

Welcome back to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today we are kicking off a new year, 2022 with your favorite guest and mine. In today's episode, we are talking all about goals. It's a new year. The slate is blank, and I want you to hit all of those goals. But first we have to figure out what those goals are.

Is it world domination? That's cool. Let's do it. I want to help you achieve complete and total world domination, or maybe it's that six-figure pet photography business. Well, whatever it is, we are here to help you make some plans so that we can start 20, 22 off on the right foot. Stay tuned. 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. Hello Hello, hair of the dog world. Nicole Begley here, back with your favorite guest and mine, Heather Lahtinen from the Flourish Academy.

Also one of our hair of the dog coaches, Heather, Thank you so much for having me, Nicole, what are we covering today? Well, we're coming up to, oh gosh, this is hard. Or coming up to my favorite time of year, but it's not my favorite time of year because weather-wise, it's my least favorite time of year.

Cause I'm 100% at summer girl, but it's my favorite time of year in terms of planning. And that is the new year, giant blank slate of possibilities. That's what I love about it as well. That it's, it's like a reset. It's a fresh start to try something new. And obviously we don't have to wait for a new calendar year to do that,

but it sure is helpful to just have a line essentially that says, okay, time to reset, time to figure out where you're headed. What are you going to do? It's exciting. Yeah. It's so exciting. Yeah. And it's just something I think when you're like, it's like turning a page of this list fresh clean year. And like you said,

you can decide that it's like February 4th and you're like, all right, let's time to make some goals, but I guess it's just so culturally ingrained. It's like January 1st, here we go. We're going to make some new goals. But before we get there, I don't want to put the cart ahead of the horse because a lot of people do. They're like,

man, January 1st let's look forward. Let's make some new goals, but that's actually not where we want to start with our planning. Is it? No, I don't think you can actually. I might even go so far as to say it's a mistake to do that because you can't move forward until you look backwards. Now I am not the type of person to dwell on what didn't work or what,

even what did work. But I just think that you need to close out the previous chapter before you start the new one. You wouldn't just randomly jump around in a book and read chapters. It wouldn't make sense to choose your own adventure book. Oh, You know, I've never read one of those when you were a kid. No, I never read one.

I know shelters, Whether you've read like every book under the sun and you never read those. It's like, if you want to fight the dragon, turn to page 72, if you want to run to the florist, turn to page 57, like I'm definitely fighting the dragon. Yeah. I've never, that sounds really fun, but no, I've not done that.

So that aside, not that type of book, but any other type of book, you wouldn't want to jump around in the chapters. It wouldn't make sense. And I think that because here's why you have to take the lessons and you have to use those and how you are going to approach. So the lessons from the past dictate somewhat how you approach the future,

maybe what worked, what didn't work. What do I want more of? What do I need less of? So you can't just start by saying, okay, let's just race forward. I sort of think you really need to close out the past or look at the past year and just make some sense of it. Yeah, absolutely. So where do we even start?

Are we starting with our wins? I think that's a great place to start because when you are diving into this process, I always want to do it from a, a place of gratitude and positivity. And so you want us, and we do need to look at some things that didn't work of course, but why not start our session by asking ourselves a couple of questions?

Three of those are what went well? What were you really excited about? And what were you proud of in these could be professional or personal. You just want to ask yourself what went really well. What was I excited about and what was I proud of? What did I accomplish? Because it just gets you in a good frame of mind. Yes,

absolutely. And for those of you guys following along and home and we're like, man, it'd be really helpful if I had a worksheet right now that I could like write these answers out on, I got ya. Don't worry. Go to [hair of the dog academy.com/planning](http://hairofthedogacademy.com/planning). And you can go ahead and download this worksheet. It's a couple pages, but it's a hundred percent worth it.

And this work is just so important. I mean, one of the reasons that it's so important to start with the wins and I do this every year when I sit down, I've actually even started kind of tracking my wins because it's harder than you think to sit down at the end of the year and be like, but once did I have last year?

Like, I don't know, like I have all these goals of where I want to be. I'm not there yet. Obviously. So last year was a bus is where are our ego brain takes us as soon as we start to try to think of these wins, but I guarantee you you've had wins big wins, small wins. There are wins. And our brain just is not good at letting us recognize them.

That's exactly right. In fact, you'll ask people what went well last year and they'll be like, nothing, nothing, everything was terrible. I didn't, this didn't happen. I didn't get this done. That's automatic. Your brain will go to that negative space. So in order, and it is very difficult, Nicole, it is very difficult to sit down and say,

where did I win? So difficult that this year I started out by creating a Trello board of monthly wins things that were going well. So that when, when it's a year later, I can look back and go through those and remember with a huge smile on my face and a sense of accomplishment. Oh, I forgot about that. I forgot that.

That was amazing. I'd really did. Now. I will say I kind of fell off the wagon. I started off really strong at the beginning of the year. And as things go on, I don't have as many, but I would, I created these cards in Trello where I would have kind words testimonials from clients. I would just write small wins that I had.

I would write the books that I read, things that I was feeling. And now I can just go look back on that and think, oh my gosh. Yeah. I'm I'm really actually I was very productive and that's, that helps me to feel fulfilled. Like, okay, that's great. I accomplished something and I can, and I have it.

I have it. So I don't, I'm not going to remember from January to January. I don't know about you, but I'm just not going to be able to remember where I was winning last January. Well, yeah, a hundred percent. And you know, like it's so pervasive that I even thought I'm like, gosh, what did I get done this year?

I started a freaking nonprofit, hello, big deal. And my brain immediately, it was like, whatever. It was just another year. Yeah. You can so easily do that. You can downplay in. I, you know, to some degree it's not our fault. It's just the brain automatically goes to the negative. And it's very difficult to remember the positive.

