

EPISODE 33

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTRO MESSAGE]

[00:00:35.4] CS: Do you wish there was a resource that just fold you into doing and starting your business? Well good news, there is Reina and I have created one and you can find it over at creativeempire.co/getstarted. Or you could just text “mycreativeempire” to 44222. That’s “mycreativeempire”, all one word to 44222.

In our guide, you are going to find 50 of the things in order in the way that we would get started. These are the things that you could just walk through and tick off as a list or go through day by day, month by month, whatever floats your boat and your pace of life. We wish that we had had this when we have gotten started so don’t wait, go get yours today. Get started now at creativeempire.co/get started.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:21.0] RP: Welcome everybody back to the Creative Empire Podcast. It's Reina here and I have Christina with me.

[00:01:25.5] CS: Hello.

[00:01:26.8] RP: And we are back for another episode and y’all, we’re so excited to have The Scobeys with us and they are such a dynamic couple. I’ve got to see them speak at Creative at Heart, just a couple of months ago and they have just been such an encouraging force in my life

and I loved hearing them present together and so we're excited to bring you guys here with us. Welcome, Graham and Ashley.

[00:01:50.2] GS: Thank you very much. We're excited to be here, yeah.

[00:01:50.7] AS: Yeah, thank you guys for having us. I love that you said "y'all" in your intro because it makes me feel very at home.

[00:01:57.9] RP: Not even from the south but all good. Anyway, so tell us a little bit about where you guys are and how you have arrived where you are right now.

[00:02:08.1] AS: We're in Denver, Colorado, which is actually a really big arrival in our lives just recently. We just moved here about six weeks ago from Atlanta, Georgia, which has been a home to us for a while. That's where we grew up and we have been planning this move for about three years and finally, just looked at each other and said, "We're either going to do this or we're going to always wonder what if we had done that thing?" And so that's where we are right now, physically, which has been a really big change for us and it's been a good one, ups and downs but mostly ups.

[00:02:41.3] RP: I love it and you guys I want to talk at first, tell us about your business a little bit so that the audience can get a little bit more context.

[00:02:48.2] GS: Yeah, well we started our photography business back in 2008 and we were at this natural transition point in our lives at the time. We had just moved from Los Angeles where, when we first got married we were in Los Angeles. I was working in the movie industry and Ashley got a great offer from UCONN to go to grad school there and so we're like, "Great, let's do that," and we got there and it was like, "Oh there is no movie industry here in Source, Connecticut."

[00:03:12.2] AS: Lots of cows but no movie industry.

[00:03:15.1] GS: Yes, lots of moos and do you see other there?

[00:03:18.5] AS: No, it's not. Yeah.

[00:03:19.4] GS: I think we could edit that out. So we started our business and we always loved photography. We were like, "Okay, let's make a go at this business," and started shooting anything and everything we could and we realized really quickly that that was just going to lead us to burn out. What we had done was effectively build a business and try to attach purpose to that and so we decided that we were going to re-engineer that process and instead, we hit the brakes on our photography business.

We had a lot of really long, drawn out conversations about what our purpose was and what we feel called to, what we feel like we want our lives' work to be, what excites us, what keep us engage for years and years and we boiled down all those conversations to three things. And those things are people, moments and relationships. So we said, "Okay, this is who we are and we put that out to the world," and said we are also photographers but this is what we're about.

We started working with couples, nationally. We didn't really expect that and we didn't know what to expect but looking back on it, that was the obvious thing, right? Is that we started working with couples who have been married for 10 years or had just gotten engaged and we started shooting weddings and everything just clicked for us. And so fast forward to today and that's still what our business is about. That's still what guides and drives every decision that we make as a business are those three principles.

[00:04:45.8] RP: It's beautiful. That's so you guys and knowing you and how heart-centered you are in that way, you're very people-centered in that way and when I met you it was very clear from the very beginning and you make people feel welcome, which is a really cool quality.

[00:05:00.6] GS: That's a praise, yeah.

[00:05:02.4] AS: Yes, for sure.

[00:05:03.7] RP: Yeah, I mean it's true that's how I felt. I sat between you guys at dinner and you welcomed me into the conversation where I just stepped in and it could have been awkward

and you could have wanted to sit next to each other and you just allowed me to be there so yeah.

And I love what you're saying about how you have built a business that supports your life and I struggle with this. I don't know Christina if you worked through this? But for me, I'm a workaholic and I struggle with working too hard and sometimes getting to the burnout and you guys have made some big decisions and I'd love to hear a little bit more about how those really scary decisions have come about.

[00:05:41.1] GS: Yeah.

[00:05:41.5] AS: Yeah, for sure.

[00:05:42.2] GS: Well that's the risk, right? In doing what we do and having our own thing, whether that's something that we're doing full-time or if it's something that we're doing on the side, it has the potential to take every ounce of margin away from us because we love it. We're so engaged but quickly, a business can become your life and that happened to us.

