that could be as simple as, put something on the calendar to finally go for a walk with a friend that you've been texting with and haven't made it happen or whatever, like investing in people I think is really important. And gives us so much.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. And you've hung onto that piece of what you are doing in terms of the communities you are building. And I think it is important for us personally in terms of not feeling alone, but also I think if we are gonna create change, through community is not only the best way to do it so you're not exhausted on your own trying to do it, but I think it's more effective too.

**Katherine:** Yeah. I honestly think it's the only way, I just don't see a lot of examples of change happening in other ways. And building community is so multi-layered like building community is about dropping off a meal for someone who had a miscarriage, building community is about offering to watch someone's kid after school, when you're free and they aren't. And it's not just about giving it's about how we create these communities of care. Which I think are so important for moms.

And I think for companies I think the most important thing to me is I think that a lot of companies recognize that, people are struggling and some have a lot of top down ideas for how to fix it. I think that companies should be doing a lot of listening and I would really challenge companies to reframe who caregivers are. So I think that there's an idea that there's some people who are caregivers that need special accommodations, but I think companies should start thinking of everyone is gonna have caregiving responsibilities at some point in their life. How do we make work environments that support people in all stages of their life as caregivers? Rather than this person we're gonna have to make some special thing for, and also not wanna give them a promotion because of it or whatever. So to me, companies really listening and trying to radically rethink how they think about caregiving.

**Jacqueline:** That is definitely a great example because a husband can have to be a caregiver, a dad or a son, there's so many roles that that men can also play as caregivers. But my understanding is they just don't relate to that term . I think that's part of it is thinking about what is a term that we can use that companies are comfortable with and that can also then connect with the men who want to be caregivers.

**Katherine:** That's interesting, cos I feel like caregivers is much more expansive than just moms or parents. And I think, people being uncomfortable, like we're all going to have to give care or we're all going to need care at some point in our lives. I think that, some of this also is culture change. Why are people not comfortable with the idea of caregiving because that's seen as feminine or because that's seen as something that doesn't have value? So a lot of these are culture change ideas and part of it can be for companies to adopt language in a broader lens.

And, maybe we can for example, when Elizabeth Warren at the 2020 democratic convention was childcare's infrastructure, that phrase has really stuck around and that idea has really stuck around. So our language does matter and how we phrase things does matter and latching onto thinking about caregiving and using that term in a more expansive way, I think could be really powerful.

*Thanks to Veronica Rol for checking and editing this transcript.*