

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm Nicole Begley. And today I'm going to be talking with my good friend and Academy and elevate coach, Heather Lahtinen about morning routines. We're sharing what we do. I'm sharing where I struggle and I'm sharing my biggest issue and biggest downfall. When it comes to morning routines, I'm sure you might be able to relate. So stay tuned.

Speaker 2 ([00:27](#)):

Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. If you're a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host, pet photographer, travel addict, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley,

Speaker 1 ([00:46](#)):

Everybody Nicole here from hair of the dog. And I am back with really one of my favorite guests and pretty much starting to become sort of co-host of the show is Heather Lahtinen from the Flourish Academy, also from hair of the dog Academy and one of our elevate coaches. So Heather, welcome back to the podcast. Thank you so much for having me, Nicole. You know, I love working through these episodes with you and I think that your listeners find them really valuable or at least that's the feedback I've been getting. Yeah, absolutely. You know, I was going to record this episode today. We're going to be talking a little bit about routines and, you know, I was just going to kind of share my routines and I thought, you know what, it's gonna be way more fun to have a conversation with Heather who also loves her things about this.

Speaker 1 ([01:30](#)):

So, uh, yeah, we're gonna get some routine routine Asian going. If you look back, when do you think you caught onto this notion that you should have a routine or that they're important? Hmm. All right. So here's my whole thing on routines by nature. I don't like repetitive things, freedom and flexibility. A hundred percent. And you know, I can be free to do the same thing, but I, I get bored. So like for instance, even in my business, like I love creating processes, but if I had to like execute on the process again and again and again. Yeah, no, that's no bueno for me. So routines have been a challenging thing to get together, but that's one hand the other hand, I mean, I've always had routines. I have like my teeth brush your teeth, like try to brush your teeth with your left hand instead of your right.

Speaker 1 ([02:17](#)):

If you usually use a right, like no way. Um, when I go to the bar and I have the same routine, when I get in the shower, I had the same routine of how I do my hair. And if I happen to go out of order, then I usually forget something or I do conditioner before the shampoo or something goes awry. So, I mean, I live on some routines too. Yeah. Some of the benefits of routine routines, one of the biggest benefit is that you won't forget something that you do everything that you need to do. So you're not forgetting something that's really important. Like for instance, picking up your children from the bus stop, which may or may not have done for getting them. We love our children. I understand. I, I once said to pick up and

Speaker 3 ([03:00](#)):

Kindergarten, so there was no afternoon bus service. So I had to pick them up. Um, and of course I'm always like, Oh my God, I gotta go flying out of my house. Like the, the is like two miles away, go fly. Now it kind of blew through a stop sign, get pulled over. Basically I can see the school. So my son is

waiting there with the teacher, like can see me pulled over down the road, ends up walking with the teacher back into the building because it took so long. And so then I was really late. So moral of the story, if you're running late to pick up your child, you should still probably stop all the way at that stop sign

Speaker 4 ([03:33](#)):

Speed to pick up your child. Cause it's just going to make you more.

Speaker 3 ([03:37](#)):

And then of course, you're, it's like, ah, although I think I did impress the police officer slightly cause he pulled me over and of course I didn't have my wallet. So I was just like, I just ran down to the car gun and just went to go. But he's like license and registration. Like I, I don't have my wallet with me, but I'm like, but I know my license number, like PA it's not that long. And when it's funny, I, you know, grew up in PA. And so I got my first license there. So I knew that number. Then we moved to Florida for a while. When I came back to PA and got my license again, I had the same number. I'm like, Oh, well look at that. So you can remember it easily. So I just rattled that off and he let me go with a warning.

Speaker 4 ([04:13](#)):

Okay, good, good. Okay. So there is importance in routine here. You and I are both really into personal growth and development. So we read a thousand books and in these books we have read it over and over. I mean, if you've read it once you have literally read it a thousand times, the importance of establishing a morning and evening routine. But when I'm talking with people about this, they're like, well, but Heather, I really do not need one more thing to do.

Speaker 3 ([04:37](#)):

Or the other big hesitation is I'm not a morning person. And it's like, I can barely get myself out of bed and out the door and whatever time to which I say, well, you can do the routine whenever you want. Like, it doesn't have to be at five 30 in the morning. I would not be a happy person getting up at five 30 in the morning. So I choose to start mine at like seven 30 or really just whenever I get up.

Speaker 4 ([05:00](#)):

So funny because I knew we were going to be talking about this today. So I happened to look at my watch when I finished my morning routine today and it was seven 30 when I was finished. So I have, I think I was up around 6:00 AM and I agree with you. I don't think it needs to be 4:00 AM. It could be six, seven, eight, but I will say this and we can get into this. When we talk about the night to nighttime routine as well, people say, well, I'm a, I'm a night owl. So I stay up really late and I sleep and I have read several books on sleep. And all of the studies prove that you being an actual night owl. It, the chances of that are less than 1%. There are, there is 1% of the population that is truly wired differently, but everybody says that they are, everybody says no one ever claimed to be a night owl.

Speaker 4 ([05:46](#)):

The people who do say, you know, a lot of people will say, yeah, me either. We'll say I'm just a night owl. It's just how I'm wired. And I'm like, well probably not. According to the, because sleep is really important. And there are specific chemicals that are released at specific times when you sleep that repair your body, you know, that are very restorative and really, really important. And some of those happened earlier on in the night. In fact, one study said that there's an, I don't know these chemicals. I

pretend like I know all about this neuroscience, but I just read a lot of books on it. There's some chemical that's released around between the times of 10 and midnight, regardless of when you go to sleep. So if you are not sleeping between 10 and midnight, you are not getting the benefits of this chemical. And so it's really important that you get. So if you, maybe you are in fact a night owl, but chances are you actually are because what is it you're doing at night?

