

In today's podcast episode, Heather Lahtinn is back and we are talking about adventures and split pea soup and how that can help you receive feedback in your life. So stay tuned. Welcome to The Hair of the Dog podcast. If you are 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. Hey everybody. Welcome to the Hair of the Dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today we are back, the queen of the soups, HeatherLahtinen is joining us. Maybe not the queen of her soups because well, she just likes to taste soup.

Not really bake soup because Do you bake soup? No. You make soup. See, we do not. This is not a cooking podcast everyone. Not At all. Hold your Horses. There's no cooking happening here. We do like to talk about food. We're gonna talk about food today, but not how to cook it. Heather, welcome back.

Thank you so much for having me. When this event occurred that I'm about to describe, I could not wait to talk to you about it, but as I was telling you this via Voxer, I was like, listen, we need to make this a podcast because there are so many lessons. And by the way, this is the way just my brain operates in general.

When I am living my life out in the wild, if you will, or reading books that are not even business related, I am always drawing parallels. I'm like, oh, this is a good lesson. This will be great for the podcast or for Elevate. It's just like the way my BR brain works, it, it's able to draw a parallel for a lesson in business from almost anything truly Including the great split piece soup incident of 2023.

Oh my gosh. Okay, so let me tee this up. We have a soup cookoff fundraiser at our church every year to raise money for our missions team. And the way it works is people bring their crockpots, we line them up, there are little lunch bags in front of each soup has the name of the soup. There are little bowls everywhere.

You taste the soup and you vote with your dollars. So you put money in the lunch bag to vote for your favorite soup. They then count up and whoever soup raised the most money wins the very coveted silver ladle. Oh Yes, you win an award. I will never win the silver ladle, just FYI, unless I can buy really good store-bought soup and pass it off as my own,

Which I suppose you could. It's a, it's a fundraiser. Who cares. One year my mom won it and one year I won for the baked category. So there's, there's baked goods as well. Oh, All right. Well I might be in on that. Yeah, I could. Okay. Okay, so there's two winners. One for the soups,

one in baked goods. Do they get a a silver spatula? It's a ladle. I know, but for the baked goods people. Oh yeah, I think it is actually, I, I heard, it's funny, I won it one year. What did I get? I guess I have a picture of that somewhere. Anyway, we do this every year.

It's a lot of fun. It raises anywhere between like, maybe two and \$3,000 to \$5,000 or more for this mission's trip. So it's a lot of fun. And when people are donating money to the soups, usually if you looked in a bag, what you would

see is like \$1 bills, \$5 bills. Some people will put a 20 every once in a while, a 50. Some people write checks and put in their soup. But like that, this is the level we're talking about here. Okay. So this year, this is just a couple of weeks ago, my friend made her split pea soup. She's an excellent cook by the way. And so I told her in church, we were sitting in church.

The soup Cookoff was after the service. I said to her like, I was kind of smug, I must admit. I said, you're gonna win the soup Cookoff today. And she's like, I am. And I'm like, yes, because I'm about to write a big fat check to donate to the, the mission. 'cause my dad goes on these mission trips.

So it like, it like helps him to go, okay, so I'm gonna donate. I'm gonna write a check. I'm gonna put it in your soup and it's for a thousand dollars. I'm gonna write a check for a thousand dollars for your soup. You're going to win. 'cause nobody's, nobody's else is gonna do that. Like it's, it was like fun for me,

you know? It's fun to be generous. It's actually, it's fun to make money. So you can be generous like this. But I'm like, you're gonna win. We're like best friends. Okay, great. Alright. So we go into the fellowship hall, we get the soup. I'm trying all these soups and I get her soup and oh my gosh,

Nicole, it was absolutely inedible. It was awful, terrible. Something was wrong. Like, I don't know what happened if she didn't understand salt, pepper, onions. I don't know. It was just terrible. So I'm sitting at the table with my mom and my daughter and I said, oh my gosh, you have to try this soup. Like,

am I just out of my mind? And they tried it and they're like, oh gosh, something is wrong with this soup. I looked at Ella and I said, what in the world am I going to do? I just told her she was gonna win the soup. Cookoff, I don't think I can vote for this soup. Ethical dilemma. Enter stage,

right? Here we go. So what do you do in this situation? Let me ask you, you're in this situation. You, you know, gave your word to someone, but I'd be freaking out right now because a, I hate confrontation. So I do not wanna go to her and be like, Hey, your soup's terrible. I'm, I,

I can't vote for it. I want you to win. But I just can't, like, that conversation feels so uncomfortable to me that I would be like, I'd probably feign that I got food poisoning from some of the soup and have to just go, you Just like Disappear. And then I would just write a check to the mission later. You would exit stage left.