And we also tend to downplay the positive and really focus on the negative. It takes effort. It takes focus to flip that, to say, no, I'm going to focus on the positive and the wins and downplay the negative, which is obviously going to serve you more than the opposite. I love the idea of keeping track of your monthly wins. I think I'm going to start to do that on my favorite writing tool.

My remarkable too, and make myself a little notebook in there, or I can track those types of things. I was tracking it in a way, like I have a, to do a sport. That's like all my projects that I want to be working on. And as I complete it, instead of deleting it, I check it off because I'm not a monster and I have to check it off and then I move it over to a completed side.

So I at least have this list of what I've done. So again, you can look and be like, oh right. I started a nonprofit. I mean, right. That's a pre I forgot. I did that. I forgot I had to file all that paperwork and go through that process. But I did it and you're starting to already generate funds for that nonprofit,

which is amazing. I mean, that's a huge accomplishment. So that's definitely something you, you don't want to forget. I wouldn't read. Or if I gave myself a few minutes, but anyway, just wanted to show how pervasive that is. That's true. So the next thing, so we have our wins, we're going to write out and then we want to ask ourselves,

who did we have to be to accomplish these wins. So tell us a little bit more about that. How do we, how do we figure out who do we need to be? I feel like this is like one of those things where it's like, you know, we hear be, do have that. We need to be the person before we can have the things before we do the things.

But it always seems like this. Like, what the heck do you mean? It's kind of like when you're learning photography and somebody is like, there's magenta and that image like, oh, are you talking about Being able to see that? Well, okay. I agree with you. The first time I learned the be, do have model, which was several years ago,

it was very confusing. Who do I have to be? I don't know if I knew who I had to be. I would already be that person. Yeah. It can be very frustrating. So the reason this question is so important, listen to how this question is phrased. If you look at your wins from the year, the past year, you ask yourself who did you have to be to accomplish those things.

So the best way to understand this model is to look backwards so that you can then apply it for it. So let me give you an example. You finally, you, I know you had been talking for years about this nonprofit.

You finally did everything that you needed to do. Who did you have to be to accomplish that? Well, action takes her abstraction.

Take her. Yeah. And it wasn't even because I hadn't been thinking about it years. It was an idea that popped into my head in February. And I was like, bill, I was an immediate action taker. I'm like, this is so ridiculously aligned. I can't sit on it. So it was who did I have to be? I had to be someone that listened to that alignment feeling and listened to basically Micah and like my gut instinct of like,

oh, this was, this is this isn't good. Download that I just got from like the universe. I need to move on this. And then I had to take immediate action. I love that. So now what you're saying is, okay, in order to achieve things, I have to be the type of person that takes action. That's what you're saying.

The things listening to what's aligned and take action on those things and not taking the action on the things that I know aren't aligned, but I feel like I should take action on That's a different being that person is being yes, exactly. Discerning and wise about their decisions. That person is, is seeking clarity so that they can make those wise decisions. That's the type of person you have to be to achieve those things.

So for anybody who maybe started their business or had a big sale, I would just ask you, who did you have to be? A lot of times it's well, I had to be brave. I had to meet courageous. I had to put myself out there. Okay. If you, if you can identify those words, then we can become more of that person by saying moving forward.

I want to be the type of person who is courageous. Okay. How could I be more courageous in my business? Because that worked for me last year. So when I apply that, moving forward on these new goals, does that help? Yeah, absolutely. So if it's, you know, you're wanting to reach out to a new potential marketing partner for your business and you,

you have these kind of plans, but a lot of us get stuck in our head of, oh, they're gonna say no, I don't even know what to say. Well, who did you have to be to finally do whatever big thing you did last year, whether it was, you know, maybe you started a calendar contest, who did you have to beat our approach to that charity?

Okay. I had to be someone that trusted in myself and someone that, you know, just work through the fear that said, thank you. I understand. But there's nothing to be scared of and did it anyway. And then, Yeah, I love that. That's a really good example. I asked myself, I did a few things in my business in the past year that were different than maybe we are taught.

And so I had to be a risk taker. I had to be brave. I had to be courageous. You had to be a, I mean you more like jumping off a building, let's just like you wanted to start base jumping. Heather had to be a specific type of risk taker. Yeah. Well a wise one. Yeah, of course.

Yeah. We're not talking about anything extreme here, but, and, but you know what? I love what you said, I think, oh my gosh, this is really an important point to note is that you said, trust yourself. I had to trust myself. And I think a lot of people are hesitating to move forward with things in their life or their business because they simply aren't trusting themselves.

So could you just flip that and say, I, I can trust myself. I am the type of person that trusts themselves. I will make good decisions. I will move forward. And if I don't, I will correct my course quickly because I am an action taker. These are all types of being. Yeah. Yeah. That's good. So good.

Moving on. Okay. Well go ahead. Well, I'll go losses for the year, but Heather, we're not supposed to focus on more shortcomings. No. So we're not going to park here. You know, we're not going to stay here, but we do have to understand what didn't work because you, in order to course correct. I actually heard once that there's no such thing as a bad goal,

there's only a bad timeframe. So maybe you just assigned the wrong timeframe because one of the questions I ask myself is what goals fell short. I know. Why is the, is the next part of that question? Go ahead. I also want to put in there of what goals fell short. I think sometimes we get really obsessed with this kind of like vanity metric of like,

I'm going to earn a hundred thousand dollars in my geography business. And then you end up earning 98,642. And did you not make your goal? Like, are you going to say I missed my goal or are you going to be able to look at that and say, man, I played the game of a hundred thousand dollar business owner. I was being that person.