Speaker 3 ([06:37](#)):

Well, and here's the thing. I think why so many creative people tend to feel like they're a night owl is because maybe that's when they're allowed to be creative because they don't have other life responsibilities right. Then. So it's their time to be alone and to have their own time. Which, you know, since my family hasn't left me alone in this house, since this whole pandemic started seven months ago, I, I could see how I would maybe stay up til three in the morning, just so

Speaker 4 ([07:07](#)):

Right. There's no constraints at that time frame. So that's when they do it, but you probably should be getting, I mean, one of the benefits of a routine is getting plenty of sleep. Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([07:17](#)):

Actually this is not going to turn into a sleep podcast, but I actually listened to what's the Joe Rogan podcast a while ago about sleep. So it was like three hours and it was,

Speaker 4 ([07:27](#)):

Yes, it was. You sent it to me. Yes. Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([07:31](#)):

So interesting. And basically if you don't get enough sleep, you legitimately like start to hallucinate and start to like, you have all these like physical manifestations in your body from the lack of sleep. Um, that happens pretty quickly.

Speaker 4 ([07:46](#)):

Yeah. And it's very serious, you know, they compare it to being on drugs or like a drunk driver. But the thing is a lot of people might not take it that far. So they might not be that sleep deprived. Right. What they don't realize it is that is absolutely impacting their performance. Yeah. And this might be so slight that they're like, no, I feel fine. Okay. You might feel fine, but it could be impacting your performance. In fact, it probably.

Speaker 3 ([08:07](#)):

Yeah. And I think that goes with the same where people say, Oh, I'm a night owl. The same amount of people that are like, Oh, I don't need that much sleep. And I think it was the same amount, like one or 2% of humans actually don't need eight hours of sleep. Most of us need at least seven hours of sleep. How many hours of sleep do you get? These guys need seven.

Speaker 4 ([08:24](#)):

I sometimes fluctuate. I've actually been pretty consistent

Speaker 3 ([08:26](#)):

Recently. I'm usually like seven and a half hours, sometimes eight, but I fluctuate between like seven and eight and a half. Like if I get eight and a half hours of good sleep or I'm not like up and tossing and turning or like last night, our fire alarm went, did one beep, which kind of woke me up and I'm like, wait, was that in my dream? Or was that real? And then it beeped again, like 12, 15, and then I got out of bed and I'm sitting and I could tell it was upstairs, but we have like three in the hallway outside of the different rooms. Plus they're in, there's so many and there's carbon monoxide detectors. There's a gazillion detectors. So I'm sitting in our little loft area at like 1215 in my robe, like wanting to go to bed, waiting for the beep, sat there, held there for 15 minutes waiting

Speaker 4 ([09:08](#)):

Again. And suddenly

Speaker 3 ([09:09](#)):

I was like, all right, I'll go back to bed. I got into bed. And then of course I couldn't fall asleep cause I'm waiting. And I'm like, it's going to beep again, it has to be bigger.

Speaker 4 ([09:17](#)):

It hasn't beeped since it's now been well over 12 hours, I would change them. All that happened to me the other night too. I would change them all. Yeah. Because that's just not enough.

Speaker 3 ([09:26](#)):

And number two, and I'm looking, I'm like, I have a little step stool, but we have like 10 foot sealants. Like I don't think I'm going to be able

Speaker 4 ([09:31](#)):

To reach those little.

Speaker 3 ([09:33](#)):

And so I'm like, if I have to go out, turn off the alarm, open up the garage, pull out my car so I could get the ladder

Speaker 4 ([09:39](#)):

They're off the wall in the middle of the night. Yeah. Right. Okay. The point to that is we're getting, yeah, you're getting, so I, I get between eight and nine hours consistently eight and nine hours. And I'm, I'm loving life understanding that this is different for people, especially people who have toddlers or say newborns like, Oh, that's it. Yeah. That's a different season. And by the way, if you do have a newborn or a very small infant now is probably not the time to look at adjusting your own routine because you're probably just trying to survive.

Speaker 3 ([10:12](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. That was the worst one. You'd like laid down in bed and you're like, I have no idea if I'm going to get four hours of sleep or nine hours of sleep.

Speaker 4 ([10:19](#)):

Yeah, yeah. That time was not for me. Not for me. Okay. So shall we start by talking about morning routines? Yeah. You know what? Let's back up a step because again, I don't think anybody wants one more thing to do or add to their list. We need to really get connected with why you need a routine because you could hear us talk about it. You could read about it, but until you understand the benefits truly, you're probably not going to do it. So what if I said to you, instead of looking at this, like, I need to add things in the morning. What if I said to you, I can help you reduce stress. Would you like less stress? I would think everybody would say yes. Would you like more time? Would you like to feel more in control of your life? Would you like to achieve your fast goals faster with more intention?

Speaker 4 ([10:59](#)):

Oh yeah, of course. So that's why you want to start with a morning routine and we're going to talk about all different variations. You know, uh, I tend to take it to an extreme level. We can talk about how getting started is just really important to make one small change. But another concept I have taught in my productivity course, and Nicole, you will be familiar with this was this idea of bookending your days. So what that means is that throughout your day, it can feel very out of control. You can feel very reactive to your family, your children, your email, your business, your job, whatever. You're just reacting all day. And at the end of the day, you're exhausted because you don't feel like you accomplish anything. And again, you're just reacting to everything, which means you are not proactively creating the life that you want because you're just putting out fires.

Speaker 4 ([11:42](#)):

So I introduced this concept of bookending your days so that it gives you a sense of control, take control over what you can control, which means you might not be able to what happens from say 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM because of the kids or the family or whatever, or your job. But could you take a little bit of control first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening, because it will leave you feeling differently about yourself and how you are approaching your life. It will give you a boost of self-confidence and self-esteem, and again, you'll feel more focused. You'll feel like you have more time, you'll feel less stressed because you will feel in control even when the middle of the day still feels hectic to you.