To be totally honest, that is where we're coming from is a season of our business being our life and figuring out that's not a healthy place for us to be for our marriage. That wasn't a healthy place to be just as individually and definitely not a healthy place for us to be because we have two kiddos and we want our lives to be about them more than we want our lives to be about our business.

[00:06:26.2] AS: Totally and it is such an easy thing I think especially for creative entrepreneurs, which I think surprises people sometimes, right? Because you have maybe a nine to five like the more traditional job and you leave that and then you end up working 24/7 and that's not what a lot of people expect but it's what typically happens because you have this thing that you are driven by passion and you are driven by ambition and it is something that you can't turn it off and you don't have to. Because there is nobody holding you accountable, because there is no standard for what the hours of a creative entrepreneur's job are and it becomes a really difficult thing.

So I guess for us, probably year three, if I am thinking about that correctly, we were in this season where we worked every single night. We would put our daughter to bed and we would work until 2 o'clock in the morning which is super embarrassing...

[00:07:13.7] RP: Oh my gosh.

[00:07:14.5] AS: ...and totally unhealthy and we would just sit, that's all we ever did. We would go on date nights and just talk about business. Everything revolved around this business and we were in those building years, which everybody goes through and it's really important to have the hustle and to put everything that you have into it so that it can grow but then you get to say, "Okay, now I'm going to create margins, and now I am going to create what we call "life rafts"."

So we always say that in order to build a business that supports your dreams, you have to have life rafts or else this thing that you love so much is going to end up drowning you, which happens a lot, which is really dramatic. It's not going to really drown you, but from a time and boundaries perspective, you have to add margins to be healthy and it's not something that nobody's watching you like watching the clock to make sure that you don't do overtime or all of these things. You really have to do that for yourself and set standards for yourself.

[00:08:09.2] GS: So we came off starting our business, we did a lot of things backward. I think I mentioned before that we got some things backward about purpose and the type of work that we were doing. We created a business and then all of our dreams were centered in that business if that make sense? So it was like "we want to make this much money and we want to go and shoot in these places and we want to win this award and we want to speak at this" or whatever it was and it's different for everybody.

Everybody has different goals and I'm not saying that business goals are bad but the conversation that we didn't have was what do we want our life to look like? What do we dream about doing with each other? Where do we want to go and take our kids and be for a month at a time? Or how do we want just like the daily life to look? What do we dream about when we think about like we wake up in the morning and we get to spend time as a family over breakfast? I mean that sounds like a really small minute like inconsequential thing but that to me, those are some of our most important dreams are the ones that are the everyday little things.

[00:09:14.5] AS: And you have to fight harder for those dreams in a lot of instances, right? You have to really work. We have to work a lot harder for the dream of getting to have breakfast as a family and dinner as a family three or four days a week and we did for winning awards or shooting in these beautiful places.

And I think one of the really important things to consider when you're creating business goals whether they're really concrete and practical or if they're more pie in the sky and personal, either way, you need to know the "why" not just the "what". Because for us, a lot of our goals were there just to what, they were this award, this paycheck amount, this whatever and we didn't have a firm understanding of why in the world we wanted those things to begin with.

[00:09:58.4] CS: Just going back a little bit. I'm curious in the abstract what this looks like because I think you guys have done a great job of giving us the feeling embodying what your life is like now. But can you give us the contrast between what your life look like a year, a year and a half ago when your life was all about your business it sounds like, versus now where your business is all about your life?

[00:10:23.4] GS: Yeah, well it was a slow transition too. It wasn't a flip of a switch where it was life looks like this and then it was like this. This has been like Ashley said, that probably about 2011 was when we were totally swamped and so that slice of life that Ashley gave you, that was probably our starting point where it's like we're working until 2 AM.

[00:10:45.6] AS: Our kids are always with sitters.

[00:10:47.8] GS: Yeah, they're with their grandparents, they're with sitters, they're at pre-school.

[00:10:51.4] AS: We were saying "yes" to everything and "yes" is a super powerful word. I think that is a great thing to do is to say "yes" to what you can but also again knowing the why behind your "yeses" and understanding the power of "no" as well, something that we've had to struggle to learn. But we said "yes" to everything.

Like if somebody came in and they wanted us to shoot their wedding and it felt like maybe this wouldn't be the very best fit but then it would be another number on our calendar, or check in the bank account, we were like, "Yes, absolutely. We will do that," and live to regret it and all of that good stuff. It was just zero margin in our lives at all. We were working constantly, we didn't have — our relationship was suffering for it, we didn't see our kids a lot, we were out of town a ton and we did everything together. So it was always both of the parents were gone.

[00:11:39.1] GS: Right and these are all the consequences but the practice that was leading us there that we were using our life to support our business rather than using our business to support our life and that was, I don't know when that clicked, when that dawned on us. I know for me personally, there was a moment where Evie had her first — Evie is our daughter, she's our oldest. She had her first gymnastics competition. At that age it's not really a competition, it was like a performance.