Yes, I sure would. And that would be it. So ironically, Ella is taking an ethics class in college right now. And she says, well mom, what's more important to you? You know, the truth or what you said you were going to do? Oh. And it was like, wow. I dunno, this is, I can't,

I cannot in good conscience vote for her soup. If it wins, everybody's gonna know. Something was weird because if they tasted it, it's awful. So I said, I don't know what I'm, I have to tell her, how can I, no. My gosh, this is terrible. At this exact moment, my friend walks behind me and she says,

how is the suit? And I said, Nicole, I just did not give myself the luxury of thinking no time to think. Yeah, I had to react. And I said, bro, this soup is terrible. I, I mean, I have never actually tasted something so awful. It's actually inedible. I can't eat it. There's no way I can vote for it.

I can't put my check in your soup. Everybody's gonna know. And I'm just like, spouting off all this stuff and she's looking at me. Okay, first of all, how would you react to that? Well, it depends how, how tied I was to how important having good soup was to me. What if I, what if it were your photos?

Oh, I mean that would, yeah. And I said to you, that would hurt. Like what if you were super proud of a set of photos? Oh, and I said to you, those are the ugliest photos I've ever seen in my life. Oh Yeah. That would not feel good. No, it would feel awful because Even if they weren't this my like,

best, best photos, but they were good photos, you know, like normal photos. And you said that like, yeah, that would hurt. That would hurt. Okay. I will admit that my reaction was very strong. I was just caught so off guard and I just could not, like I have no poker face. It turns out I can't lie.

I cannot lie. Well, and you also did not come at it from a, I imagine from you it was more like a joking Heather. Yes, yes. I was like, dude, this was not good. What happened? I said, what happened? This is not like you, 'cause she actually is a really good cook. Yeah. She's,

she's holding her bowl of soup and she's like eating, I don't think it was hers. I think she was tasting something else. And she looks me square in the eye and she says, yeah, I know. Isn't that the craziest thing? And she shrugs her shoulders and we literally start talking about something else. She did not even flinch nor care at the way I attacked her soup.

I find this to be utterly fascinating. Side note, I ended up voting for the crab or lobster? Lobster bisque. Oh, yum. And it was delicious. And I, and it's all a secret. Like nobody knows who made anything. You know, it's like, ooh, hush hush. But I found out that one of my other friends had made the lobster bisque.

And I said, I'm voting for your soup. It was amazing. Truly the best I tasted, can I have the recipe? And he was like, hesitating. And his wife was like hesitating on giving out the recipe. And I said, yo, I just paid a thousand dollars for that recipe. Give me the recipe. I want the recipe for the soup right now.

You're like, also, I will never be entering a soup into this. So it's fine. There's no competition next year. I'm not trying To be, I just wanna eat your soup. You know what the funny thing is, as of this recording tonight, my mom is actually making that soup for dinner. That's so funny. Oh, sounds Delicious.

So, okay. That was all good. Anyway, so this happened in front of my mom and my daughter. Now my mom is the opposite of Amy. My mom is extraordinarily sensitive. If you taste her soup and you make a face, she's convinced that you hate her soup. You hate her soul. You don't want anything to do with her ever again.

Even if you tasted the soup and you thought it was amazing, but you had to

sneeze, so you made like the pre sneeze face, she'd be like, oh, what does that mean? That you nailed it? That's exactly what she would do. You hate my soup, you hate me, you hate everything. So I look at my mom and I say to her,

isn't that interesting? She did not, my friend did not take that personally at all. And my mom was laughing 'cause she knew what I was getting at here, which is like, I would never say something like that to my mom. But here's the thing, this is a very good friend of mine. I, I would consider her one of my best friends because I know this about her.

