

EPISODE 88

[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]

[0:00:35.8] CS: Hello everybody, welcome back to another episode of the Creative Empire podcast. Today, Reina and I are joined by Rhiannon Bosse of Hey Gorgeous Events and the Trouvaille Workshop. Rhiannon, welcome.

[0:00:47.1] RB: Thank you, I'm so glad to be here.

[0:00:49.3] CS: Yeah, we are definitely very excited to have you here. You're such a wealth of knowledge, and you've been such an inspiration for not just the creative and wedding industry, but also I think the heart-inspired industry, whatever that may be. You have done a great job at building a business, multiple businesses that really are defined by your own version of success and not what the industry says is successful, or pretty, or great, or whatever that may be.

You've really gone in and you've done that well by yourself. Can you just give us a little bit of a background and introduce us to you as a new mom with Lachlan, and you know, where you came from, and then how you got to where you are today?

[0:01:29.6] RB: Yeah, that feels like such a loaded question. I have a journalist background. I went to school for print and broadcast journalism, and had this big dream of being a news reporter. I have two degrees, many internships, unpaid internships on my resume, and that quote, "Sometimes on the way to a dream, you get lost and find a better one," is very reflective of kind of my life path.

In 2010, when we were getting ready to get married, I had this spark that kind of was ignited from my love of creating and building things, being in charge of things, because everyone knows the bride's usually in charge. I really couldn't find a job at the time of my graduation while we were planning this wedding, and I decided if there's not an opportunity out there for me that someone's going to give to me, I'm going to give one to myself.

I come from a family of an entrepreneur. My dad has his own company, which he started with a \$5,000 loan at 21 when he had a toddler, me. I've grown up watching him build a really powerful business based on integrity or nothing, and I thought, "I'm going to give myself an opportunity, and it's not going to fail," and I think starting with that foundation has been really pivotal part of my success. Just having this steadfast belief that what I'm doing is going to work and work here.

We just wrapped up our sixth wedding season for my event planning business, which you mentioned. I also have this workshop, which is kind of my heart and soul. It's where I can educate, and inspire, and really make sure the next generation of people doing what I do has a strong foundation for doing it the right way.

[0:03:04.0] CS: What would you consider to be one of the hallmarks of doing business the right way? I know you talked about your dad, and how you loved to bring the integrity aspect of running a business into everyday life and what you do. What would you consider to be maybe the right way and the wrong way to run a business? Yeah, I'll leave it at that.

[0:03:21.5] RB: Yeah, no, that also feels like a loaded question, because I think that's different for everybody right? The way I run my business and the model I have might be a disaster for somebody else. I think that's the cool thing about entrepreneurship is that it gives you the room to kind of call your shots, within reason, and that's one of the things I really love about having my own business.

Integrity, I think that ties in with a quality over quantity approach. We just do four weddings a year. We don't do 10, we don't do 20. That allows us to really love on our couples. Yeah, people are like, "Well, how are you profitable for that, or with that kind of model?" I didn't start out doing four a year. That's something that I worked towards, and as I've charged more for my services

and gotten better at my craft, and you know, gained this experience, I've been able to raise my prices, but lower the amount of contracts I take on.

I also have my workshop, which is an additional revenue stream, and then other small things that I do here and there. It was never that way, I didn't come out of the gates in 2010 charging what I do now. It's been a learning process, but having this quality over quantity approach so that I can be my best for my clients. I think integrity comes with admitting when you're wrong. I make a lot of mistakes. I'm not perfect, I don't do things perfectly, but I try and make things right when they're wrong, and I think that's a big thing that I see missing in our entrepreneur world.

It's that, there's not a lot of ownership with things, and I think, again, it comes back to that's not setting a great example for the next — especially being a woman, but the next group of women coming up in business. I think we have the responsibility to teach what integrity means so that we can ultimately better the client in the end.

[0:05:01.9] CS: What do you mean by that? There's not a lot of ownership of things?