Speaker 3 ([12:20](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. And along with that, I feel like one of the biggest benefits of any sort of routine, especially a morning routine is your setting your intention for the day. You're not just waking up, which this is actually a bad morning routine habit. I need to change it. And I just need to do it cold Turkey and just keep my phone downstairs. Cause I wake up in the morning and I just kind of roll over cause beds comfy. So I look at the news and the cat's lean on me and I just don't want to get out of bed. That's another bad

Speaker 4 ([12:46](#)):

We're freaking out over here. That is absolutely the worst thing on the planet you can do because you just gave your attention away. You gave your very first amount of energy. You gave that power away. It is literally if there is one thing I could implore people to do, it is to not look at their phone until their routine is done. Now, listen, I don't care if your routine is five seconds, you're going to do one push-up a day. I don't care if that's your routine. The phone comes after that. I li when I tell you my routine, you're going to die because it's pretty extensive. I literally do not look at my phone, my email, nothing until

after that routine is completely done, because I know it will shift my attention. Let me, let me ask you this. If you look at the news or your news feed or anything, does it leave you feeling good? Hopeful.

Speaker 3 ([13:30](#)):

Here's the thing though. I don't feel like it. I don't feel like it affects my productivity or mood or outlook.

Speaker 4 ([13:37](#)):

Okay. I will say this out of all of the people I know for you. That is probably true because you have a very even keel personality. So when you, you telling me that I would buy it, I'd be like, yeah, you're probably right, because I know you personally, but if anybody else said that to me, I'd say flat out you're lying because there are very few people who are emotionally evolved enough to not let that stuff get.

Speaker 3 ([13:59](#)):

Yeah. Well, and I know like I'm not reading. I don't know. I just, like, for me, I like to know what's going on and I'm a total nerd and want to see like the daily updates with this whole pandemic thing, because I think EBITDA, epidemiology is cool, even though I'm kind of over it. But, um, but like, you know, I don't know. I just, like, I read it. I'm like, Oh, that's interesting. And yeah. And I do, I do check my email. I'm looking for that. Dopamine hit Heather.

Speaker 4 ([14:25](#)):

Yeah. Well, you've got to find it elsewhere because it will grab you then you're not in control because you know that there will be something in your email that you need to respond to. That's called reactive, not proactive. You're you're waiting for somebody to tell you what to do for the day. Again, I happen to know that you're very focused and you're able to get your list, but not everybody has that.

Speaker 3 ([14:44](#)):

No agreed. And it does help immensely. I, there, I would not have been able to do this a year ago because the difference now versus then is I have a team that helps me and those types of reactive emails that would trigger me or would cause me to be like, Oh my gosh, look at all these fires. I need to put out, go directly to my team. And then they bring it to me if it needs my attention later in the day. So I've taken I've short-circuited that step because I it's true. I could not have done that. I used to actually be when I used to work full time elsewhere, I made the huge mistake. A couple of times of checking my work email, like Sunday night before I go back to work. And then it just puts you in a funk and you're like, Oh, the stuff I have to deal with, tomorrow's miserable. So then I stopped doing that because I was like, this is not productive and enjoy the rest of my weekend.

Speaker 4 ([15:33](#)):

I don't know that. I don't know that most people are able to do that. I think they're looking at their phones and it's making them miserable, even if it's a low level discontent and they're not recognizing how it's impacting their day. So I'm going to go ahead and make a blanket statement here. And I'm going to say, including you, Nicole, I want everyone first up in the morning routine is to lose the phone. Like the phone is not part of it

Speaker 3 ([15:53](#)):

Agreed. And you know, and I know why I need to make that happen is because I will be more productive in the challenges that I have with my morning routine, which will, I'm happy to talk about. We'll go away because my challenge has become, Oh, and now I don't have the time. You know why? Because I just wasted half an hour laying in bed, looking at my phone and an effect me mentally per se, didn't put me in a bad mental space. It did though affect my day.

Speaker 4 ([16:20](#)):

Well, I roll right out of bed, get right into my routine. And the funny thing is, if you do that, if you put some space between when you're waking up in your phone, you'll, you'll start to find, okay, you have this immediate reaction of like, Oh, I need to look at my phone. Right? I want to see a little bit of a sugar addiction. I can't handle it for sure. You can't handle, it's a drug. So you get you wake up. And you're like, Oh, I want to see if anybody replied to my Instagram posts because it was actually really funny yesterday. You know, what I have found is that if you ride out that feeling and you resist it, it will go away. Because if I check it, first thing, I'm on it. That's it like I'm done. I'll do my routine, but I'm S I'm distracted the longer I wait. It's funny. Cause like this morning I finished my routine and I did not in the least feel the need to check my phone. And I was, I was at the point where I would have allowed myself to do so, but I didn't want to, because I had already been so productive. I don't know something shifts in your mind. They say that's the same with sugar. If you actually stop eating it, you won't crave it as much. I'm not there by the way.

Speaker 3 ([17:19](#)):

Oh, I love my sugar. I just stopped at the bakery yesterday. Cause I drove by it and got some amazing macaroons. But um, that reminds me a lot of actually I've been doing a little bit of intermittent fasting, meaning the like I don't eat when I first wake up. I usually end up eating breakfast between like 10 30 and 11. Sometimes even not till noon, you know, the first day or two, you're like, it's nine o'clock. I'm like, I'm kind of hungry. And then 15 minutes later totally passes. And you're not hungry at all. Again until later it's like this little, little, you know, conscious brain saying, Hey, remember we usually do this right now. Hello? And then when you move past it, it's like, Oh, okay. I guess we're doing something else now. That's actually perfect.

Speaker 4 ([17:58](#)):

That's and that's exactly how you will feel about your phone. Don't look at it right away. You will, you won't need to look at it. You just lean into that feeling. Just let it pass. It's like riding a wave. You let it pass and then you'll, you'll get over it. It will, it won't kill you not to look at your phone and maybe you need to put it in a different place.

Speaker 3 ([18:15](#)):

I'm making this public public, um, whatever declaration next week. I'm not going to look at my phone at all in the morning.

