

**EPISODE — LARA CASEY**

[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.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:00:35.4] CS:** Hello everyone, welcome back. This is another episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. I am Christina Scalera. I'm joined by Reina Pomeroy.

**[00:00:41.5] RP:** Hi everybody.

**[00:00:43.4] CS:** And today, this is unbelievable, but Lara Casey is sitting on the other side of my screen right now. We are so excited to be talking to her about how she has made it happen and continues to make all of the things happen. Lara, I just logged onto your website to do some research before our interview to double check, to make sure what's going on in your life. I follow you on Instagram obviously but when I logged on, I saw everything on your shop, it was really unbelievable how much you and your team, we've had Nicole Yang on, Nicole was episode nine, how much you guys have done and accomplished just in the last year and things are so beautiful over there. What are some of the projects that you have been working on that you've been the most excited about?

**[00:01:25.3] LC:** You are so kind. Thank you first of all for having me. It is a joy to be able to chat with you lovely ladies. And what am I most excited about? Most excited I think about a product that we have called The PowerSheets and I created them for myself because I, like many of you and like both of you, do a lot of things and wear a lot of hats whether it's in business, motherhood, having multiple things that you're interested in life and I needed a way to simplify things.

So that makes me most excited and just quite honestly because they change so much every year. They change right along with us as a team and with our business growing and simplifying. So I'm really pumped about these PowerSheets this year and my hope and my goal is that they help women cut through the fluff of life because there's a lot of fluff. I mean you guys know, there's so much stuff out there that is trying to get our attention. And I just hope that the PowerSheets are a tool for that to help people cut through it and focus on what matters.

**[00:02:30.7] CS:** Yeah, so I mean speaking of growth, your family has grown a lot over the last year as well and has that had, I mean obviously that's had an effect on your business, but how is your business affected your family and then vice-versa? If you don't mind sharing a little bit for those of us out there that have family demands.

**[00:02:49.2] LC:** Yes, oh man well, I wanted to quit my business when all this happened. I even felt like God was saying, "Hey, you need to quit. This is just too much," and it was. So a little back story is that I had a son in August of 2015 and he is a year old as of this recording and then shortly after that, just four months after I had him, we found out that we were matched with a birth mom for adoption and I got chills everywhere just saying that.

But they are six months apart and having two babies that close in age has, I don't even have words for it yet. I haven't written my adoption story in the blog yet for that reason because I just can't summarize it in words. If I was to summarize it, it was the most broken and beautiful time of our lives this last year. Broken because I really believe God breaks us down to build us back up again and make us different. So all in all, this has been a big year of change.

And in the midst of that, I just realized the obvious, which is I can't do it all. I literally cannot feed to children and be a great leader and be a loving, giving wife and keep anything together. Like making dinner was a challenge, taking a shower by noon was a challenge. So I thought that the answer was to quit my business. I thought, "Okay, well let's just take a big thing out of there," you know? And that was not the answer.

But I do believe that when we come up to these big turning points in our lives, maybe for those of you that are listening it's a new baby in your life. Or maybe it's a business change, maybe it is

trying to leave your full-time job, whatever it is we are supposed to quit something. We can't do it all and we don't have to do any of it perfectly and so how has that affected my business? It has made us deeply streamline things and there's still more change to come, big changes coming. But yeah, so the answer is that it has affected us in every way, shape and form.

**[00:04:54.2] CS:** Things are looking really great. I remember going to your website after the Making Things Happen Conference and it was a little bit confusing at the time and I went onto your website I think in April or May, sometime this summer, early summer and things had totally changed or at least by that point. Now I look today, things are even more streamlined, so you're completely right. I love that you seem to be pairing down or at least organizing.

And that is something that we all struggle with is when we first start, we want to be the calligrapher, the painter, the PR strategist, the everything and so we offer all of the services on our website and then nobody works with us because they don't know how and so when we're first starting, it's really a challenge. But you also, and sorry, full disclosure guys, I'm a little nervous.

**[00:05:44.8] LC:** I'm a little nervous too. So it's all good. I get nervous when something means something so I am there with you.