She came home, she got the date, she was super excited about it and she's like, "Daddy, it's going to be this day," and I looked at the calendar and I was working that day and to me that was a pivotal moment in understanding how we had set our life up. So practically, to get back to your question, practically the changes that we've made over time have really been rooted in simplification and intentionality when we would make decisions in our business.

So like Ashley said, we are really particular about the people that we work with because we know that if we're working with the right people and it's a good fit, we can do the amount of work that we intended to do with that couple or that client and not have to go do all of this extra head spin and hand-holding in order to make that work which is ultimately just taking time away from the things that we really want to be doing with our family and with our life.

[00:13:05.3] CS: So what did that shift look like? Did you implement some kind of application process or did you raise your prices? I mean you don't have to go deep into your trade secret part of it, but if you're willing to share some of the things that maybe some of our listeners could do because a lot of people are doing just this. They're drowning, they think that entrepreneurship is their ticket out of their nine to five that they'll be able to see their kids and they get out into it and surprise, they're not seeing their kids ever now and it's really disappointing. So how can they make the shifts that you've made?

[00:13:37.5] AS: Yeah, so the very first thing that we did is that we started outsourcing things and when our business was a little bitty baby, we were like new parents who felt like we were the only person in the world who could possibly feed this kid and change it's diaper and keep it alive much less like help it grow and we felt like we were the very best people to nurture it.

And we realized around year three that we couldn't keep our sanity and also answer every e-mail and book every travel engagement and prep for speaking and do contracts and all those things, we couldn't do everything. And so we read a book called *Good to Great* by a guy named Jim Collins and in his book he talks about this idea of "right seat, right bus" or "right bus, right seat."

[00:14:21.4] GS: Right person in the right seat on the bus, yes.

[00:14:26.9] RP: You got it.

[00:14:27.5] GS: Nailed it.

[00:14:28.2] RP: You got it correct.

[00:14:29.2] AS: There's a bus and you're on it and you get in a seat and it's hopefully the right one.

[00:14:35.7] GS: Yes. That was good.

[00:14:39.5] RP: Great references.

[00:14:41.8] CS: So read the book.

[00:14:43.6] AS: But the idea is that every job is a seat and that doesn't mean that it's the right seat for you. Just because it is something that has to be done in your business doesn't mean that you should be the one doing it. So we realized early on in our business for example that

culling, which is basically choosing what images you deliver to a client which out of the couple of thousands of pictures you take on a wedding day, which 500 are going to go to your client?

It's not a good job for Graham because every single image is so special to him that he could not possibly imagine not giving it to a client and I am a super decisive decision maker. It doesn't mean that I always make the right ones but I'm going to make it and I will stick to it to the death and so I'm totally fine with going through and being like, "Nope, hate it. Bad." I am so fast at that so that's the right seat on the bus for me.

But we realized that editing is something that we outsourced around that year three. That gave us a lot of time back and we had a studio manager, so client communication is something that we started in-sourcing and it just gave us this total perspective shift that there are actually people out there that can do these jobs way better than we can and it allows us to do more of the things that we're good at.

[00:15:57.3] GS: Another thing that we did that was helpful in simplifying and be more intentional on the front end was just considering our brand and what we're communicating to people because initially, we have this very broadly appealing brand that was like, "Hey, we like to have fun at weddings and we want to shoot you." Who wouldn't want to hire those guys because they are like everybody's ideal photographer?" But we weren't. That was what we were communicating and we had clients who were coming in and they're like, "This is going to be awesome," and we're like, "I don't know if it's going to be awesome."

[00:16:31.1] AS: "You're going to be so good for our traditional wedding."

[00:16:34.8] GS: And so we got a lot more specific on our brand and that's when our evolution and actually, just recently, right around the same time that we've moved out here, we re-launched with a new brand that's very, very, very on point with who we are and I think it communicates really effectively to the people who are our ideal clients. So that becomes your watershed and the cool thing is I think people think sometimes that's a scary thing especially early on when you're starting a business.

You do feel like, “I need to appeal to everyone because I need all the chances I can get to book clients or to work these jobs or whatever the situation is. I want to be able to do it all.” There is something to be said for being a generalist and being able to help people where they are and with what they need but it’s been, like we have learned that getting more and more specific and specializing, you start to thrive because you are only doing work that you’re really excited about.

You are only working with people that really get what you are excited about and they’re excited about it too whereas, in the past, we’ve worked with clients who had different expectations than what we did best and so we tried to do what they wanted us to do.

[00:17:48.3] RP: Yeah, you’re trying to fit them, totally.

[00:17:49.7] GS: Yes, trying to fit them and we’re doing them a disservice by doing that.

[00:17:53.9] AS: Right because we are not doing our best work. We’re shooting in a different style at 70% of our capacity whereas if we shoot the way that we see the world, we can do that at a 100% and that was the difference between a D minus and an A plus.

[00:18:08.4] RP: That’s a huge jump.