Speaker 4 ([18:22](#)):

Wow. I'm going to check in on you. Did you look at your phone today? I think it's going to make a difference for you. I think time wise, of course you'll get out of bed faster and just get moving, you know, and just get things done. I, and if you have something that you want to look at, maybe you'll move faster through your morning routine so that you can get your phone. I don't know. Okay. Talk to me a little bit about what your current routine look like.

Speaker 3 ([18:44](#)):

Yeah, it sounds good. Mine is a little bit more approachable than yours. Um, it's meaning it's not quite as involved, although here's the thing I want to build my Nan a little bit more. Like we said before, I struggle with the same thing again and again, and I know my funds won't help him, but my main routine is these are the things I want to get done in the day. And I have discovered if I don't do them in the morning, they don't happen. So they need to happen in the morning. So hence now their morning routine because I just know myself. And as soon as I sit down at this desk done, nothing's nothing else is happening. Once I sit down and turn on my computer. So the things I want to do in the morning are besides like the normal brush, our teeth.

Speaker 3 ([19:26](#)):

I want to have a few minutes of reflective meditation time. Doesn't always be 10 minutes. It's not always 15 minutes. Sometimes it is literally 60 seconds. So I have made myself these rules that I will do these every day, but I have made what the minimum requirement is so easy that if I have five minutes, I can still do it. So like 60 seconds of like meditative quiet time. But I usually try to do it more like 10 minutes or so. And I prefer like a guided meditation kind of thing instead of just sitting and listening to my breath because my brain is not, um, evolved enough to handle that silence yet. The next thing I do is some sort of exercise. This is not like a forty-five minute, you know, workout. My minimum requirement for that is 30 seconds of low forearm plank. Like a little something.

Speaker 3 ([20:16](#)):

I don't like it, but I'm like, I can, and this is how I needed to frame it for myself though. It's because my brain immediately goes to, Oh my gosh, I have all this work. Not that I have to do that. I want to do, but I'm excited to get to work because I love what I do. And so then it's like, well, but I have all these things I want to get done today, but I can say you have 30 seconds. And then it often ends up being into more it's there's an actual term for this where it's like, instead of saying, I have to floss all my teeth, I'm just going to like rip off the floss. And then you're not just going to throw it away. You'll just wash your teeth cause you've done the step. So yeah. So a little meditative time, a little bit of some sort of exercise, kind of strength, training something.

Speaker 3 ([20:54](#)):

Um, and the days I'd go to the barn that counts sometimes as my barn days, and then I'm trying to learn Italian. So I do at least one Babel lesson on Italian a day. So those are my main, like non-negotiables those three pieces. And then I do try to work in some like affirmation type stuff periodically. I'll actually, there's four there's four non-negotiables I have, I do, uh, I have a book, Pam grout, she wrote E squared and think and grow rich. And I love her. Um, but she has a book basically. It's like her take on a course in miracles. So it's like each day there's like a little one page, you know, kind of affirmation or lesson from the course in miracles. So it's like, I will sit down and I'll make sure I read that once a day. So that's my four non-negotiables few minutes of quiet time, 30 seconds of low floor. I'm playing my Italian and one page from that book.

Speaker 4 ([21:47](#)):

Well, that sounds pretty reasonable. So if you give me a range on, like, if you did the minimum of, in each component versus the maximum, what would that range look like? Five minutes. 10 hour. Yeah. Okay. Right. So you D you don't have to necessarily invest an hour or hours worth of time in your morning routine. Cause it could just be a couple of minutes. It could be 36.

Speaker 3 ([22:07](#)):

Yeah. And even because I've made those for non negotiable, like Thursday mornings, for instance, this morning, it's an earlier morning for me. I get up like take care of the animals, make sure the kids are set for school. And I have an early riding lesson. So I'm off to the barn early. So like today I'm going to do my Italian later on today. I'll do my little low forum plank at some point today. Like, I'll do those things at other times, but because I've made them non-negotiable to myself, which we can talk a little bit about self integrity here, then I make sure they just happen at some other point during the day and let that happen every day, nothing would have happened because I would get to be nine o'clock. And I know this has happened to all of you guys. It happens to me where it's nine o'clock. So well, I'll just,

Speaker 4 ([22:48](#)):

Well, if I was going to ask you, how often does it not happen? Even if you say you're going to do it later, like, cause for me, if that exercise does not happen, the very first thing in the morning, it will not happen. Period. I just know this about myself.

Speaker 3 ([23:01](#)):

No, uh, it depends like, because I've made the bar low, like I will force myself to do okay. But if I was trying to say, um, like my minimum is 15 minutes of my mirror to do like a Pilates 15 minute class, if that doesn't happen, first thing, like, it's just, it's not going to happen sometimes. Rarely.

Speaker 4 ([23:18](#)):

Right, right. But you understand how you operate. I think there's something really important here that we need to know is like, you have to understand how you function best and what works best for you because it might not be the same for me. I always tell, I tell my kids, you have to operate within the confines of the system in the system. Like if it doesn't work for you, I know the exercising in the late afternoon or evening would never, ever in a million years work for me. But, but the opposite might be true for someone else. Right. So I know that if I, if I w if exercise is a non-negotiable to me, it has to happen before 8:00 AM or just won't happen. And we can upgrade our

Speaker 3 ([23:53](#)):

Operating system, but we still need to work within the confines of, you know, how much Ram we actually have.

Speaker 1 ([23:59](#)):

That's a good point. That is a good point. Okay. What about your evening routine? Do you have one?

Speaker 3 ([24:04](#)):

Yeah. So my evening routine is a little bit unorthodox too, because I love me some TV series. Like not a lot, but like my relaxed time. And this, this is because I could literally watch a movie and, or a TV show and just go straight to bed and it does not keep me up. I don't feel like, Oh, I need to watch the next episode. Like I watch one, like I'm usually in bed by nine and then my husband and I watch a show and then we usually lights out by 10 30. So, yeah. So prior to that, I mean, I usually try to shut down, work about five, and then I'll try to like, just kind of relax, but it's nice outside of the side of the porch and read a little bit, or sometimes I'll catch up on just like some personal things, like, um, you know, booking plane, tickets to Italy. I find really relaxing

Speaker 1 ([24:55](#)):

Books

Speaker 3 ([24:55](#)):

And vacations and then make some dinner or pick up some dinner because I don't really love to cook. And yeah, I'm gonna just kind of relax, but by eight o'clock we're like starting to really wind it down.