**[00:05:51.4] CS:** Okay, good, yeah. So I got to jump right in and this is totally my fault but I jump right over your background and your story, which is a really incredible one at that. I feel like maybe I got to hear you talk a lot at Making Things Happen about your background and how you get to where you are. If you guys want that full emersion experience, there is another Making Things Happen coming up every spring and fall.

So you can definitely jump into that. That's life changing and I mean that in the most sincere way possible. But would you mind just giving us a little bit of a background as to how do you got to Making Things Happen, how you got to your bestselling book and how you have this what looks like on our end, I know it's somewhat chaotic from what you've just described, but this really flourishing life with your great husband, Ari and your three beautiful kids?

**[00:06:42.7] LC:** Well, I have to say, he is pretty great. He has been very patient with me over these years and I also really loved what you said about how we feel like we have to be the calligrapher and the photographer and we have to do all these things and just to speak to that a little bit is that I have worn a lot of hats in my story. I have been a wedding planner, wedding producer in the beginning, started Southern Weddings when my husband was deployed to Iraq because I really needed something to keep my mind occupied and I also felt this very deep, oh man, I think a lot of you guys can identify with this but it was like a deep urge that I was supposed to create something.

I didn't know what I was doing, I had degree in music and theater. I don't know anything about journalism or magazines or design, but I just felt like I was supposed to do something good in the world and that sounds grand but I really felt that way, and so I started really grass roots. I opened up my little laptop, got on Microsoft Publisher and started mocking up a wedding magazine cover and like I said, I didn't have any experience but I did have a lot of passion. And from there it grew and this was back when there really only a couple of blogs and people didn't really even know what a blog was.

They would say, "Blob? Is that what you just said?" And Style Me Pretty was around and there was a great wedding blog called Faye and Greer, which I think is still active somewhere but not being posted on. But anyway, people were excited about us doing something new and different and it morphed from there. I started to take on consulting clients and I started to work with photographers on their brands and businesses. I went into business with Emily Ley to do a company called Making Brands Happen where we helped a lot of different creatives.

**[00:08:26.6] RP:** We just talked about that in a different episode.

**[00:08:28.9] LC:** Oh nice, yeah. We helped a lot of creatives launched their brands and so I've done a lot of things and worn a lot of hats, but what I had learned is that it's okay to do a lot of things and to not fit into a mold. It is okay to be a combination of things and really the title doesn't matter so much as long as you are expressing the creative gifts that God has given you and at the same time, if you have a creative gift, you should not feel pressured to turn it into a business.

You can just do things for the joy of doing them just because you love to write calligraphy doesn't mean you have to open an Etsy shop and it doesn't mean that if you don't open an Etsy shop that it doesn't matter and your gifts still matters and it still has purpose. So that's a little bit of my story and I just encourage anybody that's out there that's listening to use the creative gifts that you have been given and don't feel pressured to turn it into something.

**[00:09:23.3] RP:** That's such a beautiful message and I hope that people take that to heart, that people hear what you're saying, and we all are multi passionate. I think a lot of the women that listen to this podcast has so many gifts and talents and Christina is one of those many people, that she's a hand letterer and a painter and does photography and all of these things that I couldn't even imagine and how do we turn that into something profitable?

But you are saying, you don't have to and you don't have to do all the things like the world tells us that we have to. You don't have to juggle all the balls. You can say no to some of those things that may fall on the ground and you let them fall to the ground.

**[00:10:03.8] LC:** Yeah and at the same time, you are such a great example Christina, that there are times when you're going to break the mold and break it big time by creating your own title and your own rules for things and that's where I fell like where I am right now. That yes, I am the publisher of a wedding magazine, yes I do speak at workshops, yes I am an author of a book but I don't fit under one of those titles I'm just me and I am doing all of those things about feeling like I have to have a separate blog for all of those things, you know? I like gardening, I don't want a gardening blog. I just want to garden.

**[00:10:37.3] RP:** I like that and I think it just shows, recently too, maybe it's just a different site of Lara, but I feel like I have been seeing so much — you've always been authentic, but it's an extra layer of authenticity that you've been putting forth and maybe that's added motherhood because that's how I felt when I was a new mom and I felt like everything was a little bit crazy. But I just love the way that you show up in the world and could you speak a little bit to that? I don't really know how to question this.