[00:18:11.3] GS: Yeah. So practically in our business, just to give you an example, we went from Atlanta. In Atlanta, we were shooting — our clients were pretty traditional on their weddings. They are spending a lot of money on their weddings and they were very long days. All of these things again, we love our past clients and we were glad that we had that experience but in moving out here and going through the, I don’t know, kind of refactoring of our lives a little bit, we realized that actually, we really enjoyed the backyard wedding where it’s the family and a few close friends and we immediately have rapport with everyone and they trust us to do what we do and it’s not this big production where I need to be in nine different places at once because there are nine different things going on. It’s just about our clients and the fact that they are in love and they want to celebrate that.

[00:19:05.2] AS: Yeah and we have an inkling that that was the case. We had a little bit of an inkling that Ritz Carlton ballroom weddings with 400 people were awesome and fun and filled

with lovely individuals but maybe not where our passion met our purpose type of thing and we figured that out because we started shooting progressively more destination weddings to where about 50% of our calendar are weddings that we fly into and those were such a good fit for us.

Really getting to know the family members and getting to be a part of all of these different nuance relationships and getting to know the grandpa's name and things that just felt super personal because then people felt comfortable being who they really were and feeling their day however they were going to feel it. Whether that meant that they were crying and really overly emotional or quieter and just thoughtful and pensive.

Whatever was natural for them, that's what they felt comfortable enough to do with us there and that was such a good fit and so that's one thing that prompted this move, was just the idea that culturally out here there are a lot of destination weddings in Colorado where people are flying in for their mountain weddings.

[00:20:21.3] GS: And like elopements where people want to go hike a fourteener and get married on top of that.

[00:20:26.1] RP: Christina is a hiker. We were just in Arizona and she woke up at the butt-crack of dawn to go hiking. I was like, "You go ahead. I have flip flops. So I'm not equipped for that."

[00:20:37.1] CS: Can you tell people what a fourteener is? Because I have a feeling most people probably don't know.

[00:20:42.0] GS: Yeah, so it's a big thing in Colorado to try and hike all the fourteeners.

[00:20:46.5] CS: And there is how many?

[00:20:49.0] GS: Over 50 I think? But a fourteener is a mountain that is over 14,000 feet so.

[00:20:56.3] RP: That's not me. That is not on my bucket list.

[00:20:59.3] GS: Reina's is like, "I'm out".

[00:21:00.8] AS: You and I can chill with our wine in the hot tub.

[00:21:03.2] RP: Yes.

[00:21:03.6] AS: While Graham and Christina can go hiking.

[00:21:06.0] RP: Let's do that. So I was just going to say that you guys are such a life coach's dream client because you are willing to look at what's normal like what's the status quo and say, "I don't actually like that. Let's change it up," and have the, I don't know, it's really brave to look at life as it is and say, "What would it be like if?" And a lot of us don't have that courage, even if we've stepped into the entrepreneur role, aren't willing to look at that next "what if".

[00:21:34.2] CS: Especially with kids.

[00:21:36.6] RP: Yeah.

[00:21:36.8] CS: That's incredibly brave.

[00:21:40.0] GS: Yeah, well it is and at the same time, we have friends who inspire us in that way. Our tribe is people who are taking risks all day long and some of them have kids and some of them don't. But I've been really convicted and I think we both have that our life is a drop in the bucket. It goes by in a flash and we can debate all we want and have that internal struggle of "I would really like to do this but there is so much risk attached."

Or we can just say, "You know what? I'm willing to take the risk," and our motto has become never stuck, right? And that's really empowering because you can make the choice that has risk associated with it and if the reward wasn't worth the risk, you can change again. You can try something else.

[00:22:32.0] AS: Totally, yeah. Graham is saying that constantly to me. You are never stuck, you are never stuck. If you want to try ballet, you can go back to gymnastics. It's not the end of the world because even these little things and these big things, we have this uncanny way of

attaching fear to everything that we do and then it becomes this habitual thing and the truth of it is is that when you make this habit of choosing to lean into fear and being okay with what your purpose really is.

Like you don't want to get eaten by a dinosaur and that's totally good. It's really good, run from all the bears that's fine but it doesn't mean that changing your career or looking at things the different way or moving across the country, those are not fatal things. They're big changes but it's not fatal and it's not the final year. And we really want our kids, we want to empower them to see the world. Hopefully even more of an ever changing and not risk averse way too so that when they have something that they are passionate about, they don't even have to think about it. They're just like, "We're going to go and do that" because we have spent a ton of time in our lives debating, going back and forth, staying in the same place when we knew we wanted to move and I don't know, it breathes more the same when you're willing to, A, make those choices for yourself and B, be around other people who are doing the same thing.

[BREAK]

[00:23:52.6] CS: Since starting this podcast, Reina and I have seen our business grow so much and it was quite unexpected. We only started the podcast as a way to communicate about business and marketing for the creative entrepreneur. But this has been a nice side effect and the great news is that you could do the same thing because, for a limited time, we are taking on some sponsor applicants.

