

Welcome to the Freedom Focus Formula podcast. I'm your host, Heather Lahtinen, and I'm back this week sharing another installment of our offline photographer challenge. In case you missed it, I introduced this concept in episode 219, but essentially it's a series of challenges that we are hosting inside of our Elevate program to help photographers connect, engage, and thrive within their local community.

These tasks are carefully crafted to supercharge your in-person marketing strategies, because we know just how crucial in-person engagement is for your business growth. I would love if you would join us inside of Elevate, where one of our elevators just had her first \$10,000 month and another one just had her first \$11,000 sale. One client. You could check us out@learn.hair of the dog academy.com/elevate.

That link will be in the show notes. In today's conversation, I'm chatting with Laura Wombwell as she shares her approach to getting out in her community and meeting people as an introvert. She originally had this thought that she was bad at talking to people, but she caught the fact that it's probably not serving her to think that she also has some pretty strong feelings around money and,

you know, money conversation being gross or dirty. And I'm just curious, have you ever thought that, like, have you ever had the thought that, oh, I don't wanna talk about money because I feel like a used car salesman, and that's just gross or yucky? Or maybe you have some other version of a money challenge. I think that we all have them.

They just take on different forms. I hope that you enjoy our conversation. Welcome back to the Offline photographer. Laura, thank you so much for being here for our final installment. This is our final episode in this season. Yay. But also boo. Yeah, Right. Okay. Because it is so important to be out in your community meeting people.

So you and I had chatted before the episode about how we could kind of wrap this up, and we always talk and elevate about meeting people, about getting out into your community and meeting people. And obviously because we're talking about offline, we are not talking about posting on social media or your Instagram or your Facebooks or your videos or any of those things.

And you had said, why don't you share with everyone what you said just before we were recording about meeting people. So immediately before we started recording, I said, I am bad at talking to people. And then I said, oh, I shouldn't say that. I'm bad at talking to people. Yeah. But I think especially for those of us who are perhaps a little bit more introverted or a little bit shyer or you know,

wherever we are in our own minds about it, it can be really tough to put yourself out there like that because you've got all these stories telling you why you shouldn't. Yes. Yeah. What, what are some of those stories? Share those with me. What does your brain offer you? I was actually at Winners the other day. I don't know if you have winners in the States.

I don't think so. It's like the Marshalls Discount. Okay. Yes. And there was this woman with the cutest dash in the world, and I went to the dog, and the dog was licking me, and we were best friends. And then my partner was like, you should give her your card. And I was like, oh, no,

no, no, no. I will be interrupting this woman's day. I will be troubling her. I'll be putting her out. And he like took one of my cards and just gave it to her. Oh my gosh. I love it. But I had this whole narrative running in the background that was like, people don't wanna hear it. Oh,

people don't wanna hear from you. Right. And when I came home, I thought to myself like, how can I, even if real human being Laura isn't confident enough to interrupt people's days to talk about me, is there a character, Oh, Is there, is Laer like Super Laura, Super Laura, CEO, like really, really brave? Laura,

do those people exist? And how can I access them when I'm in that situation? Oh my gosh, I love this. And I think you're absolutely onto something. I just watched a commercial yesterday about Wonder Woman from like the seventies and eighties, and she was just like a normal person. And then she would spin around a bunch of times magically on television,

and she would have her Wonder Woman costume on, and then she would go save the day. It's the same thing. And you know what? I thought of that for years, shooting weddings is like, you're, it's like you're almost on stage. It's a performance, which means you could get into character, which means that you could choose a character that you felt,

you know, brave and like you said, courageous. And then you could talk to someone and then, you know, go home and take a nap because it maybe it's exhausting, but I don't know. I think that's a possibility. And I also think that maybe reframing the story, like the story, the narrative that you made up is like, I don't wanna bother people.

This is bothering people. Oh my gosh. Which, when you think that, of course you feel what? Well that about yourself and obviously not motivated to take action. Right. Even if it's the smallest action. Oh, correct. You're totally unmotivated, which means you keep the cards in your bag and your partner has to hand them out. He used to walk behind

you,

like you don't even know you're walking away. And he's like, here's a guard, here's a guard. Probably like hide from the rack, peeking. Oh my gosh. The stories, you know, you, you caught it though. You see that you're making up stories. Some people need help, just even being aware that they're doing that. But if we could make,

since we're making up stories, okay, since we're making up stories, could we make up one that serves us and what could that be? I think the, the counterpoint story too, I'm bothering them and they don't wanna hear from me, is I'm just letting them know of a thing that exists, a thing that I care about, right. That I'm passionate about.