I'm willing to say anything. Yeah. I am willing to tell her the truth about anything and everything, even if it's maybe painful. And because of that, we have an incredibly connected relationship and she's open to learning and growing. Okay, I'm drawing a parallel here to critique of photos. What if you were open and completely clean and clear of personalization when receiving feedback about your photos?

And also, by the way, if you were seeking feedback, feedback from myself or Heather, we would not be as brash as Heather might've given that feedback for. Yes, it would definitely be in a critique sandwich. A critique sandwich. And we would tell you that yeah, there are good, there was nothing good about that soup. I, I gotta be honest,

there was, I could tell there's Vegetables in it, there was bacon in it, which is delicious. But she had failed to pressure cook the peas enough. So they were hard split peas. If you've ever purchased split peas like in a bag in the store, they're very, very hard. You have to like cook them a long, long, like dried beans.

You have to cook them a long time. Yeah. She just didn't cook it long enough. And I think she forgot an onion, salt and pepper and any other spice imaginable. But okay, I thought about, I thought my mind actually exploded. We went home and I couldn't stop talking about this. I've Oxford you, I was talking to my daughter and I said,

what would it look like if for me, if I were so open to feedback that people like you in my close inner circle, or even my clients truly felt comfortable telling me anything like that. If you felt that way because I was just like so easy and relaxed about it, I bet you I would be much further along than where I am that my growth would just be exponential because I could receive it without taking it personally.

So this is one of the cognitive distortions, which is how we look at things in, in a distorted view, is personalization. We take everything personally as if our worth is somehow intrinsically tied to our images. We do. But I just, I just wonder, I just wanna plant a seed here. What would it look like if you could detach from that and just be open to receiving for the sake of growth?

Yes. Along with that, maybe we can dive a little bit into how did determine what feedback to accept and what feedback just rolls off your back. For instance, we were testing a couple things with the Facebook ads and you know, the trolls love to come out for the Facebook ads. So, you know, there are many comments of, you know,

this photographer, she's terrible, this or that, blah blah, blah. No one should be charging. I hope she's not charging for this. And that mean, meanwhile, I have so many incredible comments from people that have gone through the course that absolutely love it. So like I already had that bank of positive feedback from it, so it was easy for me to be like,

okay, watch, delete. It's always like random men. Yes. Why? Like, just move on. I think we just need to exclude men from my Facebook ads. Sorry guys. Yes. Any of you that are already listening here, we love you. Thank you. But you know, relax Anyway, don't take it personally. The general Joe Schmo literally on the internet.

Oh my God. So then it becomes a little bit easier to, to do that when you have that already positive bank of feedback. But maybe I didn't like, let's fast forward and if I didn't have like all this plethora of experience of students going through and knowing that this this course helps them and works for them, and I would just see those,

that would be a hard pill to swallow, even though it's random people from the internet. So there's a couple pieces to this. Like, do you have, like, how can you build up enough, I guess, positive reserves for certain things without just looking for people that are just here to validate you? Like, and, and then you, when you are looking for just that validation,

you might not actually look at truly constructive feedback because you're just, you're just willing to accept things that are already in line with what you wanna perceive, Right? You're seeking that validation so you're not actually, see, so I would start at the beginning question your true motives when you're seeking critique or feedback. Is it because you, you wanna pat on the back so that you feel validated and good about yourself?

Or is it because you truly wanna learn and grow and be honest with yourself? It doesn't behoove anyone for you to lie to yourself about what you're seeking. Every single photographer is gonna say, oh, it's because I wanna learn and grow. I don't believe you. Because if that were the case then I don't think you would take it as personally. But have you ever offered a critique to someone?

And I know you do it in a very kind manner who then like, makes excuses or tries to deny like, oh well, yes. Oh yeah, that's frustrating. Yeah. Where it's, and it's not even like, it's not, you did this wrong, it's literally just a, Hey, next time you might wanna consider X, y, z,

or this is what you can do to improve this over here, blah, blah, blah. And then it's a litany of excuses of why they couldn't do it that way then, and this and that. It's like, I'm, I'm not here asking why you didn't do it this way. I'm just giving you some feedback for next time so you have more information.