If you would like to apply for a sponsorship where we will talk all about your products and your services on the air and drive that traffic of the thousands of our listeners to your business or your website or your landing page, whatever you would like, you can head over onto creativeempire.co/apply.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:24:34.9] RP: How can you guys encourage somebody who might be feeling like "stuck is it" and encourage them to see that there is a different option that yeah, this is really scary. But what are maybe some of the first steps or encouraging advice that you might have?

[00:24:48.7] AS: E-mail us.

[00:24:51.9] RP: You're going to get a flood of e-mails, I'm sorry.

[00:24:53.2] CS: I don't know if you want to do that.

[00:24:55.5] GS: Hello@thescobey.com. Yeah, so that's a hard question because we don't want to invalidate those feelings because we've been there. We've gotten to places in our business or in our life like just recently, the past couple of years we had a point in time where we're like, "What are we doing? Everything is broken," and we started making fear based decisions and I guess part of my argument against that is look at times.

For us, we can look at the times when we've made fear based decisions or we had a pattern of making fear based decisions and our life actually suffered for it even though we felt like we're preserving ourselves. We're life preservers like we're holding onto these things that are going to help us out and keep us alive. We ended up, just like Ashley said, almost drowning ourselves in those scenarios but aside from that, so many people have talked about this in such an eloquent way and I am going to butcher it. But there's this concept of scarcity versus abundance and you can live in a posture of either.

So you can have a posture of scarcity and what that looks like is that "there's not enough jobs for me to be able to work full-time in this career or there's not enough money. I can't make enough money for me to be able to go and travel here or I don't have enough time to devote to both a job and this other thing or I don't have the capacity for more children in my life." Whatever it is, that's a posture of scarcity. There's not enough.

And like I said people have spoken very eloquently about the opposite of that mindset, which is abundance, which is just choosing to believe that there is enough because that is reality is that there is more than enough air for us all to breathe. There is more than enough food for us all to eat. We are blessed every day. Every day is a gift and when you live out of abundance, you start living out of gratitude. And when you live out of gratitude, you're willing to take risk because you know that there's possibilities. There are more and more possibilities that open up for you when

you have that mindset and maybe that's not the most practical advice like "Just change your mindset," you know?

[00:27:14.3] AS: It's like when I'm having a bad day Graham's always like, "It's going to be okay, just be happy." And I'm like, "That is not a 12 step process. That's not a game plan brother."

[00:27:24.3] GS: So make this practical for me, not so hippy dippy.

[00:27:27.5] AS: Yeah, Google Brené Brown's "Abundance." Just Google that and then read everything that you can find and watch every video that you can find because she is awesome and I love her because she is a researcher and she comes from a very quantitative program. So she's a numbers person, she is a practical person and she still believes in all of this hippy dippy stuff because it's also scientific, right?

It also breeds happiness and actually abundance breeds more abundance. If you live in a space of enough, you create more math for other people and if you close off and you live in a place of scarcity like you wall yourself off from all these opportunities to create more opportunity for other people to enjoy and invest in. It's such a no-brainer that it's not natural for us all the time.

[00:28:16.3] GS: We've seen that in our life, and here's a very practical example of that. When we moved to Atlanta, we had a hard time connecting with the photography community there and we started telling ourselves that "people just don't want to connect, there are not enough nice people in Atlanta."

[00:28:34.0] AS: "We're not good enough."

[00:28:35.1] GS: Right and so what happened was we became recluses in our community because our belief was that not enough people wanted actual community. And then over time, a few some things happened, we met some people that preached to us differently and tried to help us understand that there are good people everywhere. So we started a meetup and we're like, "Okay, you know what? Let's just try it. We are desires of community, we want to be in the community."

We started a group and immediately people showed up and we were like, “Oh this is awesome,” and then it grew and it grew and it grew and people have gone in that group, they’ve done amazing things. People have gone full-time into creative, they wanted to go into it because that group existed and they had this community of people who were around them and were saying, “You can do this. There is enough.” So that’s a very practical example.

[00:29:30.2] AS: And that group is still going on even though we have left. We handed it over to other people, there are almost a thousand people on the Facebook group. There are sometimes a hundred plus people on a monthly meetups and it’s such a great community of helpers and people who show up for each other and come to find out that if there is something you’re wanting in your life and you feel like there’s not enough or doesn’t exist, chances are if you create it other people are wanting that thing too.

There is a reason that you want it. You’re not the only person in the world who thinks like, “A meetup would be a great thing but there just isn’t one so oh well,” you know? So yeah, that’s a really good practical example of that in practice.

[00:30:08.2] RP: I love that. I think it takes a courageous person to just step outside of what they’re feeling in scarcity to shift their mindset to, “Okay, this is really hard. I’m going to try to believe that there is enough and to actually practice it through gratitude,” or just saying, “Okay there’s got to be somebody who calls me.” Or, “There’s going to be an inquiry.” Or whatever it is that we’re scared about, right?