[0:05:05.2] RB: I don't think a lot of — how do I put this? I think people want to get big fast, and they don't want to do the work. I see a lot of...

[0:05:11.9] CS: I love that you just said that.

[0:05:13.9] RB: I see a lot of mimicking other people, because their brand and what they're doing looks really great and fancy online, on social media especially. People think it's that formula, or that picture, that filter, that coffee, or that shoot, or that concept product idea, whatever. Put whatever in that blank is working for that person, it's going to work for me too.

That's why it's frustrating if you've ever been stolen from. I really struggle with that sometimes. I think my emotional maturity has changed a lot, but the first time it happened to me I crossed my arms and stomped my feet and got really upset, but now I look at it as an opportunity to educate people, and share resources to not make those mistakes, and here is a way to find who you are and find what your brand is, and what you stand for, and what makes you different.

We all have something really great to offer, it's just uncovering it, and that takes work. I don't think you should come out of the gates year one, and be well known, and be making lots of money, and be making all the right decisions, because then there's no room for growth when that happens.

[0:06:14.9] RP: Yeah, what are some of the ways ,just like you talked about a second ago, what are some of the ways that people can start really uncovering what is special about them, rather than looking outside, looking in Instagram, looking at other people's websites and try to copy them and emulating somebody else? What's a way that they can start looking inside of them? I think that's what you're saying right?

[0:06:32.8] RB: Yeah.

[0:06:32.9] RP: Find their own style or voice.

[0:06:34.9] RB: Gosh, million dollar question right? I think for me, because I can speak on behalf of who I am, what are you striving for as a person, right? For me, this is shocking. I'm an introvert. I get very nervous, and you know, lots of people, I hate running rehearsals for that reason. Nobody wants to listen to the little girl with an apron on at the rehearsal. I don't look like I'm authoritative, but I promise I am.

You know, beyond who I am as a person, I really love people. I love good conversation. I love surprising people. Successfully executing a surprise is like high in my list of loves in life. I love gifting people with things. Uncovering what makes me happy and how I want to spend my life has really helped me spearhead a career path.

When I was going through that situation of trying to find a job and not being hired by anyone in the journalism field at the time, I had this epiphany that if I can find something I'm really good at, and something I really love, and wherever those two paths come together, a job will exist. That's going to be like the key, or most of the key, to being really happy and successful. At the time, because I know myself, and I hope everyone has some idea of who they are as a person at the time, that was creating beautiful things, that was being creative, working with my hands.

It was also being really organized and detail oriented. Those are attributes that I've had for a really long time, and things that were always on my report card from teachers, and things that were obvious by the way I kept my room. It's just kind of opening your eyes to your environment and how you operate with people, and how you work within your life that you're able to uncover those things and figure out what makes you different. It's different for everybody, and it's a really vulnerable process to figure out who you are. When you can hone in on those things that make you different, that's when you have to run with that. That's where the good stuff is.

[0:08:22.4] RP: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for unpacking that a little bit. I think it's a complicated process, like you said, and it's really personal, and when we look outside of ourselves and, you know, compare ourselves to somebody else, it's just not going to measure up to what we wanted to be. It's just copycatting, and it's infuriating for the person who is being copied, right?

[0:08:40.7] RB: I think we have to give ourselves permission to change, too. I'm not the same person I was in 2010, and I'm sure you gals can probably say the same things about when you started in business. We change and we grow, and that's how we stay excited, and how we stay fresh, and how we inspire and educate people is that were always getting better.

Can you imagine how boring our world would be if we all just stayed the same? I mean, it would be really awful, right? I think giving yourself permission to change, whether that means changing your brand, or your logo, or your career path, or your business model, or your ideal client, or what you're good at, or you start outsourcing things because you realize, "I actually really don't like this part of business. I'm not that good at it, but this person is." I think giving yourself that permission is really important, too.

[0:09:23.7] RP: I think you just summed up my life in that paragraph.