Yeah, that's, that's, it's really frustrating. Mostly because I really want that person to, to internalize those comments, to improve. And when you are looking for just that validation and you won't even like, like you can't take what somebody else says and like ask yourself, oh, does the supply here, oh, could that actually improve this? If you can't ask yourself those questions,

then you shouldn't be seeking feedback. And if you find yourself getting

defensive, that's a clue that you are attached personally to what you're about to receive. And listen, no judgment, don't, don't use this against yourself. Like we all do it. That's totally fine. We just want you to be aware of what's happening in your brain so that you can get the most from the feedback in order to improve.

But I will tell you, this is maybe six months or so ago, my coach helped me with this. I have a, a process For How to deal with feedback that is, you know, I'm an engineer and I like things, just give me, give me the equation, Nicole. If you just tell me the equation I will solve for X in action,

Girl agrees with this. So I received feedback from a call I had done publicly, not in one of my groups. And I got this email and I read it and I took it to my coach and she was, she gave me this like, sort of like a decision matrix, like to follow, okay. The first que first of of all try to detach the as best you can from,

you know, whatever was said. But she said the first thing she does is ask herself is how can this be useful to me to improve? Is this useful? Is there anything here I need to learn? What do I need to learn here? And if you can find the learning component, then you receive it, the feedback, you apply it and you get better.

Okay. So it's either like, I'm gonna receive, apply, get better, but the first question is, is there something here I can use? And you Okay? But if you ask yourself that question, is this relevant? Is there some, is this something I can use? And the answer is just no. Then you just drop it. You just,

that's when you choose not to receive the feedback. This happens on your Facebook ads with, with the gentleman. You know that you're saying like you just, you choose not to receive it because you saw no merit in the feedback. Where if somebody had said to you, I, I don't know, I don't have a good example, but like, you know,

that gave you something constructive that you're like, oh actually, good point. And that you can improve something. This is the same with my YouTube channel. Yeah. I get comments all the time and some of them are like, Hey, it would be better if you did this. You, I tend to get defensive, which tells me, I know I'm taking it personally,

but then I ask myself, is there something here I can use? If the answer is yes, I'm gonna set aside my stupid fragile ego and I'm going to receive it and implement. But if the answer is no, for instance, someone on YouTube became incredibly offended that I programmed the shift key into my walk home tablet. Oh my God, Heather,

yes. The world, the state of the world is not better because of you. And it's gotten much worse due to your ear responsible walk programming. Yes. I mean they were, I can't remember the point, but like, it, it was essentially, you're an idiot. That's a stupid thing to do. And I was like, okay. The,

and by the way, in the training, the reason I do that is because when you wanna make a brush bigger or smaller Yeah. You, I use the touch ring and I programmed the key above it to shift so that I could change the hardness or softness of the

edge just right on my walk home without having to, right. Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. It's just a like convenience thing. Yeah. I actually do know that shift works on my keyboard. Like I get it. Yeah. I didn't, right. So in that case, there's nothing for me to do with that feedback. So it's the decision point at the top of the matrix, if you will, is like, is there something here for me to receive?

No, drop it, move on. Just like your Facebook comments. Yep. I think there's another question you could ask yourself too. And that is, is the, the person that is giving this feedback to me, someone whose opinion I value. Hmm. Or someone that, you know, whose relationship opinion I value or is someone that is where I wanna be.

You know, 'cause there's a lot of people that are gonna give you feedback on your pricing that have no freaking idea how to run a photography business. And they're people that you probably care about, such as, I don't know, your spouse, your family, your parents, your friends. But that feedback is not going to serve you because they are not where you want to be.

I love that because you, you have to decide, like, especially when it comes to a stranger on the internet. Oh Yeah. Obviously. I mean even, but I think it's harder when it's someone that you have a relationship with that you do value their opinion. And if they were gonna give you feedback of, you know, hey, how you acted at the,

you know, by putting your a thousand dollars in with the terrible soup, I'm kind of disappointed in you. You know? Okay. That is something that maybe you would want to, to take into account. But if they're just like, oh no, you charge way too much for coaching. Like, okay, yeah, thank you. No, No,

thank you. This does become difficult when it's someone close to you. We have a member in Elevate who also coaches with me, one-on-one who, her spouse overheard me teaching on a training once I, by the way, I hear from spouses all the time, I don't know, good or bad, I don't care. Anyway, he said to her,