I was taking that action. I was working through fear and that's a success. Yeah, full disclosure. I probably only hit like 15 to 20% of my actual goals because like the goals that I set myself for myself are really, really big. I think I'm actually jumping ahead. Cause I'm I'm I don't make hitting the goal mean like if, you know,

if my goal is a hundred thousand and I hit 98, 642, I don't assign meaning to that. That I've failed. The meaning for my goal is how did I show up to try to reach that goal? Yes. Yeah. So you're doing a, you're

doing a really quick reframe and you know, if I had my way, I would do this exercise with all of our people in a group setting or individually,

because in terms of NLP, neuro-linguistic programming, we're talking about what we make these things mean about us. So this isn't, this is really a two-part question is what goals fell short? What were you disappointed about? What didn't go the way you wanted it to. And then, and then just write those things down. Don't dwell on them and be really careful because the next part on the worksheet says,

what did you make that mean? Does it mean if you said you would make six figures this year and you made 98, does that mean you are a loser or an idiot or stupid, Right? Does it mean that if you hosted a limited edition fundraising session and you only had one client show up that that will never work in your market? Yeah,

no. Maybe it just means you need to change. Some People immediately jumped to that or they put a post out there offering something and nobody replies and they, and that's fine, by the way, if that happens, could you just drop a period at the end of that statement, you posted something, nobody replied period. That's what happened. Those are the facts,

nothing more, everything that comes after that is a story that you've made up. The, usually it is a story that does not serve you. And it's typically coming from your ego, which is saying, see, I told loser, nobody wants what you have. Yeah. Guess what? Guess what back way back. This is like 2011 was my first fall in business.

Cause 2010 I had just had a baby. So it was my first big fall in business. And I was like, I'm going to have mini sessions. Everybody else is having mini sessions up. All you have to do is put up a post and send out an email. Wouldn't do that. Guess how many people booked big fat goose egg, zero.

Like where would I be now? If I was like, oh, see, I'm not cut out for this photography thing. Right? Maybe it was because, oh, I had like a very small like non-existent email list then. And I didn't mark it in any other way. Right? Maybe you look at that. Maybe it was a strategy issue,

Nicole, anything to do with your capability, but you have to be really careful about what you're making your, I'm going to use air quotes here, perceived failure. What you're making it mean? You know, if you tried something and it didn't work. Okay, that's fine. You're just going to try something else. But it doesn't mean you're a loser doesn't mean that you should stop.

It doesn't mean you're cut out for this. Or maybe this is the universe sending me a message. No, that's your ego. Just trying to keep you safe. The truth is what you tried. Didn't work and it's time to try something else. The key here, the key is that these things are not personal. Don't make them personal. Either.

You get the results that you want or the lesson that you need and just be grateful for the lesson. It's just an adventure. It's just, you're learning. And you learned one or 10 or whatever ways that don't work. Yeah. I love that. Making a mistake or having a result. That's not what you hoped is just an opportunity to start again with more information.

Yeah. Because you're never starting from the first point you have moved alone, you have learned something, you have gained some knowledge and some wisdom. So you're not starting. Yeah. People do say that. They're like, I have to start all over. No, you know, you have all this knowledge that you didn't have before. So you're going to start from a place with,

with a better picture, a bigger picture, like you might need to do. So that's actually really good news. Yeah, for sure. All right. So yeah. So we've did our wins. Then we wrote down who we had to be to accomplish those wins. Now we're taking a look at our losses for the year. What we were disappointed about,

what didn't go, the way that we wanted to, what goals fell short, but writing down what they made, what we made that mean. So what stories do we assign to those frustrations? You know, such as I'm not good at marketing, that's never gonna work in my market. Yada, yada, yada. I mean you guys, the amount of times I hear somebody say this won't work in my market.

I want to die. Just Go listen to the podcast episode I had with Tracy monsoon, who doesn't even have a stoplight in her town. I love That. I love I've. I've talked with her extensively and her story is just amazing. There's just, I said to her, you know, nobody has any excuse after they hear your story. They really do not.

Right. Right. And yeah, I just it's. It's so rampant. I'm going to go on a tangent, small tangent for just a minute, because I have so many students that take what they receive from other people or often family members are the worst that are telling them that like, you're insane for trying to charge that much money to take pictures of somebody's dog.

And they immediately take that is, oh, well, gosh, you know, my family wouldn't lie to me, but your family is just trying to protect you because they don't know what's possible. They don't know how this

industry works. They don't know that you can be a full-time pet photographer in a town without a stoplight making multiple thousand dollars a sale.

Right. They, so they don't want to see you get hurt. So that's why they try to keep you protected. They're basically like your ego on steroids. They're, they're your, your ego outside your body that like causes all sorts of like guilt from just like being, you know, being family member with, with these people. But we love them.

They love us. They're just looking out for us. So we need to just be really careful of what we assign those meetings to be as well. And then what happens is that's happened. So that's in the back of our mind and then we go out and we try to do a marketing, something. Maybe we do those mini sessions and you get no one.

And then all of a sudden, then you make that mean, see, I didn't hit my goal there. All right. I shouldn't do this. It's not going to work. Just affirmed it. Yeah. I would say that your family is your ego like manifested in human form because they are trying to keep you. That's a great reframe, Nicole.

They're trying to keep you safe. They're trying to be helpful, but they have zero knowledge. I love, but here's the thing. You, as the individual, you choose how much of that to receive, right? Easier said than done. That takes some practice. How many size? Because we're so influenced. Especially if the person you're talking to has a stronger personality than you.

We're so easily influenced. I work with a lot of women in, sometimes these husbands will say things like nobody's ever going to pay that. Like, that's ridiculous. And, and they'll tell me this and I'll say, okay, well next time, will you just ask him how he knows that? Like where, where did he start a pet photography business?