[0:09:27.4] RB: That's hard too, like the giving yourself permission. I think as women, we feel like we have to do it all, and I feel that especially as a mom now. I think the first few months were really hard. Beyond not having sleep, and just getting used to having a new baby who is so well behaved and lovely in my world, but I want to do it all. I wanted to work every day, and I wanted to have all the weddings, and look fancy on Instagram, and wake up at six and go to the

gym, and cook all the meals, but I can't do it all. I really don't want to do it all, once you dig deep and figure out a little that that's not actually the way you want to live your life.

I've just really found, in this new role of being a mom, that extending as much permission to myself and grace to myself to know where my strengths are, but then outsource or let go of the weaknesses, that's really refreshing. That's when you can actually be the best at kind of your core competencies, if you will, is when you let go of the things that don't need to be taking up your time.

[0:10:21.8] RB: Yeah, this is like a perfect transition to the question that I had, and we're talking about success, but success looks like a different thing now that you are a mommy, right? What are some of the things that maybe you've done differently since you become a mom, or just in preparing — as an entrepreneur, I think it's really hard to prepare to become a mom if you aren't already. What are maybe some of the things that you've done?

[0:10:46.2] RB: Yeah, love this question. I feel so passionate about kiddos, and moms, and especially moms who work from home. There's not a right way to do it. I think that's the biggest thing is there's so much out there, so much literature, and forums, and blogs, and books about how your kid should sleep and eat, and should you breastfeed or formula feed, or cloth diapers or, it's like you're pulling in a million different directions.

If just growing a human isn't enough, you're overwhelmed with all these things that the world is throwing your way. One important thing I think to note is I'm a very intentional person by nature, always have been, intentional person before it was cool to be intentional, and one of the things when I started my business is, "If I'm going to do this thing, I'm going to try and be really strategic with it."

What I mean by that is, when 24-year old Rhi started Hey Gorgeous Events, she was thinking about 30-year old Rhi and where 30-old Rhi wanted to be. That would be maybe spending a few years or many years of my life working a certain way, so I wouldn't have to live my life in a rut down the line. I wanted to look back on my life as a mom and remember slow mornings. I wanted to remember the flexibility of being able to say no to a client, and not being resentful

towards my job or my clients. There was a lot of things that I wanted to be able to do, and I knew it would require hard decisions in the beginning, but it will be worth it in the end.

I think my advice for younger women, older women, whoever it is that wants to start a family, is start thinking about what you need to do now to set yourself up for the lifestyle that you want in the future. That's one of the reasons why I just do four weddings. Living in Michigan, our wedding seasons here are kind of limited because of weather. People don't want to get married when it's negative 15 out. I have a very short window of when my work takes place, and that's also a short window of when we can go camping, and we go outside, and we have picnics and walks. I don't want to be away from my family every single weekend.

I don't know that there is any advice that I can offer, but thinking again of the kind of life you want to live and the kind of mom you want to be, what you need to do now so that you can have a [unintelligible] and you can work if you want. Not everyone wants to work, and that's fine too. If you want to work, and balance a business, and do something creative, how can you balance that with being the best mom you want to be, too?

[0:12:58.3] CS: I love that. Reina and I just got back from Making Things Happen, and this was the revelation I had for myself, is that I've been putting so much of my fuel into running this business that I had forgotten about the other half of my life that I am running it for, right? It's been such a good intentional process of kind of breaking down what I've been doing, and saying this is why I'm doing it, and like pouring back into my family.

One of the most popular episodes recently was the Scobeys. I don't know if you know the Scobeys, and they talked a lot about building their life the way that they want to and having a business that supports that. I think that that's exactly what you're talking about with that intentional living. Can you explain a little bit on what kind of decisions you've made? I mean, you've talked a little bit about the — four weddings and stuff like that, but in terms of your — the days that you have, what does that look like in intentional decision making?

[0:13:50.4] RB: Sure. I love what you said, I actually did a blog post years ago called *Defining Your Success*, and my opening quote was, "Either your life exists for your business or your business exists for your life." It's unknown, so I apologize if somebody does know who said that.