I said something about charging \$5,000 and he thought that was just like over the top, like, that is a crazy amount of money. And he said to her, don't think you're ever gonna get that. Now he didn't. That sounds cruel, but I don't, he didn't say it like that. It was just like, no, It's, well,

and that usually comes from people trying to protect their loved one. That's it. Because they don't want them to be disappointed. Yeah. He didn't say he, he did not say it like in a mean way. He was just like, don't get your hopes up that that's not gonna happen for you in our area. Whatever, you know? Yeah,

right. Shortly thereafter, she had a \$6,000 sale. So sometimes you just need to like push through, you know, even though she obviously clearly respects his opinion. It was, it was just like, I still choose not to receive that, even if it's from someone whose opinion I value. Right. Because it doesn't serve me. I guess that's another part of the equation,

right? Is like, does this serve me to, to receive this feedback about my pricing or my images? And if you, but here's the thing, if you're tied up emotionally

because you're making this personal connection to it, you're never going to be able to see clearly. Yeah, No, a hundred percent. So you have to be able to say like,

okay, this does not reflect my worth. Whether they love the photo or hate the photo, Or you take it to a coach that you trust that can help you see if it is worth taking or not. Yes, exactly. Yeah. So yeah, find some trusted advisors. Who are you gonna listen to and ultimately recognize that you can decide for yourself what's appropriate for you.

Like I was telling my friend Susie this story, and she said, what if you said that to her? And she was like, what are you talking about? It's delicious. See, it was kind of easy because she agreed with me. Yeah, Right. She knew that it was not her. She knew it wasn't any good, but what,

and I said, oh my gosh, that's such a good question. I, I mean it wouldn't, it, that would not invalidate my taste buds. I didn't think the soup was good. Actually, I am a huge fan of split Pea soup. My mom makes it, it is one of my favorite soups. I make it with grilled cheese.

It's delicious. So I know what a good split pea soup tastes like, and that was definitely not it. And I, I'm entitled to like my thoughts and feelings around the soup and so is she. But she took none of it personally. And I just aspire to be like that. Like some, I aspire to be the type of person who,

number one can honestly give that type of feedback, but also receive it And admit sometimes when, you know, maybe, oh yeah, no, I I I dropped the ball on that one. Yeah. Like, and there's no judgment. You're not gonna think worse of her or less of her because not at all if she dropped the ball on making her soup.

You know, it's just these things happen. 'cause they're human. She's a great cook. She's got six kids, she's a little busy. Good Lord. Yeah. I mean, so I mean, I would, I would definitely be buying the store-bought soup. I had six kids, actually. I would, yeah. I don't, I don't know what would happen.

She's Distracted and so, you know, like some grace goes a long way. But, and we actually haven't spoke of it since. It did not impact her in the, I promise you my mom would've lost sleep over that. Yeah. Worried about, you know, I Would've lost sleep over that years ago. Or, you know, depending. Yeah.

There would've been a time that I would just ruminate on. So Ruminant like that. Ruminant. Yeah. And also, it's important to note that she made this for a large crowd of people. Yeah. So there are a lot of people. Okay. It is, it is secret. You don't know who made what soup, but it kind of got out because there's,

you know, little side note to the story. This is the pastor's wife. So she's my best friend. Okay. Her name's Amy. She's, I'm not afraid to say her name because she would think this is a great story. She'd be like, yeah, I know. The soup was terrible. And she just totally received it. And she,

she has like toughened me up that way. So one time I wore a maxi dress to church and I sit in front of her and she said to me something like, that dress is not flattering on you. It looks like you have no butt in that dress. It just doesn't

work for you. And I was like, okay, thank, I don't take it personally.

Okay. Because I know I have a rear end. I know it exists and I love the dress. So I decided like, okay, thank you. You, I'm still gonna wear the dress. 'cause it's pretty, so you see how easy that is? Oh yeah. This happened actually when you, we were in Hawaii, we were there with our really good friends.

And I have this like little skirt. It's like a brownish, like an army green kind of color, but it has pockets on the side. It's like elastic waist. It's got at, at target. Years ago, I freaking love this skirt and I just wear it with like a sun shirt when we go to the beach. And anyway, I stayed with my friend,

she's like, God, that skirt, I hate that skirt. Oh my gosh. And then I was like, oh, I love it. And then we're literally waiting in line to pay. Same day, maybe the next day. It was within 24 hours her waiting in line to pay an unprompted, some random lady. She's like, I love your skirt.