Is he an entrepreneur? Has he tried to do it? How does he know that? Because they are making that crap up. There is absolutely no basis for that advice. And so, again, who are you choosing to receive advice from when it comes to pet photography and building a business? I am not going to receive advice from anyone who does not have a photography business or some type of business where some type of service that they are offering.

I'm just, I'm not going to let that in because it's only going to hurt me if I, if I choose to accept it. So you have to say it, you know, again. Yeah. I understand easier said than done, but I would come up with some really quick witty comebacks. I love preparing these things ahead of time in my mind.

So I can say like, oh really tell me about your six-figure pet photography business jerk. No. Tell me about your last cup of coffee client that told you they want to pay this. Okay. Where are you getting this information? You're making it up. We make everything up. Literally Nicole, everything is just made up. It's true. It's very true.

Oh, all right. Well, we started to touch on this. The next step is to look at these stories of all we've made these failures mean and rewrite them. So how can we change the stories or meanings that we listed and for each loss, quote, how can we make a new story? How can we be grateful for the experience? What did we learn from the experience and how can that experience allow us to move forward?

Yes, You've already hit on this because when we were saying, when you were talking about your mini sessions and the, you know, you could have easily jumped to the story of, I don't know how to mark it, or I don't know what I'm doing, or nobody wants these photos that can be, somebody may have written that down as a loss or a failure,

but they need to rewrite that to say, no, I just didn't have the right strategy. Or there's something I'm missing that I need to learn. And now I know what doesn't work. So I mean, we've, we've kind of already talked about that, but I think that people might be tempted to skip this. And I encourage you to look on your previous page where you said you listed your losses and you,

you have a story. Everybody has a story. Don't tell me you didn't make up a story, but don't tell me you had this loss and it was fine. And you didn't make it mean anything because I haven't met a person yet that doesn't, I teach this stuff. And I still tell myself stories that Nicole has to catch me on. What are you making that mean?

So it's really important to reframe it, reframe it and re write it in a, again, we're going from the negative to the positive, switching back to the positive. What did I learn? How could I do better next time? Why was this a good thing essentially? Yeah. Ah, that is a great question to ask yourself when anything less than desirable happens in our life.

Because I come from the viewpoint as everything's always working for me, even at the minute at the, at the current moment, it seems like it's not, everything is conspiring in my favor and there's, there's something to learn in every experience. So for instance, when you have like a nightmare client that you're like, oh my gosh, this has been so taxing and trying,

and like, I'm in tears and I just wanted to make this person happy. And there's no way that they're allowing me to do so. Okay. How can you rewrite that story? Instead of saying, I have a client from hell, how can you rewrite that story too? You know, I am grateful for this experience because this has shown me some areas that I need to firm up some policies and I'm going to create this or that,

or this has taught me to not accept when I have a red flag during a consult to listen to that, to listen to my intuition and to do, what's kind of aligned because I've got, I've had a lot of those lessons, Heather, over the past many years where it would be painful. Yeah. Or are, you're just like, you can tell that it's not the right move and this isn't client-related.

This is just like something that you need to kind of try in your business or in your personal life. You're like, I feel like I should do this. I wanted, I, I need to do this, but it's like, you can feel that it's not what you really want or shouldn't be doing. And it, yeah. It's always a lesson for learning.

It's painful. I while you were speaking, I was thinking about a client I had in almost two decades of photographing weddings. I only ever had one, one really challenging client. And I'm very grateful for that. And it, and she was very challenging. And I was asking myself, like, through tears, like, oh, what am I learning here?

What is important? I'm learning to establish boundaries. I'm learning to stand up for myself and stand behind my work. I am firming up some things in my contract. Like all good things came from that and made me stronger and better, but, oh, I wouldn't choose it. I wouldn't wish it on anyone, but you have there's no growth without the pain.

There just, there's no growth in comfort. If everything worked perfectly for you from the beginning, you would never learn a thing. Yeah. I mean, who, who was going to spend a whole bunch of time to be like, oh, I'm going to improve this and improve this when everything's working for you just wouldn't. And don't tell me you would,

because you're lying. You have to struggle. I actually think about this. When it comes to my son, he does really, really well in school. And he's going to be in high school next year. And I think to myself, what is he going to do? When he actually struggles? He does not have a skill set developed to handle struggle.

And it's, it's actually concern. I mean, I'm thrilled that he's doing so well in school, but I keep telling you, it's an important life lesson. Yeah. That you need, you need to experience some struggle where something doesn't make sense to you and you have to learn a way to figure it out. So I'm a, I'm a little nervous for when that lesson is coming,

because it's called me. He's not going to avoid it. At some point, he's going to hit a class. He doesn't understand. So every, every event is happening for you. Yep. I love it. I love it. All right. So now that we've looked back, we figured out what worked, what didn't work. We wrote those stories figured out what to be grateful for from those stories.

Now it's to look ahead, to get clear on where we're going. And Heather, what do you think the biggest mistake is that people make in their goal setting? Oh my gosh. That's a big question. Nicole. Biggest mistake is probably lack of clarity a lot. They don't know who they are and what they want. And more importantly, what they don't want.

Clarity can come from contrast with. Sometimes people will say, well, I'm not sure what I want in this area. And that's totally fair. Could you tell me what you don't want? Because that contrast will give you the clarity to figure out what it is. You do, what you can't aim at nothing. You have to put a pin on the map.

So there are two parts to this, getting clear on where you're going means you have to ask yourself, what do you not want in your business in life? So essentially, sometimes I like to ask myself a different form of this question is what drains me? What do I not look forward to? And is there a way that I can either eliminate that?