[00:30:33.2] GS: Yeah and part of abundance is that there’s an abundance of opportunities. So it doesn’t necessarily, and I’m not preaching it like “just go quit your job and do this thing and you’re going to be fine”. The abundance is in the fact that you have so many ways to make it fine. One of my first jobs was working at Starbucks and I had this awesome manager who I hated at the time because she would never let us stop moving. She was like, “There’s always something to be done.”

So if there was no line at Starbucks, we were wiping down tables, we were scrubbing the floor, we were doing something because there were always opportunities to do something and we’ve

taken that into our business. So if we have a slow week, what can we be doing this week to drum up new business? How can we get out? What opportunities can we seize to continue to grow our business? And so the message is not “just believe that good things are going to happen and they will come to you”. I don’t necessarily think that that’s true. I think that believe that there is an abundance of opportunities and then going and doing the hard work.

[00:31:37.8] AS: Yeah, it’s like something on Pinterest, “Work for it more than you want it. Do it.” But the other part of that is that stuck looks different for everybody. Some people feel super stuck like their geographic locations and people feel really stuck in terms of their finances. Some people feel super stuck based on the opinion or judgment of others, right? There are different things that paralyze you and so the answer is different for each of those scenarios.

[00:32:03.1] RP: I have one last question.

[00:32:05.3] CS: Yeah, I was going to say that...

[00:32:05.6] RP: But I’m looking at Christina because she has something. Go ahead Christina.

[00:32:08.6] CS: I am just soaking this all in and what’s really striking me is the fact that a lot of people have come to me or said over the time that I have been working with them, “I want to be a destination wedding photographer.” That’s right up there with Style Me Pretty and all the other things that you guys listed that you wanted as well at the beginning of your careers and not once have I heard you say today about how glamorous and wonderful it is.

But instead I have heard you say how much it supports not only the dreams that you had but your family and your lifestyle and it’s so funny because it all feeds into this conversation we’re having about the abundance and is it enough? And it’s because you put yourself in a place where that was possible but it did become a reality it sounds like rather than the other way around where you just constantly chased it for the sake of chasing it.

I’ve never known the answer to “how do I become a destination wedding photographer?” but I feel like if that’s really what you’re called to it sounds like then you will find a way to get there or

to either get there or just have that as part of something that supports your lifestyle rather than just as a means to an end.

[00:33:18.2] AS: Totally.

[00:33:18.9] GS: The why is so important. It can't be overstated how important a why is.

[00:33:24.2] RP: How do you get to your why? Sorry to cut you off. I think that a lot of people talk about having a why but we don't talk often about how do you get to it?

[00:33:33.0] GS: Yeah, I think we don't talk about it because that is a hard conversation.

[00:33:35.2] RP: Totally.

[00:33:36.2] GS: There's not like, "Well step one," you know? I think that we live in a society where, and just like the place and time that we find ourselves in, there's such a high value put on the appearance of things and the what is much more important, right? So like, "I am a destination wedding photographer, look at my Instagram account and it's all these beautiful places and these beautiful people." Instead of people striving for connecting with why that's important to this particular person, they just look at what that is and they decided that their dream, this other person's dream should be their dream.

[00:34:17.7] AS: Right and it changes throughout time too because I think when I was in elementary school, I wanted to be a doctor because that's what the most, I don't know, prestigious thing to be. It's what you do? What kind of car you drive? It's all those what questions and they never really hit at what's important to you in the center of your being?

[00:34:38.4] RP: It is more status.

[00:34:39.8] GS: Well, I don't want to come across as super judgmental. I guess the point that I am trying to get at is the reason that we automatically, I think the reason that we struggle with looking at other people's life and saying, "That's my dream," is because we are so distracted.

We're scrolling through Instagram all day and we're having one conversation with one person while we're texting another person.

We're so distracted and we've forgotten the art of introspection and really sitting with ourselves and trying to understand. We believe that we were created and that we were created with a purpose and there's a very unique purpose for me in this world, in this tiny little lifespan that I have. But I am never going to know what that is if I just go around and look at what everybody else is doing and assume that my life should look like one of their lives.

So this is kind of an answer to both of your questions about the destination thing. We love destination weddings because we love people and moments and relationships and that just so happens that that's a really good avenue for us to be able to invest in each of those things. So it hits our why and it took us unplugging, quieting everything else and really just trying to understand who are we and what do we want out of life and what do we feel like we can leave this world with in order to get to that?

[00:36:09.7] AS: Yeah and if you take a minute and you think about like I'm just sitting here thinking about that conversation and the conversation that we had around our kitchen table about what is important to us? The people, moments, relationship conversation back in 2008. If you take a minute and you think about the conversations that changed the course of your life, you probably can remember them because chances are, you weren't looking at your phone.