Speaker 4 ([25:06](#)):

What would you say if you take a step back from like maybe an older version of Nicole versus where you are now, where have you seen benefits to either of these routines?

Speaker 3 ([25:16](#)):

I guess benefit is noticing, noticing my habits, whereas before it was completely reactive and I didn't even know, like I just, I just go get through the day and go and be tired. And, you know, before I was working for myself, like, you know, there'd be stressful stuff going on at work. And then like your sleep schedule goes off. I would wake up at four in the morning, not be able to fall back asleep. And that happens a couple of nights in a row. And like, I can live with six hours of sleep once I do that a couple of nights in a row, and I'm a mess. So just having that, and I think it's a combination of all the things like me doing what I'm supposed to be doing now. So like my, my work stress is very low. Like, like my stress level in general is just pretty low. So that certainly helps. And, you know, it's hard to say what came first, the chicken or the egg, like just having these routines, you know, to have kind of an outlet and to have a way to kind of quiet your mind and have kind of a routine in your day, does that lead to less stress or just the less stress lead to being able to do those four? You know, it's hard to say what, but you know, it definitely helps.

Speaker 4 ([26:21](#)):

I agree with you. I feel, I feel very in control of my life and my day, because I have, again, book-ended my days I take control in the morning. I take control of the evening. And then if something happens throughout the day, that's more reactive. It's, it's not as detrimental to my focus because I'm in control of the areas I can be. And actually that happened this morning. I did my morning routine. I have things on my schedule today and I was thrown off by two and I'm going to use air quotes here, photographic emergency. Okay. First. All right, you guys, for real, there is no such thing as a photographic emergency, and last I'm a wedding photographer, unless you're at a wedding and your camera doesn't work, you're going to be fine. Like whatever it is is not truly an emergency. Well, anyway, two of these things that I helped, two of my clients with took up my entire morning and I was not anticipating that today at all.

Speaker 4 ([27:08](#)):

I had other things on my agenda, but I'm still open and flexible. And because I have a different view of time, I, I don't know if you know this, but I actually own it, I own time. So I don't have any issues with time. And I think that's also because of these routines. So less stress, more intention, more focus, more time so that when things do get thrown off, because they will, I tend to react better, handle it better than I used to. Like the older version of myself would get really stressed out about that. Like, can't believe this, what am I gonna get to all this work done? And how am I going to accomplish this? Where now I feel much, much more.

Speaker 3 ([27:41](#)):

Yeah. The time thing I used to be, it took me a long time to start to make some strides in the time department. Cause I always felt like there wasn't enough time, but guess what? Everything always gets done before it needs to get done. Somehow it works. So, yeah. And then one of the other things which I want to touch on later, but I want to get to your morning routine first is one of the ways I think it helps for me to not feel stressed and to also feel productive is part of my daily routine. That's not necessarily a morning or evening, but it's usually towards the end when I'm winding down my Workday of me making a plan for the most important thing to do the next day and doing that first thing when I sit down

Speaker 4 ([28:23](#)):

Critically important. Because if you try to create your list the morning that you will be executing that list, right. And you're already in reactive mode, right? Where if you do it the night before, or if you're a Sunday type planner, you know where you're doing it Sunday evening, you're planning out the week. That is absolutely proactive. And you know, I fall off the wagon, Nicole, I'm not perfect. But when, when I actually sit down the night before and write my top three things for the next day, they almost always get done literally by like 9:00 AM. Right, right. Covered Nicholas, like just write it down and then it's done. And then, you know, I have an ongoing list of things that I could tackle and then I need to work on, but the three most important things are done. And when that's the case, you've just won the day. If you're winning the day by 9:00 AM, you are ultimately winning at life

Speaker 3 ([29:12](#)):

A hundred percent. And I have noticed if I go through a few days where I feel like, Oh God, I worked hard today, but nothing. I didn't feel like I moved the ball forward. Oh, surprise. I haven't been practicing that. I've just been coming in, sitting down and what needs to happen? Oh my gosh. Look at all these things I need to do. Instead of being cognizant of what's the most important thing to focus on here and get that done, which I do daily. But I also, I'm also a Sunday planner, like Sunday evening. I love to sit down, look at my calendar, grabbed my little, um, my little planner and I just put in my appointments for the week just so I can have on Sunday night, like just know, okay, Wednesday is totally open. I've got a ton of calls Tuesday. You know, this is happening in doctor's appointment on Friday, just so like, I kind of have a general idea of what the week's gonna look like. And at that time I also look and say, what needs to happen this week? So I try to get like my three big goals or if it's like a big complicated something like planning my unleash hairstyle challenge content. That's just the one thing for the week. Cause there's a lot of moving parts to it. So, you know, I just look and figure out what needs to happen by Friday to make me feel like this week was a success and start over.

Speaker 4 ([30:19](#)):

That's key. What you just had was what if I got one thing done this week? Where would I feel successful if you could do that on a daily basis too, you could say, what are the three things that if I got them done, I would feel awesome. I would feel like I accomplished so much. And I have these, I make lists Sunday night as well for the week, looking at my schedule, planning it out. And then I also have a separate list that I call on my mind. And it's like a brain dump. It's like things that like are just like really starting to press on me. And I probably need to get to, and I'm thinking about doing this or maybe doing that because that's separate from my goals and my task list, right? There are goals, there are tasks that need to get done, but then there's things like maybe they're bigger projects or something I need to research or explore or understand more. So I keep those separate, but the key is it gets out of your mind and it gets on to paper. And that frees up. Some, some of your Ram your space is open available.