Or if I cannot eliminate it, can I minimize it to some degree? What drains me? And then the opposite of that is what gives me energy. So essentially what I'm asking here is what do I not want? And what do I want? And getting clarity on who I am in my business and in my personal life. And then this will ultimately lead to the goals that I set,

you know, the smart goals, like getting really specific, but I eat, you can't jump to that. You can't jump to a specific goal until you determine what you don't want or what you do want. Is there anything in your life, Nicole, that you can think of that you're like, I don't want that anymore, or I want less of that.

Well, I can tell you what I want. More of that was based on what I want less of. And I want more margin on my schedule. Oh, Good one. Because, Because my kids are getting older and they're gonna be gone soon and I don't want them to grow up being like, man, I would love to have my own business,

but nah, my mom worked too much. Right. Where was my mom? Yeah. Yeah. So what you're doing is you're practicing what I call regret minimization framework. Can I live my life? So let me give you a

personal example. My parents live with us and they're in their later seventies and still healthy. Thank goodness. But obviously they're older and I'm very,

very close with my mom. And when she does pass, I will have zero regrets because I spend every day with her every single day, you know? And, and it will be sad, but knowing how important she is to me, it's important for me now to spend time with her. So I need to make time and space for relationship, because I know that it's limited.

You know, like you said, your children will be leaving at some point. And so how can I maximize my time now, but minimize remind regrets later. Yeah. And it it's, it's definitely part of that. And it's also a part of, one of my goals is definitely to be someone that is healthy because it's, it's so easy. I get up in the morning and if I come to my office before I do,

you know, like my little mirror workout and simple Lottie's or you know, now it's too cold to walk in the morning, but you know, if I don't do that, first thing, if I walk into my office game over Same, we're done. I'm locked in to work for the day. And there is nothing else that's going to happen. That is true margin all around.

But I want to go back for a second on I think, yeah, definitely yours. Actually. I'm going to pick up a bit, I'm going to hold onto my other thought for a little bit later, I'm going to piggyback on yours. So people not knowing what they want, because I think that's huge. And how many times do you ask someone?

Well, you probably don't ask somebody very often. What do they actually want in life? It's more like, how are you fine? But if you were to ask somebody, Hey, what do you want in life? There'll be like all taken aback and probably just like stammer. I, and I don't know because most people have not given it any thought because they are so busy doing their job,

taking care of the kids, feeding the dog, doing all these life, things that we're told that we're supposed to be happy doing without actually figuring out what they want to be doing and what makes them happy, what drains them and what gives them energy so important. So if you're sitting there and you're like, oh man, that's me. I don't really know what I want.

Oh my God. It's okay. Take a deep breath. What I recommend you doing Heather? I know your process is very similar. Is sitting down and writing out, like, what are the most important buckets in your life? You know, is it work? Is it financial success? Is it spirituality? Is it family? Is it friends or can lump together as relationships?

Like what are your main buckets? And you know, most of us will have most of those as our buckets. There might be some others as well. So what are those buckets? Write it down. And then you can start kind of taking stock of those buckets. Oh man, that buckets full, all that buckets, pretty darn empty. That bucket has holes in it.

And that can kind of give you an idea of where maybe to focus first and which ones you can look at. Why is this bucket full? Like what part of that bucket is giving me the synergy? Where why does this bucket feel drain? And so that can start to give you some clarity of where you want to figure out what you do want.

I think that's a great place to start. And I think I would even to help make that less overwhelming, I would say start with the top three. And that is relationships, finances, and health. Those are like the top. Yeah. I think there are people often categorize these into seven buckets, but those are the top three. So where are you at with your relationships?

Where are you at with your health and where are you at with your finances? And those things have to be in order for everything else to kind of fall into place or to give you the space, to deal with the other things. Because if your finances are a mess, you know that it's kind of a monkey on your back. You can't stop thinking about it.

It's very distracting. Same thing with your relationships. Where are you at with your most important relationship? Usually that's your marriage or it could be a family member or even a friend. And then I'm telling you, I am telling you straight to your face. Nicole, the health one is so big and so neglected that because not through anybody's fault, it's just the way you said,

this is just the way the world in life is structured is you're just so busy doing all of the things that you just don't have the time to make that a priority. So you come last and the health one is like, if you did one thing, if you set one goal this year, I would encourage it to be around your health, your either your fitness and exercise or your nutrition,

but something to help you become a healthier person. Yeah. Because we don't appreciate it to all of a sudden it's gone. And you know, I'm very, very lucky that it has not been anything major, but like even like spraining my knee, breaking my finger, like, oh man, like those are minor inconveniences in the terms of health issues.

I understand fully. But just those makes me like, man, I am really, really thankful because that can not, that can all change in the blink of an eye. If you don't have your mouth, you can't, you literally can't do anything. So it's really important to focus on your health. So you could say, what do I want more of in my life?

I want more of a healthier lifestyle. What do I want less of, I want less junk or you Still want the Junk. That's why I talk about temptation. We'll talk about temptations. And those three things you mentioned though, like health, wealth and relationships are really, those are our necessity needs. Those are like primary drivers that if those are not met,

then I like the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. You can't focus on like, how, how can I get some pet photography clients in, if you don't have those three things at a baseline level. So true. Your brain has a amazing capacity. I mean, I think is near limitless, but your bandwidth is a little bit different, you know? And you only have so much bandwidth or some might even say that's willpower throughout the day.

And if your brain is busy trying to fix your finances, get you out of debt or your relationships, then how can you possibly have room to think of creative ways to grow your business? I mean, it's just not, it's just not going to happen. You have to get those other things in order first so that you can create the margin, the space,

the bandwidth. And I mean this, I mean this metaphorically, but I, I also mean it literally like just creating the space, like physically to have the time to do what you need to do for yourself, so that you also have the time and capacity to grow your business. But I read once I think it was Donald Miller's that sat at you are only as successful as your most important relationship.