I give them full credit. That's not something I came up with, and that just resonated so well with me in that moment, knowing that I was on the verge of wanting to be a mom and to take my business to this next level.

It requires a lot of hard decisions, and I love that you mentioned MTH, because that's really been pivotal for me to uncover what those decisions are and have the courage to make them. It's saying no a lot. It's facing the fear of letting people down when you say no. I have had to say no to a lot of workshops and speaking engagements, and not even on a business level, but a lot of personal things I've had to say no to. No, I can't go on this with girlfriends, because I have a wedding that weekend.

I've missed out on a lot of friend's weddings because I've had commitments so, when I do four weddings a year, I can't really say no to a wedding to go to another one, you know? It's going to be ultimately contributing to my household on a monetary level. Saying no a lot is probably the biggest decision I've had to make. I also kind of make this full circle from when you guys introduced me about defining your own version of success.

I've had to get really honest with myself, because I can get very distracted very easily by what other people are doing, but I've had to get honest with myself and almost write the script, or a motto, I guess you could call it, that outlines what success looks like for me. Because what success looks like for me is very different than it looks like from the next person, and it should be. For me, success maybe doesn't mean making six figures, maybe it does. It might not mean that I'm working five days a week, maybe I'm working three. Maybe it means I outsource more things, maybe it doesn't, but that's the beauty of it is that definition is what I want it to be.

In that blog post, actually, and I have it pulled up here. This was inspired by Shay Cochrane of SS Stockshop, who I'm sure you all know, and she's wonderful. She actually spoke at this workshop on defining your success, and I remember that the words that kind of poured out of her mouth, and I perked up immediately, and I thought, "Wait a second!" Again, it's that giving permission to all of us in that room, and me giving it to anyone who is listening right now.

You've got to do that. You don't have to have the formula, that one-size-fits-all of what success means. It can be relative to your life and what you're looking for, and I'm a big believer that

small is the new big, too. My version of success kind of fits in line with that, and there are some prompts here. So for me, my version of success, or my business will be considered a success if I'm able to maintain a reasonable work/life balance.

My work cannot rule my life all day every day. That's important to me. I have a marriage, I have friends, I have hobbies, I like to work out, I like to sit on the couch and watch TV. If I cannot do those things, I'm not successful. If my business generates revenue where I can spend and invest in my family, our home, our life, our hobbies, in our future, my business is a success.

If my business keeps me fulfilled, happy, intrigued, my business is a success. When those things are not being done and those needs are not being met, that's when I know that I need to reevaluate things and go back to the drawing board. Those are just really simple prompts that I came up, with but they're huge. They're revolutionary.

How I think about my business, and the decisions I make, and when I get inquiries for more weddings and they sound really great, even though I have my four booked, it's going back to that, and those are what inspire me to say no to those weddings. Even though they're really tempting to say yes to them. Does that make sense?

[0:17:20.5] RP: Absolutely. I think having those prompts in place ahead of getting those inquiries is the key, right? Because we get so triggered by, I don't have enough, or I am not booking enough, or I'm not getting enough inquiries, and what you're saying is set that standard before you get those inquiries.

[0:17:38.9] RB: Yeah.

[0:17:40.2] CS: Practically speaking, I know you have office hours, and like, what are some other things that you've been able to implement to make this a reality and not just a blog post? I love this, we'll have to link to this blog post in the show notes.

[0:17:51.2] RB: Yeah, no, office hours are huge. I remember the first MTH I went to, we talked about office hours, and I remember thinking, "Wait, people have office hours? You're allowed to

do that?" Yes, you're allowed to do that. That gives structure to your clients and it teaches your clients, in turn, how you want to be treated.

I think just sticking to your boundaries is everything. It's really easy, again as women, and as a people-pleaser, especially for me, it's easy to just say, "Well, even though I'm ready to work and it's 8:30, and my office hours aren't until nine, it's okay. I'll just take this call." Well, then all of the sudden, your clients start expecting you to start working at 8:30 every morning, and then it's a slippery slope, and then you're staying later than 4:00, if your office hours end at four like mine do. Then you're calling your husband, because you can't pick up your son, because you're going to go a little over.