Speaker 3 ([31:12](#)):

Mine's a little bit different instead of like the big projects mine are. I do a separate little list on my little, on my little yellow paper of all the five minute tasks. Like, you know, like the gazillion things like, Oh, I need to call and cancel this. Oh, I need to do this. I'd like the, all the little household it's personal, it's business, all the little stuff. And I just write that on this. And I just put it in my calendar and I just move it day to day and cross it off as we go. And like, none of it, it's not, I don't know. Sometimes you look at like these big, long lists and big, long lists. Don't always work because you feel like I didn't get all that stuff done. So, because I've already picked out my most important piece for the day, and I know what my big rocks are for the week. And those aren't them. Like, I don't have this attachment to getting those done. It's just things that I know I need to take care of here. And just like, Oh, I have five minutes. What can I do? Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. And I knock some things off. So that frees me up from remembering the minutia stuff, because it's all those little details that make me crazy having to remember them. So that's my outlet for that.

Speaker 4 ([32:13](#)):

I think that that's brilliant because you get it out of your head on paper and then you don't have to remember it in your mind and you just get them done when they're like bonus items. Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([32:21](#)):

Yeah. That's exactly what it is. Cause you're like, Ooh. All right. So let's, um, let's buckle up and talk about your morning.

Speaker 4 ([32:29](#)):

Okay. Let me start by saying, I highly recommend reading the miracle morning by how L rod and I've always had somewhat of a routine, but after I read that book, it really solidified for me the importance of it. So again, you might be hearing this thinking, okay. Yeah, that sounds good. I think you should really pick up this book and read it or listen to it because it will just inspire you to actually take action. So at a high level, I'm going to share what he calls his life savers and then how I adopted those.

Speaker 1 ([32:56](#)):

And it's a super quick read for those you guys. Like I don't have to agree to book such an easy read, highly recommend,

Speaker 4 ([33:03](#)):

Very easy. So savers is actually an acronym and the S stands for silence. So that's meditation, breathing, whatever, whatever you want to call it, the ACE stands for affirmations. So whether you're reading something or you're saying things, those are affirmations, the V is for visualization. So imagining a future scenario for your business or your life E is for exercise. It's pretty straight forward. R is for reading so that you can fill your brain with something positive, you know, ideas and thoughts to improve yourself, learn, learning, knowledge, all that good stuff, and ask us for scribing, which is journaling. So it was really inspired. Um, how's had a lot of medical issues, like very serious medical issues and his story is inspiring and it was inspired by the savers. And I thought, I'm, I'm going to make a chart. I'm going to do all of these things. It's going to be amazing. Some of them I was already doing, but you know, maybe this is a good time, Nicole, before I even get into my routine to explain the importance of incremental change ditches, where I've blown up too,

Speaker 5 ([34:05](#)):

I read the same book. I'm like, yeah, I'll do it

Speaker 1 ([34:09](#)):

Like a day in like, Oh, screw that. I don't have time for this. You can just revert back to your old habits because our brain says change is scary. Change is scary. I don't have the energy to manage this change. Reverts, revert to save my energy.

Speaker 4 ([34:23](#)):

It sets off a siren that says danger, and it won't allow you to do it. So I highly recommend reading the book and then implementing one or two things on a very small scale. Like Nicole mentioned, maybe something that takes 30 seconds,

Speaker 1 ([34:34](#)):

Second exercise check

Speaker 5 ([34:38](#)):

Jack. I just exercise 30 seconds. Beat that. Yeah. 30 seconds or a minute

Speaker 4 ([34:43](#)):

Or whatever, something very small, please. Don't try. I am such an overachiever. I read this and I'm like, Oh, I'm going to do it all. And I'm going to do it for hours. I'm going to, I'm going to make all of this happen. So I actually got really into this and then I've backed it off somewhat. So what my current routine looks like as I get up, I have something very small to eat. I exercise, I get ready. I meditate. I read at least, okay. My goal was five to 10 pages. This of a good book of something edifying to my brain, meaning not fiction, but some things, self development related this morning. I read one page. I just didn't have the attention span. Or I felt the time to read five to 10 pages. So I read one page and then I do my affirmations. The one habit I have not been able to get to stick is that of journaling. And I've tried Nicole. I have tried, I've tried to make it simple. And so I'm just going to write down three things. I'm thankful for. I do. Oh, I do gratitude well, but most times it's often in my head and it's when I first wake up. I try to immediately think of three things I'm grateful for.

Speaker 3 ([35:44](#)):

I actually have a new little journaling prompt that I'm going to try that. I feel like, Oh, this could actually work a little bit better. And that is a future script date of, and not necessarily even doing a daily, but like on my Sunday night to write down, like I've done this for a year goals. So like the end of the year. So December 31st, I wake up this and that, I feel this, this is what I've accomplished. I'm so thankful for XYZ. And so you're like, you know, transporting yourself into the future to, to write this little kind of thank you. Note of what's happened in the past year to do that for the week. So it's Friday, it's time for happy hour for myself, a chocolate martini reflecting on this awesome week. That's good. Actually

Speaker 4 ([36:24](#)):

One of my affirmations is about reflection and it says something along the lines of, I will invest time in reflection to gain a deeper perspective of where I need to make some changes. So I think that's great. Um, I want to talk about affirmations for a second. So the exercise part is really simple. Go move your body. I think you should get seconds guys. That's all, it takes 30 seconds. So I usually do 30 to 40

minutes, six days a week, 30, more than 30 seconds. But you know what I started with many years ago, I started with

Speaker 3 ([36:56](#)):

Yep. Yeah, no, I mean, seriously, you guys, if you're listening to this, you're like, I don't, that's why I started there. And that's why my minimum, my minimum viable product is 30 seconds because I take the excuse of, I don't have time off the table. By the time my brain gets back with you don't have time. I could have been done. So I just do it

Speaker 4 ([37:16](#)):

Even with yourself and just do it. Right. Okay. So I exercise, I use 10% happier from my meditation app. They have various meditations. They have courses. They are fantastic. Usually I aim for a five minute guided meditation. Again, I try to read five to 10 pages of a book some days it's one page, some days it's nothing. I mean, occasionally that does happen, but my affirmations and I, I adopted this from house recommendation and the book, the miracle morning. I have a page of affirmations that I actually read out loud to myself every single day. And I timed it the other day. Cause I was curious how long it takes five minutes. So if I, if I really feel rushed or like not focused, I'll read half of it, you know, or I'll pick apart to read, but I have it broken down in different categories.