So wherever that relationship is, that's where your success will be. If that relationship needs attention, your brain is constantly working in the background to try to fix it. Cause it knows. Did you ever have like a disagreement with your husband? And you're like, it's just kind of percolating in the back of your mind. Like we just have to get this right.

We have to clear it up, get it right. And you, it's not that you can't do anything else cause you're, you know, you're living, but you're not creating that space because you can't, your brain is like, I have to fix it. I'll have to fix it. I'll have to fix it. So could we get these things in order so that we have the space to create?

Yeah, for sure. And the, to create, we want to start creating our actual goals. So this is where I was going to say that like one of the biggest mistakes, I see people making in goals besides not knowing what they

want and that is playing, like making safe goals, like really just lowering the level of what they're going to go for.

Instead of working from the space of anything is possible at any time and going for the big goals, because the reason that people try to keep those safe goals and they don't want to be disappointed later and then make up those stories that we just talked about. We're looking at last year about the smear, right? So they're just like, well, you know,

business should grow at 10% a year. So I made \$40,000 this year. So next year I should make a goal for \$44,000 right now make it for a hundred. And if you hit 80, even if you'd hit 40, if you showed up and were acting more from a place of a seven figure business, being more of that person, that success.

Right. Right. Exactly. I think you're right. That people don't want to set themselves up for disappointment or rejection because they can't handle it because they're making a story. Okay. I don't know why this popped into my brain, but do you remember in back to the future, George McFly was going to write a book and this is young George McFly and his son,

Marty, who was back in time says, you know, why don't you write the book? And like, I just couldn't handle the rejection. What if nobody likes it? What if nobody likes it? I can't handle that type of disappointment. Okay. Could you reframe that and say, what type of person who do I need to become so that I can handle disappointment?

What I'm labeling is rejection. Even though we could reframe that and say, it's not really rejection, but it still has that same emotional content to it. So I don't want to ignore it because it's a very real feeling and you are going to feel disappointed. So could you just say to yourself, I'm going to set the goal. I'm going to set it really high.

I might be disappointed, but that's okay. It's okay to be disappointed. Like I don't need to avoid it. I don't need to avoid the rejection. Not everyone is going to get me or understand me. Could you just be okay with that? And I think if you do that, if you have that conversation with yourself, what it does is it creates this.

It like releases that emotional tension of I'm trying to avoid it and creates the space so that you can take more risks or be more courageous because you're not trying to avoid it. One other way. You can start to reframe that a little bit too, is how you write your goal. Instead of being the goal is I'm going to write a book or I'm going to get a book accepted by a publisher.

I'm going to reach out to two publishers a week. Good one. And then the success of that goal is dependent on if you an action, if you took it, you can't control the outcome. So it's dependent on your action. And the other thing that has really helped me reframe how I think about like these kinds of bigger stretch goals is from our mentor,

James Wedmore. He likes to say, what type of game are you playing? What game you want to play this year? And that game could be a revenue game. That game could be if you're already in business and you're making what you want to be making, but you're working too much. That game could be, I want to make just as much money and work half as much time.

Ooh, good one There. And the success of these, like, again, it's not like my goal is to make this much money, which I have another thought about that. Standby. But instead, my goal is to play the game of a business owner that runs a six figure business. Right. And so then you can approach that a little bit differently.

And then I did want to touch really quickly on, oh gosh, I just lost it. What was it? Oh yes. Thank you. If you are writing these goals, simply I want to make this amount of money I wanted in it's all dislike. Money-driven there is nothing wrong with money. We just did a six part series on money, But it does not work.

If your end goal is just money for money's sake, the goal, and you need to LL the thing you need to ask yourself about that goal is what will that money give you? Is that freedom? Is it options? Is it security? You know, what is it that you're actually working towards? Because you start to kind of have those little bit of feelings now and take stock of where you are in that realm of things and still have these funny goals.

Like it's always stretching. That's fine, always growing, but I don't want anyone to be in a place where they think, well, as soon as I hit that six figure business, then I'll be happy. Then I'll be able to relax. Then I'll be able to be successful. Then I'll feel worthy. If you don't now you're not going to that money.

Won't change it at all. Just the, the amount of money you think will change. It will change, Right? Th this is actually a really critical point. So I have done this inner work and I've asked myself, what am I seeking? When I say, I want more money. I want more money for me. It's freedom, stability and safety.

I would say mostly safety and freedom, safety, safety. I have this thing about safety. So I once identified that I can ask myself, okay, how can I begin to feel safe now? What, what is working in my life and my business? Where am I safe? Could I already tap into that feeling without needing X number of dollars in the bank or certain revenue goals to be hit?

Where am I experiencing freedom already? Where do I have freedom? Or where could I get more freedom before that money even comes in? So what we're doing here is identifying the core value that we are seeking. And if you can say, well, I want six figures. I want this amount of money because I want to feel what or I'm thinking.

It will give me what will that give you and drill down really deep until you hit the core value, and then ask yourself a couple of layers. You might have to say in what will that do? And then what will that do until you get to the core value and then ask yourself, how can I tap into that now? Because you can,

you can, without waiting for that money and then maybe tapping into that way of being now is actually what will get you that money Backwards. Right? Right. So, yeah, this actually is a great segue to talk about those smart goals. And you had kind of a way to help ourselves with temptation because health is on my list, but I got,

I'm not going to lie. I have a real hard time going past crumble cookie and not stopping in to see what the flavors of the week are coming home with. Yeah. I love this. So smart goals are really important. A smart goal when it comes to health or let's use losing weight as an example, because it's very common and you say,

I want to lose 10 pounds by January 31st. And that's a smart goal. It's specific. I want to lose 10 pounds. It's just measurable. It's actionable, it's realistic. And it's time bound, right? That fits all of those. It checks all of those boxes. And that's great. That's great. Until you walk by the cookie place, you are super stressed out or exhausted,

and you think, you know, what would make this all better? Coffee, pot, cookies, ice cream that would make this all better. So that structure actually, this is a recent epiphany epiphany for me. Nicole is I thought that structure is great, but it's not helping me with the temptation. If you know, who do I need to be to be healthier?