**[00:11:04.5] LC:** Yeah. No I am actually really glad you said that. It made me a little teary eyed actually because I think back to, and I promise this relates and I've never told the story before.

But I think back to a moment when it was about three days after we had adopted Sarah, our daughter and I was nursing my son at the time and trying to nurse her too and I didn't have any milk supply at all. I was just totally stressed out because none of us had slept and it was such an emotional experience.

And beautiful but very emotional and really the kind of thing where we had to put our hands open and we didn't know if we were going to come home with her. We didn't know if the birth mom would change her mind so we really just went into it with total abandon and I remember sitting there unable to feed her and I have two crying babies that have no food in their bellies and just feeling completely out of control. Like, "There is nothing I can do to fix this," and I feel like something has broken me in that moment.

It just made me open my hands even wider and it really, for anybody, for both of you, I'm sure you've had life experiences that really made you have a gut check and it made you realize what matters and what doesn't and that was a big moment for me this year. It just made me realize like, "Why am I chasing after these things that don't matter? I am not in control and I shouldn't be in control," and so yeah. I don't know if that makes any sense but that to me speaks to authenticity.

That when you experience pain or challenge or just terrible situations, whatever they are, you have two choices. You can either, for me, it's relying on God and let go of control or you can try to control it and fix it and drive yourself nuts and chase your tail and so I am choosing the former to open up my hands and to trust and part of that is sharing my story, authentically. So I am grateful to hear that, I am super imperfect and I certainly chase after the wrong things many times and find myself chasing my tail as well but I am grateful to hear that that's coming through.

**[00:13:09.9] RP:** Yeah, for sure and every new addition of the PowerSheets, I feel like it gets even more to that core. The first time I used it in 2014, I was still in my job and really didn't know what I was doing and I was like, "Yes, I'm going to look for my purpose," and stuff like that and it was sort of there but I hadn't really gotten the courage to dig in. In 2015, it really pushed me to leave my job and to create my business really. I didn't know what it was but it made me open my eyes to something that was possible.

And this year, I am working through it and every single year I feel like it is encouraging me, pushing me to be better at being me rather than being this other version of Reina. I don't know if that makes any sense?

**[00:13:52.6] LC:** It does. It does, it's like the Making Things Happen Conference when we first started it almost 10 years ago now, my goal was to teach other people how to make big things happen in their lives. Basically how to add more to their lives, and overtime all of that has been stripped away from me like through almost losing my marriage, to almost losing my business, through motherhood and post-partum depression, miscarriage.

So many things have been these stepping stones for me to just let go of that and to realize it's not about making more happen or being someone other than myself. It is about making what matters happen and that is something that is, it's like, I can imagine it like as the very closest thing to your heart. Nothing can get closer than that, and it simplifies life.

**[00:14:40.0] RP:** I'm going to need like 10 deep breathes here because I'm going to start crying.

**[00:14:45.5] LC:** I wasn't expecting to talk about all of this, but you guys are wonderful.

**[00:14:49.3] RP:** Thank you so much for sharing so openly. I think all of the things that you do are so super intentional and just pushes us to go there when life pushes us the other way and says, "Do the instant gratification, go to Instagram, check out Facebook and just be with people that way." But what you're saying is go to your core. Go to what's most important, what's in your heart and what's really the most important thing there and yeah, I don't think I was prepared for this conversation but I am so glad that we're having it.

**[00:15:22.1] LC:** Yeah and my friend Lisa always says that we were made to crave something and I think we're in a society of craving. Like everybody is trying to meet our cravings. They are trying to fill those voids for us with stuff and things and inspirational phrases and those things are fine and good and there's nothing wrong with them and there is nothing wrong with buying things or great new products or whatever but those things cannot last.

So for me, the goal now is not about making big things happen. It's about doing something that lasts longer than me and cultivating something that lasts longer than me and you said, we find ourselves getting on Instagram or trying to escape and I find myself doing that all the time and it always reminds me. When I feel that emptiness after a Facebook five minutes or finding myself scrolling Instagram and I'm like, "Oh I feel so heavy. What is that thing? Why am I doing this?" It reminds me that was made to crave something, it truly was. It was made to worship something and what am I choosing to focus my attention on? Is it feeding me life or is it killing me? Because there really is no in between.