Speaker 4 ([37:58](#)):

Let me give you a few examples. Oh, here's a good one. I have one called quantum leap and I say to make 20, 20 my best year ever and take my life to the next level. I must actively brainstorm. Get out of my comfort zone, take risks and take action. I must focus on goals, projects outside of my current realm, but it's one of my affirmations. I have a financial affirmation goals, exercise, authenticity, family productivity, rest reflect, Oh, here's my reflection. One. I'm looking at my sheet right now. I say, I will invest time in reflection, gaining a deeper perspective by asking questions. Like, what am I doing well that I need to acknowledge for? What can I be doing better? What am I not even thinking about that I should be. I say that every day,

Speaker 3 ([38:42](#)):

The quality of your life is determined by the quality of the questions asked

Speaker 4 ([38:46](#)):

This question. People might get hung up on this one. What am I not even thinking about that I should be? But the thing is Nicole, you and I do this all the time. I'm not asking me. I'm asking my subconscious

Speaker 3 ([38:56](#)):

To answer exactly. I

Speaker 4 ([38:58](#)):

Believe. I believe that you have all of the answers you need inside of you. And so I'm just asking my subconscious that question because how do I know what I'm not thinking about? I don't, but I believe there's another component inside of me that does.

Speaker 3 ([39:11](#)):

And you might not get the answer right then and there, I might just pop into your brain while you're cooking dinner while you're taking a walk or something later. And you're like, Oh, where'd that come from?

Speaker 4 ([39:19](#)):

Listen to this one. I have one called overcoming fear, fear and worry, or a misuse of my intelligence and imagination. I will only think positive. Self-affirming in confidence, inspiring thoughts. My success is inevitable. So there is nothing to fear. I love it. Yeah. That's a pretty good one. Then I have a list. I have a list of things. I'll just give you a few. These are going to sound funny. I use these in, um, the I M format because what you say after that's really powerful. So I say things like I am clarity. I am a leader. I am an expert. I am a genius and I apply my wisdom. How about that? I am a success magnet. I am successful. I am an action taker. I am inspired. I am an inspiration. I am unlimited power and they go on. Okay. So there's a lot of them. I am committed to living every day as the best version of myself. That's what I actually repeat a lot throughout the day. I am committed living every day as the best version of myself, these affirmations, these morning routines, it will literally change your life.

Speaker 3 ([40:18](#)):

It just doesn't change your life on the first day, which is why I think it's about this creating this habit, which by definition is hard for humans to do because changing habits, creating habits, our brain wants to revert to what we've always done so much, so much. So I think one of the ways that you can start to overcome that is that incremental change. Start with something really small and tell yourself, like, write down, why write down the benefits of, of this routine or this one new piece of your routine so that you can remind yourself. I know this is why I'm doing that. I think that is helpful for trying to change those. I do want to talk real quick about affirmations because affirmations is one that I have struggled with, but it's not necessarily one that I do consistently, but I know that it's so beneficial and I should, but I was listening to a podcast by Emily errands the other day and she had somebody on and she recommended writing your affirmations as I'm ready, which let's back up for a second.

Speaker 3 ([41:16](#)):

Your subconscious brain doesn't know negatives. So, and it also doesn't know like what's true and what's not true. It is very literal. So to do the affirmations is I am, is just so important. Like you can't say I will be like, it doesn't that, that doesn't compute at the same level that I am does. But when you're doing certain things like maybe health things, like for instance, my high cholesterol runs in my family. I have not had the high cholesterol yet because I'm ready to have a cholesterol of 97 or less. Um, um, but you know, I try to tell myself the affirmation is I have a cholesterol of 97 or less, but you can hear that little voice in the back of your head say, you don't know that you do Y but you're just making this up. Like, totally

Speaker 1 ([42:07](#)):

Like I'm a millionaire. I am a millionaire. My brain's like, no, you're not [inaudible].

Speaker 3 ([42:14](#)):

Um, uh, yeah, so, like by saying, I'm ready, like I'm ready to have a cholesterol of 97 or less. I'm ready to have a million dollars in my bank account. I'm ready to do this. It's a whole different energy that gets put behind that because your conscious brain can't say, Oh, liar. We be like, Oh, well that does sound nice. You know? So it's, you're able to put all of your energy behind it. So if you struggle with affirmations or

with this, this little voice in your head telling you that that's not true, just try to change the verbiage a little bit.

Speaker 4 ([42:47](#)):

This is very solid advice. So I had not heard this before and I have a couple affirmations that are not entirely true just yet. And so I think switching them to say, I am ready to is actually really helpful and probably beneficial because what we're trying to do here, and we've talked about this in a bunch of different ways is we're trying to get our subconscious and our conscious mind to work together instead of against each other. And so what you tell your subconscious versus what your conscious knows, like, I know it sounds like you guys, I know when sometimes when I hear Nicole and I talk, I think if somebody heard this conversation, they would legitimately think we were crazy where she's like

Speaker 1 ([43:26](#)):

Asking me a question and I'm like, well, before you go to bed tonight, just ask your subconscious.

Speaker 3 ([43:30](#)):

And I do, I bet. I'm like, Hey, subconscious, um, put this. And it almost always does. Usually in that moment when I wake up in the morning, like I'm just waking up and I'm like, Oh wait, what is that? That I was just thinking about? Or what was that little dream I just had? Oh, write it down. Like it, it happens. Um, or it just might happen again with a random thought while you're just like, where you least expect it in the shower taking a walk.