And maybe they don't know that it's out there. I would think that that's probably usually the case. I think for me, where it gets muddy, and I think this might be the case for a lot of people, is because it's our business, right? So giving someone my card or telling them what I do, commercializes it. Oh, And I think that is a speed bump,

at least for me. It is where I'm like, this woman is just shopping. I'm just a person in the world. If it weren't a business transaction, I would be like, oh, I love photographing dogs. I would love to photograph your dog. But because I'm like, please spend money with me. Oh, but is that what you're saying?

Is that what you're saying? When you hand her a card and please spend money with me? No, obviously, No. And what is, what, what does that mean to commercialize it? I think because it, it eventually would be a business transaction. There's something in my brain that, that says, Nope, that's that's wrong and dirty. And you're,

Is that because you're making her pay you Absolutely not. So wouldn't it be her decision though, if she, if you said like, Hey, I do this, check out the website or whatever, then she would be the responsible party in terms of making a decision whether or not she wanted to move forward and hire you. Absolutely. And maybe she would love to spend that money.

What if she would love it? What if it's your responsibility to share it because people don't know, and you are depriving them of that gift? Like what if you looked at it as like, not commercial, not trying to get anybody's money. I'm certainly not trying to steal anybody's money, you know, but I have this responsibility to share what I do,

and at the very least, to give them the opportunity to know that it exists so that they can make their own decision. I think it's rather presumptuous for you to make that decision for them ahead of time when they don't even know it exists. Yeah. Yeah. It absolutely is. And I think this definitely carries over into all of my interactions with

money.

Oh, for sure. It's a theme for sure. So when, when it comes to money, what happens in your brain? It's like, no, we're not gonna talk about it. Not even necessarily, no, we're not gonna talk about it, but that the, the sort of exchange of money makes it, I don't even know what if I have the words for it.

I haven't. I haven't Flush Flush. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It changes, it changes the relationship somehow It changes the relationship for me because, you know, at the end of the day, if, if it was just an energetic exchange or if it was just bartering for something I needed and something they wanted or what have you, it's, it's adding in that layer of having people pay you for your services,

that there is something deep inside me that says, that's gross, and people are never gonna pay you. Oh, okay. Those are thoughts, right? That's gross. And people are never gonna pay you. And because of that, you just don't even wanna face it. Yeah, yeah. And so it's fear, right? Like the not putting myself out there,

the not talking to people, it's, it's just me protecting myself from those future money, blah, Raw. Exactly. Because it feels gross. And who wants to feel gross, right? So you're protecting yourself by depriving the world of your gift. Yeah. So, you know, I mean, you just have to look at it for what it is and ask yourself,

what's more important? Is it more important for me to protect my ego? And by the way, I've had seasons where it was, so I get this, is it more important for me to protect my ego, or more important for me to serve and just let people know that this exists and, and keep, keep even the money thought out of it,

which is like my responsibility. I was getting a test at the hospital yesterday, you know, I was telling the technician, I'm like, yeah, I was talking to my life coach. Everybody needs a life coach. Do you have a life coach? You should get a life coach. What's life coaching? You know what I'm telling her all about now,

I'm not trying, it wasn't like trying to get her as a client, Laura. I was, I was simply explaining to her that this is a thing and that it's really pretty awesome, and it's like saved my life and you should look into it. I feel like, and I'm for real serious, that it is my responsibility out in the world to make sure people know life coaching exists.

Because certainly people know therapy exists and it works for some and not for others, you know? But life coaching is different, and I think it can help a lot more people. I think it can reach a lot more people, but most people don't even know what it is. So I think it's my

responsibility to tell her that. So what if you just thought,

I, I'm about educating the community that pet photography is a thing and it's my responsibility, put it out there, and then all you have to do is sit back and remain open to the fact that they might choose you to pay you to photograph their pet. And like you give them that decision instead, you're taking that decision from them, which again,