Well, I definitely need to be disciplined when it comes to like exercise or whatever. I need to be the type of person that makes good choices when it comes to nutrition. So the key here is you need to identify as

a person with a healthy mindset. So who you want to be. So you take this smart goal, right? I want to lose 10 pounds by January 31st,

you say, who would I need to be? I need to be a healthy person. I need to identify as a healthy person, which includes discipline, et cetera. Then when you are faced with a temptation or a choice, you're outside of the cookie store, you're looking in the cookies are amazing. You ask yourself this question, this is key.

You should write it down. You ask yourself what would a healthy person do? Okay. Now you ask yourself, what would a healthy person do here? What would a person who is disciplined? Do what would a person who takes care of themselves? What would that person do right now? Well, that person, you can answer the question pretty easily.

That person would rock away or find a different, and either not eat anything or find a different snack. If they are And buy one cookie and split it with your family for a quarter of the cookie. That's true. That's true. And listen, sometimes you need to say the heck with it. Yeah. This is all about, this is not probation.

It's just the bus switch. You know, Sometimes I say to heck with it, It's not a, not a big deal, but when you're like checking the crumble app every week to see what the cookies are, that's a problem. That could be an issue. So Don't ask me how I know anyway. Yeah. What I learned from this epiphany was in addition to my smart goals,

what I am now doing is writing down key words of the type of person I want to be. This is really critical to this process. I say things like, who do you want to be? What do you want to be known as well? I want to, in my business, I want to be courageous. I want to be an action taker with my finances.

I want to be a financial wizard. I want to make good decisions in relationships. I want to be kind. I want to be forgiving. I want to be the type of person that shows grace. Now watch how this plays out in a relationship. You have a disagreement with someone you really care about, and you're tempted to defend yourself, or maybe snap back with something.

If you have written down on your lists, I want to be a kind thoughtful person. You could ask yourself, what would a kind person do here? What would a, what would a person who extends grace? What would they do here? What would a forgiving person do here? And it's just, it gives you space to pause and think before an action is taken,

that doesn't serve you like buying the cookie or snapping back at someone that you love. It just, it gives you that pause. What would a healthy person do here? What would a person who takes care of themselves? Do what would a kind person do? What would a courageous person do? What would a brave person do? But you have to list these words,

the words that are important to you. I think that this is my new way of setting goals. That it's like, I have my smart goals and they're, you know, very formulaic and that's great, but they just weren't helping me in areas of temptation. Right? Exactly. Or like in, in any situation, like it wasn't helping me in situations.

I wouldn't have it for mine. That's like, all right, I want to meditate every day, you know? And you, it comes up and comes into your brain. Like I lose her. You didn't do it today. I don't know. Maybe that's just what my ego says to me. And then you can ask yourself, all right, what would someone who's committed to the Stu,

that's it? You know? And, and so like when those stories pop up, you can just kind of counter it with all right. And then maybe it's, I can't do it right now, but I'm recommitting to do it at four o'clock today. You know? And again, we've talked about this before. Maybe it's just like, I don't have time for a full workout today.

I'm committing to my 30 seconds of low forearm plank. Right? Certainly you could find 30 seconds and then you're still being that person. Even if you can't do that full amount that day It's at you're staying in integrity. So one of the key phrases I love to use is almost a blanket that covers a lot of things is what would a person who takes care of themselves do in this situation?

Because it can apply to a lot of different things. What would a person who takes care of themselves? Now, the reason, the reason I think this is important is because I don't believe that smart goals give us a strategy for dealing with temptations or, or like if we slip back into old habits, let's say, so this, this way of being means that you have to first identify,

just list some words, list, some words of the type of person you want to be, and then ask you, write those questions, post them on. I put post-its all over my house to remind myself what would a healthy person do here? Another blanket one I love to use is what would my future self thank me for? Because The thing is eating the cookies right now does not do anything except give us immense pleasure.

Immediate, Immediate. It's very difficult to avoid that by thinking about the future implications of what that could mean the impact on our health. So, you know, what would a healthy person do? What would

my future self thank me? Would my future self be glad that I gained five pounds and I can't fit in my jeans or the opposite? Of course the opposite.

Right? So that means I have to think I'm crazy again. I'm, I'm just, I'm watching out for automatic behaviors that don't serve me and I'm pausing and giving myself space just even a minute to think that does not please don't mishear me. That doesn't mean I'm always making the best decision. I am sometimes eating. Sometimes you are making the decision of like,

no, it's okay. I'm having the cookie, right? Yeah. It's okay. Then I'm not getting loud and you're not going to kill yourself. Like, why don't you eat the cookie? No. You made a decision that today you were going to enjoy the cookie and enjoy the cookie. Yeah. Because you, you don't want to enjoy the cookie with this.

Like low-level misery in the back of your mind, about how much you think you failed yourself. Right. Right. And this, I think that segues really well into our final question, which is what you need to let go to accomplish this, to accomplish this, which, you know, in terms of like losing 10 pounds, do you need to let go of that?

Self-talk every time you look at yourself in the mirror, before you get in the shower, like that's something we should probably let go of if it's not kind. Right, right. It's not certain, that's actually a really good point. I read the book, the high five habit by Mel Robbins, which I highly recommend. And she, the premise is that you give yourself a high five in the mirror when you see yourself.