**[00:16:28.7] RP:** Well I appreciate that that we posted something on our Instagram feed yesterday and it was about your book and you commented on it and it really did make my day. So I don't know if that's encouraging to you, but you did made my day.

**[00:16:40.7] LC:** That is really kind.

**[00:16:42.1] RP:** Yeah and one of the things that I wanted to say was that you were maybe this is intentional, maybe not? But you are incredibly encouraging by just showing up in the world and what have been the things, I don't know, I'm sure you get fan mail from people or just e-mails that talk about the impact that your products or that your work is having. What has been encouraging for you to hear from I guess people who buy your products?

**[00:17:10.1] LC:** Yeah, so even recently, I was reading through and I always read the blog comments every day and try to respond and I think back to when I first started a blog way back when and this was I think 2006, and how impactful it was for someone to send me an e-mail and how it was really life changing for me. I remember two specific e-mails that I got right after I started my blog from people that said, "Hey, I just saw that you started a blog, I just want to encourage you. I've had a blog for a while and I just want you to know that you're doing a good thing."

And that never left me. Like for us, especially with the magazine, we really believed that there's power in handwritten note. Every week, I probably send out four or five boxes of free product to people, not for Instagram likes or anything but because I have read someone's story and believed that we can feel a need for them and so that has been really encouraging for me and



just a great reminder that that's where it's at. There is probably one is what I would like to say. One person. If I could just affect one person, then I have done my job and that is actually you mentioned my book.

Every time someone posts about my book, it just lights my heart on fire not because I believe I wrote a great book. I really don't. My story is super messy and I am not a great writer, but I'm just amazed that God used that book. As I was writing it guys, I cried so much writing that book. I grieved writing that book and then I just had to open my hands and be like, "Well the world's going to know my story. I hope this does something for someone."

But as I wrote it, I would envision in my mind and maybe for those that are listening, maybe you have a blog, or maybe it's even just a social media post, imagine just one person, like if you looked at your social media followers. Say you've got 10 people, if you have 10 people following you, if you imagine them in a room with you, 10 people is a lot of people, you know? One person is a lot of people so I don't know if that answers your question. I could talk about that for hours but I believe that there is power in affecting just one person.

[BREAK]

**[00:19:14.5] CS:** Do you a business that serves other businesses? We would love to feature you as a sponsor on our podcast. Each week, our episodes reach thousands of listeners and they are hungry and eager for the solutions that you would provide. If you would be interested in advertising with the Creative Empire Podcast, we would love to have you. All you have to do is jump on over to [creativeempire.co](http://creativeempire.co), and learn more about becoming a sponsor and getting your services and your products in the hands of our thousands of listeners. We're so excited about what we can do for you.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[00:19:51.8] CS:** When is the right time to start showing up and being vulnerable and authentic in your business?

**[00:19:57.9] LC:** That's a really good question.

**[00:20:00.5] CS:** Yeah, I mean I guess I came from a place of you read all the online — when you were first starting to get into the entrepreneurial world, I feel like I am a little bit newer and so everything is like “how to build 10,000 newsletter subscribers”, “how to increase your following on Instagram” and then we just had a conversation with someone else about how to build your following organically and how that really supports your business and your life better. I think one of the ways you can do that is by being authentic and vulnerable. But that’s really scary to do if you don’t have an audience or maybe if you do have somewhat of an audience.

**[00:20:35.9] RP:** Or you are trying to build your credibility.

**[00:20:38.3] CS:** Right, so how do you balance the professionalism of being a business owner and offering a great product or service to your customers or clients versus the authenticity?

**[00:20:51.3] LC:** Yeah, that’s a good question. We were actually talking this morning in our staff meeting about this new trend of hyper transparency that we’re seeing. You know people blogging about exactly how much money they are making and all that stuff and it’s fascinating because we are lawyers and we really like to take a peek into someone else’s life and say, “Oh my goodness, that’s how they do it? Oh my gosh!” But vulnerability to me is a very different thing.

There’s more risk involved in that and to me, the times that — it’s very interesting, lots of people say, “Lara, you are so vulnerable and I’m grateful for that,” and I don’t think about it to be honest. I think, “What can I share that is going to help change someone for the better?” And for me personally, the things that I am sharing are the things that match that answer to the question. So maybe it’s, I am just pulling this out of thin air, but maybe you have an eye glasses company. And sharing transparently about your business struggles is not the best choice, you know?