I just turn to my friend and be like, she loves my skirt. That's Fantastic. I love how she just said, I hate your skirt. She's like, you know, it's just like we're we're very blunt sometimes, but know you Didn't think it personally, did you? No, No. I thought it was hysterical. Yeah. Like, good thing,

you know, it's like, good thing you don't have to wear it, but yeah. You know, I love my skirt. So See It's just light and fun to be friends with you and to be friends with Amy, because I never have to worry. I, you know, the, when you're, you have a friend that's really sensitive and you feel like you're walking on eggshells,

like, I can't say anything. Like that's no fun. Like, and if, if you are one of these people that's very sensitive, I respect that about you. So am I, but just, could you maybe start to separate your worth as a human from Other people's opinions? Yes. Yeah. Yes. That it truly doesn't matter unless you decide it matters.

Like if you want to care about someone's opinion and improve, then great. But if you don't wish to receive it, then you get to make that choice. Like, like take the agency that you have over your thoughts and decide if I want to receive this feedback in order to grow and learn and get better, or, I loved this image, my client loved this image,

I'm gonna move on. Yeah. But worrying about what other photographers are thinking or saying about your work, I, I just believe is possibly a waste of your brain power. Yep. That's All. So, and if I had, if I had a goal, a lifetime ambition to be a fashionista, I might have, you know, taken that to right.

A little bit more personally about my skirt, but I don't, so you'll see me in it probably next summer when we go on the boat. Because you wear it. I don't, I don't buy new things very often for that kind of stuff. And if you love it, I mean, Yeah. Yeah. It Works. And just a side note,

secondary lesson here is about integrity. And I, like I said, cannot lie, I couldn't in good faith, put my money in that soup when I knew it was terrible. I had to do what I deemed was right. Here's the thing about values-based living and running your business based on your values, if you, you know who you are,

what you what,

and what you stand for, your decisions are made before you encounter them. So while I did struggle for a couple of seconds, really I didn't because I knew I had to tell her. It was like, I mean, certainly I don't like confrontation and it was uncomfortable for a second, but I knew it had to be done. So when she walked by me a minute later,

I took the opening and Asked you, how was the Soup? How's the soup? How's the soup, ladies, how's the soup going? And I'm like, this is the most awful thing I've ever eaten. I can't even eat it. I couldn't even finish it. I took a couple bites and I was like, is something wrong with me? Maybe I'm getting sick.

You know? And then I asked Mom and Ella and they were like, oh yeah, that was, that's pretty rough split pea soups. I Love it. Oh my gosh. Oh My goodness. Isn't that fun? Oh, crazy. Well, thanks for sharing that. I hope you guys found some humor, enlightenment and, and some just new ways to maybe look at some things and question,

you know, are there things that you're taking personally that there's really no need to, and, and have a little bit more of a way to kind of gauge where you want to source feedback from and what kind of feedback you want to, you want to receive. So, And if this is an area that you really struggle with, I would really recommend getting a coach and working through your thoughts around it because it's probably,

there's probably something a little bit deeper that's going on that you're thinking, that's causing you to feel connected to your output and taking it personally. I mean, I am a highly sensitive person and I would say years ago I would've been crushed by someone not liking my photos or, or my soup. And I've worked really hard with a coach and a lot of the books that we read to sort of unders not change who I am,

but understand who I am and, and work with it in a way that just detaches me from the personalization aspect. It, so therefore, my point is, it is possible to shift this thinking. It's not about changing who you are, it's just shifting your thinking around it. As with anything it comes down. Yeah. To your thoughts. Oh my goodness.

All right, Heather, this has been so good. Everyone else, thanks for being here for another week and we'll talk to you soon. Thanks for listening to The Hair of the Dog podcast. This was episode number 218. If you wanna check out the show notes for access to any of the resources that we mentioned, simply go to [www.hairofthedogacademy.com/ 2 1 8](http://www.hairofthedogacademy.com/218). Thanks for listening to this episode of Hair of the Dog Podcast.

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