You weren't thinking about what you had in your next and you weren't thinking about what you're going to have for lunch or for dinner and that's very rare in this world and so they stand out to you, right? Like if I am sitting here and two days ago Graham asked our daughter Evie what mommy was good at and she said, "She's really good at being on her phone." So I'm sitting there and just saying that this as someone who struggles with that.

I struggle to not be plugged in all the time and I can think about it, I can remember some of those conversations with Graham or with friends that have altered the course of my life from either a physical perspective or a mental perspective like there aren't many of them and none of them involved a device.

[00:37:11.5] RP: That's beautiful. I want to be like you guys when I grow up. All the serenity and all of the love and just a lot of introspection and just space and oh, it's so refreshing and I feel like I'm always go-go-going and I struggle with that too so.

[00:37:27.0] GS: Yeah, well we struggle with it too. Yeah, don't take that to mean — we're not sitting here meditating for six hours a day. But it would probably be helpful to stop sometimes and just breathe and think about the things that are important and really get re-centered on those things.

[00:37:43.5] AS: Right and it's one of those things too where sometimes the answer is not going to look like what you think is going to look like. We have also a lot of photographers who tell us that they want to shoot destination weddings and I am very upfront with them in saying, "I don't actually shoot destination weddings anymore. Graham does all of those because it connects to his purpose and my purpose is with my kids at the stage in our life."

And being at a destination wedding means at least two days on either end of that one wedding that I am away from the kids. And so we have chosen at this point in time for me not to travel as much because it doesn't connect with my purpose right now. It doesn't mean it won't later because that changes.

[00:38:18.7] GS: And that's a really good point. I think when you start thinking about your why and your purpose, a lot of times, especially as entrepreneurs because we're addicted to the things that we do because they're so fun. We automatically assume that our why is like, "Why am I a photographer?" But your why is so much deeper than that. Your purpose is so much deeper than the work that you do and it means so much more and it can affect so many other aspects of your life if you let it.

And we're walking with that right now with Ashley in figuring out. She's an integral part of this business but she's also an amazing mom and there's no doubt in my mind that that's what she's meant to be doing right now is just being the amazing mom that she is.

[00:39:03.0] AS: He's going to make me cry.

[00:39:04.9] RP: Guys! So one thing I was going to touch on before we wrapped up is about the fact that you guys wear a lot of different hats together. You are married, you are business partners, you work together while you're shooting, you're also parents together. And so as a social worker, that's my background, seeing all of those things happen and you guys are very clear it seems to me what role you're playing at any given time or at least that's how it comes across.

Like we're on video right now and I get to see you guys looking at each other just so beautiful and I'm wondering how do you keep each of those roles separated so that they actually make sense and one is not always bleeding into another?

[00:39:45.4] CS: Making compartmentalization?

[00:39:47.6] RP: Yeah.

[00:39:48.0] AS: That's a really good question and to preface that, when we decided that we were going to go into business together, the very first thing that we did was call a marriage counselor and we got into counseling with somebody who had counseled other family businesses because family businesses are a sticky, sticky thing. They're wonderful but they are multifaceted. They're like very complicated beasts.

So when we got married, Graham's parents who we love and adore, their wedding present to us was anytime we need it for the rest of our lives if we needed to go see a counselor, they would pay for it and for us, that was something that, and that's what we wanted to do for our kids too because A, it normalized the idea of counseling. It was assumed that at some point we would need that and they gave us complete permission to be messed up, right?

Complete permission to need help at some point and so we never had to question if we can afford it or what people would think about us because two other people that we respect most in the world were like, "You will probably need counseling at some point and we would like to pay for it." So we never had to have a conversation that like, if that made sense. So that was the first thing that we did when we decided we were going to go into business together.

And that was hugely helpful for us and relationally what that was going to look like and also structurally, we'd always had very closed systems. So I don't look over Graham's shoulder when he's editing blog images and be like, "Oh those are looking a little green honey." That's not my mattress. That's not my monkey. Those are both inside jokes that make no sense, I'm sorry.

[00:41:22.8] RP: It was like, "Is this the same bus or are we on a different contraption here?"

[00:41:26.5] GS: There's a mattress and a monkey on our bus.

[00:41:27.2] AS: It's a mattress and a monkey on our bus, that was such a bad joke. And he doesn't look on my shoulder when I'm typing out timelines or when I am blogging. He doesn't look over my shoulder and be like, "Oh that's really froufrou language you're using on the blog." There is none of that at all and it's really good for our marriage because he does things differently than I do like probably the exact opposite way of how I could do things. So I'm never going to fully understand or agree with how he does things but they're his things to do, so I let him do them.

[00:42:02.2] GS: And one thing that's important when you're talking about husband and wife working together or friends or anybody that you have a personal relationship with outside of work, it's really important to understand that conflict happens everywhere and so at some point in that friendship or in that marriage, you're going to have conflict and that can either bleed into your business or it cannot and at some point in that business, you're going to have conflicts and that can bleed into your marriage or it cannot.