But for me, our business is about helping people to uncover what matters to them and then, like I mentioned before with the PowerSheets, sifting through all the noise to be able to do something about it. So if I am not doing that transparently, how’s anybody else know how to do that? And so that’s where we are is that we try to speak from a place of walking by example.

So I don't think there is a one size fits all answer to that question and I think that sometimes we're asking the wrong questions like, "how to grow your base to 10,000 people" is really irrelevant when it comes down to it. It is, I mean not that it's unimportant. Yes having a bigger following of numbers can translate to good things but more so, are you having the right conversations with people that are going to help them?

Because when we think about where we want to be when we're 80 years old, most of the time people do not see social media numbers in that picture. So if that's what's going to be important to you or not important to you when you're 80 years old, why is it important today? And again, I am not saying numbers are bad but we just need to focus more on what we're giving rather than what we're getting.

**[00:23:05.4] RP:** I really appreciate that answer and I think I'm also curious about you've been in business for a really long time and you have to be at some point be profitable or sustainable in order to have that kind of things that you wanted to have in your business and you obviously have a team and stuff like that too. So how do you balance that intentionality that you have and that impact that you want to make, the people's lives that you want to change with the more financial or the realities of the business world and business ownership?

**[00:23:39.6] LC:** Yeah, absolutely. We think about this all the time, we often talk about the profit of people. So for us, the number one focus has to be the profit of people and that means helping to change people's lives rather than dollar signs but dollar signs are the fuel that is needed to make those things happen and to grow a business that speaks those positive words to people, and so for us they're not disconnected. I think that we so often think that money and helping people or being intentional or disconnected and they are not.

It just depends on your perspective and how are you using that money, and so for us we have to look at, well I'll just give you a real life example. So recently, we're talking about, "what are the problems that people are facing that are following us? What are the main struggles that they have and how could we'd be better listeners with that?" Because really, that's what it's all about like people are going to buy your products if they buy your lifestyle and so we're not selling people products and when we do sell people products, we lose because nobody listens.

But when we are showing you and teaching you and equipping you to live a specific type of lifestyle or to encourage you in a way, that's when people really buy in. I don't know if that answers the questions but I think that they are one and the same and that we shouldn't be so afraid of the dollar signs and to be really transparent, we are not the biggest wedding magazine. I have two separate sides of our business. There is the Lara Casey Shop and then we have Southern Weddings. We're not the biggest wedding magazine, but I know that we have a very loyal following. And we will never be the size of Brides.com for many reasons or even Style Me Pretty, but we don't need to be so.

**[00:25:22.3] CS:** Right, why?

**[00:25:23.9] LC:** Yeah, we don't need to be and the reason is because we don't — well, I'll back up and say this.

**[00:25:29.0] CS:** No, what I meant is why would you want to be? I mean you have such a loyal following and I mean literally, you can't even produce enough magazines for your following to get one in hand. Your most recent magazine sold out very quickly.

**[00:25:45.6] LC:** It did. Man, it was fast. It did, yeah and I think too even for my book launch for instance, you know I worked with a publicist during that time and they were great and at the same time, we saw so much traction from what people would consider smaller bloggers talking about the book and telling their closest friends about it, that got more movement than some of these big media things that I did. So I think there's something to be said for that.

**[00:26:16.5] RP:** I love that and I wrote down profit of people three times on my notepad because I just love it. I have a group, it's a very small group called the Heart Centered Biz Bosses and the whole purpose is that we're people centered. We value people over the bottom line and obviously, you have to be profitable at some point in order for it to be sustainable but that's my mission and in business ownership.

But I was really wanting to ask you a little bit about one of the things that always comes up for me when I shop on your site is that you give back with your shop. Can we talk a little bit about that?

**[00:26:54.9] LC:** Yes.

**[00:26:56.0] RP:** I mean we're coming into the holiday season.

**[00:26:58.6] LC:** Yes, so we do. We have a wonderful organization we support called Love One Another Project and Carol, I have chills everywhere thinking about it, you all are going to get me emotional. Carol and Brian, I have known them for a long time because Carol are the ones who run Love One Another Project, Carol's son is a wedding photographer and so somehow I clicked over on something and lo and behold, there's a picture of Carol dancing around with kids in Africa and it intrigued me.