I'm not sure that's fair. Yeah. And I think that's a good reframe because I want, I wanna be fair to people, you know, I, I want, I share with people, I want to serve people. And, and I can completely understand that just being stuck in my own fear and, and my brain telling me to like, play small and Yeah,

stay safe. Yeah, Stay safe. Yeah. It's, it's not helping as many people as it could. No, it, it, it harms the community, I think, because I think people love their pets and need to have photos with their pets. Like, I think it's like really awesome and pretty cool that you can do that. So that's one thing is like reframe,

like, this is service and education, but the others to work on the thoughts. Like if the fear is, you know, if I share something about money, it's going to be gross. Tell me what happens if something like this is gross. So I think the money, thoughts is, is where a lot of the self-doubt or lack of self-belief,

like that all comes in along with like all the money lessons you've been taught your whole life and scarcity mindset and all, all the, the wonderful stuff that we deal with as entrepreneurs. So once someone, you know, if that person makes the decision to book me, you know, then going through the process of like sharing the pricing is a hurdle because I'm like,

oh, they're going to think I'm too expensive. And then if they book, I'm like, oh, they're, they're still, like, when we get to the ordering appointment, they're gonna be like, no, no, but can I just have a \$25 digital please? Right. And I think because of how my brain has these money stories that ends up being like a completely self-fulfilling prophecy.

Oh no. To a hundred percent yes. What could you do to shift those? Like, you know, just like you, you, you know, we've been working together a long time, you know that those aren't serving you. And to think that people don't have the money or just the thought, this is gross. They're gonna think I'm too expensive and they're not gonna wanna pay.

Those, those three thoughts feel pretty awful. And we don't know if they're true or not, because we're just making them up. So again, I say, if you are going to make up stories, could you make up one that's

like, everybody has tons of money. Everybody wants to give me their money. People are ready, willing, and able to pay and let them determine.

I mean, the, the client determines the value based on whether or not they pay it. So honestly, you don't even have to worry about it. It doesn't even need to cross your like, realm of thought. You just have your prices, you decide what you wanna charge, and then you present it to people, to the world, they decide.

And then your, your only job is to receive. And furthermore, I have a lot of thoughts. Could, could this improve a relationship? And how would it harm it? 'cause you said, you know, you're worried if you talk about money that the relationship will change. Well, you and I, I consider us friends. We've been talking for a long time,

and you pay money to talk to me and we talk. Do you think that's changed? Or do you think I'm gross? No. Oh my gosh, no. I think you're wonderful and I'm happy to pay you. Interesting. And I see the parallel. But, But, but what, but what? But that's where not believing in yourself is what Yeah,

it's you. Right. Right. It's because it's you. So you couldn't do that. But, oh, and, but also what's possible for one person is possible for another. I think that you can be friends with your clients, have a good relationship and charge them a ton of money. How's that for a thought? And I, I take good care of myself,

so I take a shower, you know, I wash my hair. So I don't think I'm gross at all, like physically or mentally, I don't think, you know, my intent is to serve. And so I just, I just put my programs and my trainings out there, and then people decide if they wanna pay me. But actually was thinking about this.

So in Elevate, we have this course coming up called Empowered Building Wealth and Photography. And I was thinking about it last night. I was like, well, I was gonna do it as a bonus for some other groups with Nicole. And you know, for Elevate, of course, when you're in Elevate, you get everything. It's like, bonus city.

Okay. But then I was like, I, I wonder if I should put that empowered course out to the public, you know, in charge for it. And then people can decide if they want to join. Like, it doesn't matter. And my brain was like, no, don't do that. That's what like, the default is. And then the real Heather stepped in is like,

why wouldn't you give them the opportunity? Like, they can decide if they wanna sign up for it or not, but if you don't even put it out there, they don't know it exists. And even if no one single person bought it, I at least put it out there for people to see, okay, so

what does this, does this make me dirty?

No, it's, it's just making a neutral offer. And Neutral. Yeah. And well, and you know, there are so many people out there with money stories, especially us creatives. Yes. Like, We need this information. And I think this is exactly why people need empower. They do. Thank you. Tell the people, Laura, tell them they need elevate,

they need empowered. Well, because we can see the value when it's someone else. Right. You know, it's so easy to, you know, have service providers or what have you that you are happy to give your money to. 'cause they give you a great experience. And I think I know me personally, like I struggle believing that of myself,

even though I know I have evidence that proves that it is true. Yes. So I think working through those stories and just like being aware that they're there Yes, yes. Is, is for sure the first step. And then like, trying to, trying to change them. I'm Not, I think you're, yeah, I think you're making better progress than you even realize,

because actually week one of Empowered is about your money, philosophy and awareness. And the key is like, oh, we, everybody has a money philosophy, even if it's default and you don't realize it being aware, verbalizing it, talking it through, oh, I'm worried about bothering people and I don't wanna be gross and dirty. And then examining those thoughts.