Speaker 4 ([43:54](#)):

Right. And then you're like, wait, where did that come from? People will refer to this as like, like an epiphany or, Oh, it was just like instinct, but that's actually not, what's really happening. It's that you put your mind on it and your brain came up with the answer. It just needed you to ask the right question to, to sort of mine it right. To find it. Yeah, no, that's really good. So, okay. My morning routine, I've timed it a couple of times. If I am like all in there's this one time, I'll never forget. I actually reached out to you. And I was like, Nicole, my morning routine took two hours this morning. Like that's a little bit much. Okay. That's too far. The truth is if, depending on how everything is flowing together, it's usually about an hour, hour and a half

Speaker 1 ([44:37](#)):

Because you're exercising for a clarinet or half an hour.

Speaker 4 ([44:40](#)):

Right? Yeah. So most of that is exercise because the reading of the affirmations is five minutes. The book is five minutes. The meditation is five minutes. I mean, that's only 15 and that's literally everything else. So it's 15 minutes for that. And then however long I decide to exercise. So, you know, again, I think that people, especially people who are, are struggling with time management, maybe need to start with like a five minute routine or five minutes or less to get through a few things. And then just slowly start adding onto it. Based on what's important to you in this season. Maybe, maybe it's like super important to you to get fat or to work on your health. So you want to implement the 32nd plank hoping to get to the six minute video that I watched. Right? So maybe that's where you want to start, or maybe you're already good with that. And you want to add in reading and you're like, well, pick up the miracle morning and read a couple pages of it every morning. And these will you, you will then be proactively

creating your own life, creating it, the life of your dreams based on the season that you're in. Not just reactively living to the outside forces.

Speaker 1 ([45:44](#)):

Yeah. I mean, I don't even know that there's anywhere left to go after that because that is, uh, sums it up.

Speaker 4 ([45:50](#)):

Well, I need to really quickly just, I'm going to hit you with my evening routine. Oh yeah, yeah. But it's definitely very simple. I mean, I try to stop working between four and five. Same as you. Um, we have dinner every night together as a family around six or 6:30 PM. After that, depending on the season, a lot of times I'm outside working or doing something, we live on a homestead, so there's always work to be done. Um, now that it's getting darker earlier, that's shifted a little bit. I might read, I might watch a show with the kids, but I am tip almost always typically in bed reading a book at 8:30 PM. How long I read, just depends on how long I can keep my eyes open. The other night, I was probably asleep at 8:36 PM. Some nights I'll get to like nine 30. So I'll read for an hour, but almost never, ever pass that.

Speaker 4 ([46:34](#)):

So really the important things to me in the evening are like getting to bed in bed at a decent hour so I can read really. It's not, I mean, yeah, the sleep is super important to me and I love sleep who doesn't, but it's really about like, I want to get in bed so I can read so I can read something again. That's edifying to my mind before I fall asleep, that's really, really important to me. So that's like a non-negotiable is eight 30. I'm going to eight 30 or nine. I mean, I'm flexible. I'm not a freak about this stuff. For the most part. I'm a pretty reasonable person. Although I have been known to yell at my children to leave me alone. I'm going to bed to read at eight 30. And I was like, mom, it's eight 30. I don't care. I need, I

Speaker 1 ([47:10](#)):

Need some time to read at night,

Speaker 4 ([47:12](#)):

Right? Yeah. Not in the morning because I like to also get up early and get things moving. But I would say for me, if I were to put more weight on one or the other, if I were new to this, I would focus on the morning routine. I think it's more,

Speaker 1 ([47:26](#)):

I agree, because by the end of the day you usually have lost some. Yep. And you're just tired. Your brain is tired. It's made decisions all day and then you're just not setting yourself up for success because it's going to be hard to overcome those already programmed habits. That's right. Yeah. For sure. Um, yeah, you guys, I hope you enjoyed this little peek into the lives of, of me and Heather and, and uh, yeah. And I think I'm going to start keeping my phone downstairs. I think that you need to, because it's such a reflex for you that you just, for most people, they reach over and they're reading it because it's mindless and it's easy and your head's comfortable and warm and now you just have to get up. I think, um, the alumni got to rip the bandaid off, correct? I mean like literally just roll over and get out of bed because you'll get your day started sooner and you'll feel better about it.

Speaker 1 ([48:19](#)):

And you just feel more in control. I've again, this is not for you, Nicole. But for most people looking at their phone causes them to feel negative feelings and it's not serving them. They're either irritated by something they see, or a friend upset them or makes them roll their eyes or it rarely, rarely makes people feel good. Right. Right. So stop doing it stupid. Right. Well, I know I'll feel better when I get up and have my 32nd plank, Don restoring thing, 30 seconds more than that. But yeah, like it, it really works for my brain just to say, this is all I've committed to. I've just got to do it because it allows me to keep my self and integrity to doing that. Um, so therefore it just builds on itself and I can then add harder things. I would like to suggest just because what you just said popped into my mind.

Speaker 1 ([49:10](#)):

Let's come back with another episode. All about integrity, the importance of integrity. I love it. I love it. We'll definitely do that. Thanks so much everybody for joining us, let us know your morning routine. I would love to know what your morning routine is. Um, just go ahead and let us know in the hair of the dog Facebook group, it's a hair of the dog academy.com/s be a group. If you want to join us there. And, um, otherwise we'll see you next week, Heather, and let us know where people can find you. Of course, they can find you in the hair of the dog Academy and as one of our elevate coaches and the hair, the dog elevate program, but where else can they find you? Absolutely. You can find me@flourish.academy on the interwebs. You can follow me on Instagram at flourish Academy. And we also have a pre a free private Facebook group. You can look up the F a community group. Primarily I focus on wedding and portrait photographers, helping them learn their craft and grow their business. Awesome. Thanks so much, Heather. We will talk to you all soon.

Speaker 2 ([50:10](#)):

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