And I got to know her and she and Brian have hearts of gold. They are servants and they are just amazing. So yeah, we don't really talk about this too much because I also feel a little weird about it because we give a lot of money away to them and any other accountant who doesn't know me and my heart for this, they would look at our books and say, "You're giving percentage is way too high," and I just don't believe that.

I am very, very convinced that we are supposed to be helping them because we have been able to help them by the Grace of God do so many amazing things for children there. So yeah, that fires me up. When people are out and excited about PowerSheets over the holiday season and December rolls around and then the New Year, I think about Carol and Brian and how pumped they're going to be to get their checks and just thinking about what they're going to do with that money.

When people say things like, "I don't like selling products," I think about them. I just think, "I am all about selling products if I am going to help them out." I know our products help people to begin with but yeah Reina you opened up a can of worms for me here.

**[00:28:36.6] CS:** No, I'm so glad you guys are talking about this. Reina is being really humble right now. She is building a school for children in Africa through Pencils to Promise.

**[00:28:44.9] LC:** Oh my goodness.

**[00:28:45.5] CS:** And she wouldn't tell you that so I am going to.

**[00:28:47.9] LC:** Yeah, I love Pencils to Promise too. I have known about them for a long time as well.

**[00:28:52.0] CS:** Yeah, I mean we both really believe in the power of using your business to give back. I do it in a little bit of a different way. I support children through a charity and just for individual...

**[00:29:02.4] RP:** You sponsor them, right?

**[00:29:03.2] CS:** I sponsor two children through Children's International and hoping to do more.

**[00:29:08.4] LC:** Wow that is awesome.

**[00:29:09.3] CS:** As the profitability right so I am a little bit newer and so that's what I can do right now but it is something that I have to do.

**[00:29:14.5] RP:** Just start where you are. I love that you all do that.

**[00:29:17.9] CS:** I know but it is something that I've struggled with because, it's like you say, people get a little nervous and I get a little nervous and I don't highlight it very often because I worry that my clients or my customers will say, "Well why aren't you charging us lower prices?" And so that is something that I've always worried about. Reina I feel like is very comfortable. How do you feel about that? I mean you are very transparent.

**[00:29:41.1] RP:** I just tell people that 10% of anything you pay me is an investment in another's child education and I am upfront and honest and I love talking about it because I think my clients

are of the mind that if they can pay that much for coaching and to have their lives changed that they want to also help other people and I don't know if you found that Lara that people are giving and we expect them to be mean but they actually aren't.

**[00:30:04.6] LC:** Yeah.

**[00:30:04.7] CS:** Most of the time.

**[00:30:05.4] LC:** And what's funny is that when we first started this partnership with them, our goal was to have people donate directly to them. We even say that on our website, "We don't want to pull on heart strings to try to get you to make a purchase with us, which is why I rarely talk about it in conjunction with shop products. We want you to know about Love One Another project, I want you to get involved, I want you to go sponsor a child through them.

So if you are listening, go to Love One Another Project, Google it online or go to our shop and you will find a page there that has all the info. But yeah that is our hope and our goal is that it is not about us. It is about direct support for them.

**[00:30:39.8] RP:** Yeah, I feel really great every time I make a purchase because I know that there is money going to Africa and to that it's you know?

**[00:30:46.0] LC:** That's so cool.

**[00:30:46.9] RP:** Yeah and I think it's great that you do that.

**[00:30:49.8] LC:** Thank you that was really encouraging to hear.

**[00:30:53.0] RP:** Yeah.

**[00:30:53.1] CS:** Yeah and I love that it does, it feeds in with, I mean it makes me more excited to purchase from your website as well knowing about that. If some is just starting out though, I know at Making Things Happen, we talk a lot about this is "how do you give back?" And Nancy Ray is a great example of this as well but if you're just starting out, I remember being at Making

Things Happen and I hadn't started any of my current businesses, which thankfully, Making Things Happen has really made things happen for me.