It's easier said than done but we really do try and value the debate. We value each other having very different opinions because we do all the time and at the end of the day disagreeing about something that's in the office should not impact my ability to be a good husband or to be a good father. So learning to weave and separate the lines of your relationships and just manage conflict effectively and understand that conflict is not a bad thing. It's just how you react to it and what you do with it that is important.

[00:43:01.5] AS: Yeah, totally. So closed systems I guess is the concise answer to that question, is just that we don't look over each other shoulders. We have very specific tasks even

in terms of like our home life I have mommy days and Graham has daddy days and on my mommy days, he's in the office working and on his daddy days, I'm in the office working and if there is a swim lesson or a dirty diaper and it's your at home day, you take care of it all and same thing with the office. If you get an important e-mail, that's your day to get work done so yeah.

[00:43:33.5] CS: No, I'm good. I don't have anything to add to that right now actually. But I do just want to ask you really quickly in closing if there was one thing, I mean you've given us so many takeaways just a wealth of information. If there was one thing that a beginner or business owner, maybe a beginner photographer, calligrapher, whoever is listening were to listen to this entire thing they get to this point and they say, "This is amazing but I don't know what to do with this." What is the first action step that they could just take in the next 10 minutes to go and build their own creative empire using some of this information today?

[00:44:09.6] RP: Graham gets one and Ashley gets one.

[00:44:11.7] GS: Let's make this really practical. That's a great question.

[00:44:15.1] AS: My first step would be to find a group of people in your area who are doing something in the creative space, in the entrepreneurial space and ask them to go to dinner or go to coffee and not want to pick their brain but just to be around like-minded people who are taking big risks and doing big things with their dreams because that is something that rubs off on you and it gives you courage to be able to do the same thing.

Those are the people who are going to be able to show up for you in really meaningful ways because like in our life we have amazing friends who have traditional jobs and they're usually not the ones that are like, "You're moving? That's so awesome! It's probably because of the mountains right?" They're the ones that are like, "Why are you moving?" And that's fine. That is totally fine. But our friends on the pie in the sky dreamer side, they get us. We say we're moving and they're like, "We might move too," and it's that kind of thing and it's like that snowball of courage happens when you are around other people who are taking big risks too.

[00:45:17.4] GS: Yeah, that's really good. I think in addition to that, understanding that starting doesn't happen in an instant. It's a process and we're always starting something, right? You might have a business for seven years but there is something that you need to start and you know what it is, whether that is another facet of your business or maybe you want to just start exercising more regularly or you want to start going to a church on a regular basis or have some sort of spiritual thing in your life.

Sometimes we look at starting as like, "Okay, I need to get everything ready in order to make that happen. So I've got to have the money, I've got to have the time, I've got to have the influence, I've got to have the education and then I can start doing this thing." When in reality, you could just start today. If you want to start a new line of greeting cards, my friend Josh Solar is an amazing, amazing greeting card maker. I forget what his official title is but it's like "ambassador of hope" or something like that.

[00:46:20.3] RP: Oh I love that.

[00:46:21.2] GS: "A professional encourager" that's what it is, yeah and every day he just sits down and he paints something and they're goofy and they're fun and they're amazing.

[00:46:28.9] AS: Some of them are super dirty.

[00:46:30.5] GS: He's had some really bad ones, but he is a great example of someone who just goes and does the work. He didn't have formal training in painting. He didn't know how to create greeting cards. They had a photography business before this and they had a blog before that or after that, but he's willing to go and do and it's really that simple.

[00:46:55.0] RP: So go paint a picture, basically.

[00:46:56.9] GS: Go paint a picture yeah, exactly.

[00:47:00.1] RP: Love that. It's like don't ask for permission I think is what you're saying. You don't have to have all the things lined up in order for it to be like "you have arrived", or whatever.

Well, we are so grateful that you guys have shown up in such a big way and I think this is such a cool episode because we've never had a dude on our podcast ever so that's fun.

[00:47:20.4] GS: Well thank you so much for having me.

[00:47:22.2] RP: Absolutely. Thanks, Graham.

[00:47:24.4] RP: How can everyone find you on the internet?

[00:47:27.4] AS: We are on Instagram @thescobey's. We are on the interwebs at thescobey's.com.

[00:47:33.7] GS: And we're about to launch some educational resources. We have an e-mail list where we send out some totally free tips and tricks and things we're thinking about. So you can join our mailing list if you go to thescobey's.com/education. Yes, I think that's the link.

[00:47:52.7] RP: Excellent.

[00:47:53.5] GS: thescobey's.com/education is the link.

[00:47:56.8] RP: Fantastic. So we'll send people over that way and I think they will get a lot of, I've seen you present so I know how important and how influential that can be. So we are super excited to have talked to you guys and I can't wait to hear what the audience thinks. Thank you to The Scobey's and thank you so much for listening to this episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. We'll see you next time.

[00:48:19.5] GS: Bye, thanks so much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:48:22] ANNOUNCER: Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to www.creativeempire.co where you can find

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