Are they, is that true? How could I prove that's true? What else could be true? And then just starting to dig a little bit deeper to maybe begin the shift. Do you feel like, you know, over the last year or so that there's, you're starting to make some of those little bit shifts? I do. I do. I,

a lot of the time I feel like I'm really slowly climbing that mountain. Yeah. Yeah. And Sometimes I slide down a little bit, but like I, I feel that it's there. And at the very least right now, even just identifying when you're telling yourself things that aren't true, they might be true for your brain, but they aren't. Right.

Right. Empirically true. Yeah. Just catching it is, is a big step. And having a, and having a little laugh at yourself, a little chuckle and saying, oh my gosh, I'm telling myself a story. There goes my brain again. That's so funny. And also so disempowering. Could I make up a better story? Like, oh,

everybody is out there, they love me, they love pet photography. And the next time you go into your little store and you see somebody with a dog, if you think it, like, in my brain, I think about you, I'm like, you are the most interesting person in that store. Like, you're so interesting because you do all of these different things and you're

so multifaceted in what you do that,

like, if your default thought was, oh my gosh, everybody needs to know me because I'm so fascinating and interesting and I'm a pet photographer, and oh my gosh, there's a cute dog that is licking my face. Like, could we just keep it light and easy and not make it into a sales pitch? I wonder if that's a first step is like,

your brain is like, oh my gosh, I'm pitching my offer to this woman. Like, I didn't think I was pitching my offer to the tech yesterday. I was just like, it was like educating, like this is, this is a thing and this is what we do. And it's just like light and easy and fun. And maybe if you can tell your brain,

Hey, I'm not charging her, I'm not digging into her bag to steal her money. It's like, maybe you could start to talk to yourself. I mean, try it out. See what your brain thinks. You know what I mean? Yeah. Yeah. I think even just having little conversation starters or little ways to get from, oh my gosh,

your dog is so cute to, I see a lot of dogs because I'm a pet photographer. Those little ways in, I think for me, just like with the latter thoughts, yes. They're like bridging. Ah, bridge it. Bridging bridging to the offer. Yeah. Bridge that gap and try it out. Like consciously make the decision to go out to the store this weekend,

find a dog and try that out and check in with yourself afterwards. How did that feel? What am I thinking? Well, I, I, I'm alive, so that means I didn't die. Okay. So that's a good first start, first step, you know, and then what else is true? It probably would be like really interesting and exciting for someone to meet you and know what you do,

but if we walk into a room thinking, I don't wanna bother people. I've got nothing to share, nobody wants to hear about my job. I don't wanna steal money. Like it is, no wonder people stay silent with those thoughts. Like, it makes sense to me. So all we have to do is shift those thoughts a little bit, and then you take a different type of action and shifting those thoughts is your Wonder Woman costume.

You just spin around. Look, I know there's gonna be young people listening to this. Look it up, the Wonder Woman Show. She would spin around and this, oh my gosh, it's so bad. It's so funny. I it's a good show anyway, that you could like walk into a room and be like, no, people need, I'm a superhero here and people need to hear me.

I think you would just show up differently. Yeah. Okay. What is, before we ask where people can find you, what is one piece of advice that you've learned or you would give to photographers who are, you know, with you on this journey and find this to be challenging? And I'm working on this myself, but you're braver than you think.

And people are less bothered than right than you think. Yeah, that's true. But it's, it's a process. Right. And if we're not all the way there right away, that's okay. That's okay. That you're not gonna get it. All right. And like, we don't get mad at our dogs for not knowing how to sit right out.

That's true. Yeah. So give yourself grace and, and, and try and, and I will try to take this. Oh my Gosh, I love that. As soon as you said that, I was like, Laura, give yourself grace as you're giving that advice. Right. Okay. Where can people find you? They can find me@laurawommel.com. It's complicated to spell L-A-U-R-A-W-O-M-B-W-E-L-L.

And I will post that in the show notes. Of course, people can find you on the interwebs and you are highly accessible inside of our Elevate program. So if anybody wants to talk to you, they could do so there. Thank you so much for being with us in these past several episodes and sharing your challenges and your insight. I think it's been amazing and super helpful.

I have had a fabulous time. Thank you.