But I hadn't started any of my businesses. So I am hearing you talk and I am hearing Nancy talk and I'm like, "How the heck am I going to get back? I don't even know how to make money." So if someone is in that position where maybe they're at Making Things Happen or shortly thereafter and they are trying to figure out how they can start a business that gives back, how can they get started and just do a little bit maybe to get started and then scale from there?

**[00:31:41.8] LC:** Yeah, the first thing that popped to my head was there was actually a story in the Bible about an old widow who gives what we would consider a penny because that is all she has but to her, that was a big deal. So for you, if you're making \$100 a year off of your Etsy shop, give a dollar to someone, you know? Don't use the smallness of your business or the smallness of your generosity, I should rephrase that. Don't use what you believe is small generosity to minimize the impact that that could have.

So my answer to you is to give anyway and to anyone that is listening, there are lots of ways that you can get involved with other organizations without that donating financially but I also believe that if you're listening, you probably have an iPhone, you probably have a dollar or so that you could donate to someone and really make a huge impact. You just never know. So whereas we're talking about building a school or for us it's this big dollar signs, it is just as impactful for you to reach out and give what you might believe is little but what is a lot to someone else in another country.

**[00:32:52.0] RP:** I totally agree with that. The first time I heard about this concept of being able to give back with your business was Kelly Parker-Smith of Hello World Paper Co. I don't know if you guys know her?

**[00:33:01.8] LC:** Yeah.

**[00:33:02.7] RP:** She is an incredible person but she just talked about it openly on her podcast and was like, "I give 10% away every month to a different charity" and I was like, "Whoa." 10% is 10% whatever you make, right? If you have a profit that even if it's a dollar or even if it's a



\$100, a \$1,000, there's no shame in not doing it, but I think that there's an added benefit to be able to give back to the world so.

**[00:33:29.6] LC:** Yeah, I agree and you know what's funny is that the first time you do it is the scariest. It's like really anything that you do in life is that you may feel this hesitation like, "Oh my goodness, am I going to be able to pay my bills?" It's the same thing with tithing. This is a big thing. 10% even is big for most of us, but you never look back. So if you are on the edge and you're just thinking, "This is super scary," to lean into it, try it once. You can always go back but I have a feeling you will never go back.

**[00:33:58.1] RP:** Agreed. I don't even know how we got on this topic but this is something I am super passionate about.

**[00:34:03.1] CS:** No, I agree. I mean I am newer to it and it was really Making Things Happen and you and Nancy that got me into it in the first place because I wanted a purpose that was bigger than my business and I felt insecure creating that purpose within myself and so whether that's a good or bad way to get into giving to others, I don't know? But it has created a sense of purpose beyond my business.

I don't have kids yet so it makes me feel responsible to these two kids. That I feel like I know pretty well because I get checkups from them all the time, I get letters, I get pictures, they're really involved and so it makes me feel really responsible for their futures and so if my business isn't doing well, I can't give them as much money and then that makes me feel really bad.

**[00:34:45.5] LC:** You know what though? That's so beautiful. The responsibility that you feel, there is something to be said for telling that story. So I don't know if you have told that story publicly but I think that a lot of people would be really inspired hearing that from you.

**[00:34:59.7] CS:** Thanks, yeah. I mentioned it once on my blog, but I don't know, I'm a little shy about it.

**[00:35:05.5] LC:** Well because it matters to you, you know?

**[00:35:06.8] CS:** Yeah, it's definitely a more vulnerable side.

**[00:35:08.9] RP:** Well, when Lara Casey tells you to do something.

**[00:35:11.9] LC:** No, no don't always listen to me.

**[00:35:15.5] CS:** I'll put it on my PowerSheets, yeah. Yes, so I think it's great that we've touched on this topic because for me, it was kind of a taboo topic. So I'm glad we got that out there in the open and it is interesting to me as well because you two are both fabulous moms and you have kids of your own and so you could be giving that money to them but instead, I feel like you're setting a really great example for them to look up to and say, "Wow, mom can do all these things and she can help these other people. I can do that too".

**[00:35:44.2] LC:** I hope so, I really hope so.

**[00:35:47.1] CS:** Yeah, so what do you think is on the horizon for Lara Casey Media and Southern Weddings and how can we continue to see you do some really amazing things in this world, putting people — what was the term?