Because when you look in the mirror, you oftentimes pick apart the things that you don't like. And so you have to let go of that because the truth is maybe, maybe the goal is not 10 pounds. Maybe it's just, I want to be healthier and I want to be more disciplined. And I want to be the type of person that takes care of themselves.

And then possibly, maybe, maybe not, the unresolved is losing 10 pounds. Right. I take care of myself. I exercise. I eat well. And I have pretty much stopped with the scale because I was gaining weight. And everybody's like, it's mostly it's muscle. Well, you still don't want to see that number go up. Right. So I just,

you know, my clothes fit well, I am most likely inside of my weight window. I have like a window. Yep. I feel good. So the goal is to be a healthier person. And if weight loss happens as a result of that, so be it. So what do you need to let go of? Maybe you need to even let go of that number.

Yeah. More in terms of a photography business, what are some things that people might need to let go of in terms of their photography business? I think expectations of what they think it should look like or comparing themselves to what everybody else's business looks like and define for themselves, what success would look like for them. I would argue the biggest thing most people need to let go of is this comparison trap they fallen into about where everybody else is.

Oh, that I I'm actually working on a training right now because people will often say that they're behind on something. I feel so behind. And my response to that is, okay, what's your gauge? What is the metric you are using to determine that you are behind? So like for instance, if you think of a gas gauge in your car,

it's either, you know, four empty or somewhere in between. And you know, at which point you need to refuel. But when you say you're behind on your photography business, according to Yeah. One, one is the deadline for your photography business to be open or Yeah. And by the way, there might be a gauge and that's possible, but you made it up,

right. You made it up and then you compared yourself to everybody else. And you made a determination because that person has more clients than you, that you are behind. And then you, you slated yourself into this imaginary metric so that you it's like, we're always looking outside of ourselves to determine whether we're ahead or behind and worthy. Right. Could you just maybe let go.

And I foresee a future episode on this whole metric gauge thing because yeah. I'm working on it behind the scenes because I think that people are just making it up and then they're making up a reason to feel badly about themselves, which is doesn't serve them. So let go of the metric, let go of this be ahead or behind business. If there's no place And letting go of the comparison to somebody that's been doing this for five years when you've been doing it for five weeks,

I see that a lot. And also people make comparisons based on what people post on social media like, oh, this person is doing mini sessions. They're obviously going to fill them all up. They could be like me and get nobody. I certainly didn't put that on my social media afterwards. Like, Hey, guess what nobody got, please. It's true.

It's just, we, we are getting to hide. We're letting our attention focus on things that are outside of our control and outside of us and have no bearing on us and our business. And we need to just, we need to let go of that. We need to let go. We need to let go of these strange expectations that we've assigned to ourselves that are completely fabricated and made up.

We're just making it up so that we can make sense of where we're at. It's okay to set goals and it's okay to miss those goals and maybe hit them. And yeah, you can say, oh, I was aiming for this and I'm not where I wanted to be. So I'm behind. Well, I don't know. That's kind of a label and then labeling,

usually doesn't serve you because you're always labeling usually in the negative, like, okay. So if you, if you in fact have this gauge or this metric and you say you're behind, alright, fair does is behind good or bad. Right. Right. I mean, I can keep going, Nicole. We can keep going deeper and deeper. Like,

well you, so now you say you're behind and you're assuming that behind is bad, but what if you're exactly where you need to be? And it's good. And it's protecting you from something that you're avoiding that could have happened in the future that you weren't ready for. And what if, because you're behind, you've taken a little bit more time to build a little bit more base of your business now.

So when you actually start bringing the clients in, you would then leap frog in front of the people that are ahead of you right now. Right? Exactly. And I love him. Photographers say, well, I follow this one photographer. And she's so successful. And I say, how do you know if you seen her profit loss statements? Right,

Right. You, I mean, you know, her bank account, you've logged into her bank account and you know, what's coming in and what's going out. No, you see you're posting pretty photos and it looks like she's busy. Okay, great. That's fine. But you don't know that that's success. That person might not be making, they might be making money.

They might not. We just don't know. They might be miserable. They might be thrilled. Who cares? It doesn't even have any bearing on you at all. Ooh, man, this was good. Heather, are you guys ready to plan for your new year? Like in a whole new kind of way, don't forget. Go to [www.hairofthedogacademy.com/plan](http://www.hairofthedogacademy.com/plan) and download your worksheet and go through these.

I mean, I would love Heather to find out more details about like what people's plans are. You guys share your goals with us? Because the only thing that makes me happier than like looking at priceless numbers and a color-coded spreadsheet is seeing what your goals are like. I love getting in on a, you know, what you guys are working on. So please let us know Who you are,

who you want to be, who you're going to be. It's very important. You can do you have me on Instagram at hair or the dog academy? You can DM Heather at flourish academy. You can also join us in our new

pet photography community out there on the interwebs. We've moved off of Facebook. And if you just go to [hairofthedogacademy.com/community](http://hairofthedogacademy.com/community),

it'll take you right there. We do a future episode on taking risks, bold, courageous action in your business. Wouldn't that be a good thing to talk about? I think so. Yeah. Yeah. All right. Well market we'll plan it. Yup. It'll happen. All right, everybody. Thank you again for being here with us, Heather and I love doing these episodes for you and we are so excited to help you make this year,

your best year yet. We'll see you next week. If you enjoy this podcast episode, go ahead and take a Screenshot of this episode on your phone and posted up there on your Instagram stories and be sure to tag us at hair of the dog academy. And we would just love to see how you're listening and a full disclosure. Sometimes we just like to give away a little pet photographer,

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