**[00:36:01.3] LC:** I am only giggling because as you said, seeing me do some amazing things I was imagining all the blunders that happened at this house and this office every day. The spit up on my shirt, you know? But yeah, things on the horizon is simplifying our business, continuing to be good listeners and continuing to make it better. That's just a mantra that we have in the office is every year, is "make it better". Even if something is good, keep going, make it better. Even if a product sells out, make it better.

Yeah, you can find me at [laracasey.com/blog](http://laracasey.com/blog) by the time this podcast comes out, I will have released a new website. So I am excited about that and I have a new book coming out in the spring.

**[00:36:40.8] CS:** Yeah, that's very exciting and we love everybody over there. We've talked to Nicole now formally and Amber.

**[00:36:48.8] LC:** Yes.

**[00:36:49.4] CS:** So we've got to get your other girls.

**[00:36:50.8] LC:** Well, they love you guys.

**[00:36:52.7] CS:** Yeah, they're amazing and I think that's really quickly before we wrap it up here, I mean you have built such an incredible team and they are so loyal. You know I've never seen, it sounds like Lara Casey Media has a high turnover rate. It's quite the opposite and they are so excited when they talk about the company, it's almost like it's their own company. That's how excited they are.

So if you're just starting out and you're maybe looking to build a team or at least just hire a VA, what are some things that you could do to help people understand that when they work for you, it is really a team effort and Reina calls it Reina & Co because she wants people to understand that it's not just her, it's them as well. What are some things that you've done that you can get to foster that environment?

**[00:37:36.7] LC:** Well it's always focusing on the heart of what we're doing and there's so much autonomy in what we do. Yes, we work as a team, but everyone is also very much equipped and encouraged in their specific role and we're a small team. There's eight of us and that's still really small. We work from my little home office in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and we have several ladies that are remote with us as well. But the thing that ties us together is always coming back to our core mission.

For Southern Weddings that's helping couples to plan meaningful beginnings to married life and then to take them through and help them create a legacy through that. With everything that we do with PowerSheets and Making Things Happen Conference and the other side of the business, it's helping people to live on purpose instead of by accident. So I think it is, as a leader, living that out imperfectly and I say imperfectly on purpose because I think that really, it's been my biggest pitfalls and mistakes and blunders and failures that have fueled us for good.

The times that I had fallen flat on my face and been wise enough to be humbled, have been the times I think I've led the best and that really carries through throughout a team if you're making one. So my advice to people that are trying to grow as a team or strengthen one that they already have is to number one, know the mission, love the mission and live the mission yourself. It's got to be true to you. If it's not, then admit that it's not and you have to shake things up or dig a little deeper or start over, you know?

Then, if you're in the hiring stages because we just hired two new wonderful ladies, Amber and Jess about a year ago, is to know exactly what you want and what you don't want. Don't settle for anything if there are any red, green, orange, yellow flags, you run far away. I say that because it's just never worth it. Yeah, then the other thing is just some practical advice is to interview. We interviewed hundreds of women for these two positions.

**[0:39:45.0] RP:** Wow.

**[0:39:47.7] LC:** Even flew one out to be with us in person and sat with it for a year. It took us a year to hire them, two of them. Then finally, when they kind of dropped in our laps, after all we've been through and all the questions that we'd asked people, we had a much clearer understanding of what we needed and wanted and then we knew immediately that they were the right fit. So take your time, know what you want and what you don't want and like I said, live the mission yourself.

**[0:40:14.6] RP:** Thank you for encouraging us always to be so thoughtful. I think that that's just the word that pops to mind when you're very intentional and you encourage people to be really thoughtful as well.

**[0:40:23.6] LC:** Well, vice versa. I'm grateful for how both of you lead women specifically to be intentional.

**[0:40:31.8] RP:** Thank you. Well, I know that our audience has gotten so much from this. I think that if they haven't followed you before, is that possible?

**[0:40:43.5] CS:** I don't know.

**[0:40:44.9] RP:** But anyway, follow Lara if you haven't and we're excited to get everyone's feedback and hear what their take away list form this episode. Lara, thank you so much for being here and we'll see you next time. Go build your creative empire today.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:41:01.2] 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](http://www.creativeempire.co) where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]