Then it's like, why even have those boundaries if you're just going to be kind of disrespecting them? Office hours are huge. Boundaries are huge. I think being really honest in our communication with clients from the get-go in the beginning of a relationship helps make these boundaries really clear. I'm really honest with my clients that my family is really important, so I don't work on weekends unless it's the week of your wedding, or a meeting if we need to, which I understand my clients usually work nine to five in an office, and they can't often talk during the day, which is fine.

Being very clear with them that if you text me at 10:00, I'm probably not going to text you back. I might email you the next day, but that's my boundary. That's my personal time with my family. Being really honest upfront I think eliminates the risk of running into any awkward problems down the line if those things weren't discussed, and then like I said before, saying no to things. I know it's not really like a tangible action step per se, but they know, and going back to giving yourself permission not to justify things.

I think it was Ashley Olsen, maybe, or maybe it was Mary Kate who said, "No is a full sentence," and I loved that so much, because it is. Can you do this for me? Nope. Can you be there and be a part of this? Nope. I think it's respectful and professional to explain why sometimes, but I think we feel like we have to be everything to everyone and we don't. It's okay to say no to things.

[0:19:56.8] RP: I love that. No is a full sentence. Listen to that people. Have you made mistakes around this? I know that you are a super intentional person, and I feel like I am a lot of the time

too, but I am also a person that makes mistakes, and I'm wondering if you have a situation, or maybe somebody in your workshop, ladies, have had a situation where you can bring up where it was maybe not as ideal as we had hoped and have learned something from it?

[0:20:24.5] RB: In terms of maybe a time where I said no, and I wish I would have said yes?

[0:20:28.8] RP: No, didn't have a boundary, or like you need to have a boundary, or something like that.

[0:20:34.8] RB: Yeah. I don't know if this is an example, but maybe a situation where, for me, working with weddings, my job is very highly emotional. I'm working with people's personalities and emotions in a really heightened way. More than maybe an Etsy store owner might, who has hundreds if not thousands of sales a month, and I am very aware weddings bring out things in people that otherwise would not be brought out.

I feel like a lot of the times I get dragged into family problems. I've worked with a lot of brides who have lost their moms, which is a really sensitive subject, newly divorced parents at weddings. I feel like I'm sometimes a therapist on top of being a wedding planner, and my ability to love really well on people and to talk through things can sometimes cross a professional boundary, I think, because I want to help and listen and be there.

When you cross that boundary, it's giving permission to the client to cross it back with you, and that's when the after-hours phone calls happen, and you don't want to be — you don't want to let that person down, and you don't want them to walk away from their wedding and leave you a bad review because they felt left in the cold by you.

I think that's a really hard one. There's not really like a hard path line when it comes to emotional boundaries with what I do. I also have clients that are paying a lot of money for their wedding, and that's why I'm able to do four a year, and money is a really big emotional trigger, right?

I have to be really respectful of people's decisions when it comes to money, and a lot of people say, "It must be so fun to just spend people's money." I'm not going on shopping sprees with

people's credit cards, right? I'm helping respect what they're allocating for their budget, and I'm respecting hard-earned money, but there's a lot of hard decisions that come along with my job, and I have to carry the weight of that and still maintain those boundaries at 4:00.

I've got to be mom Rhi, and wife Rhi, and I can't be Rhi that's carrying the weight of bride A, who is in a huge fight with her mom and doesn't know where to turn. That's not an exemption, I've done many after-hours phone calls, and I'm very much here as a resource to my clients, but those boundaries have to be respected even when it involves your emotions. One of my favorite processes, or thought process, if you will, and this is credit to myself. I have no one copyright with this one, but it's "You can care, but you can't carry it."

What I love most about that is you can care about other people, and their emotions and situations, but you can't carry the load of it. Emotionally, physically, financially, whatever that means for you. That has been really refreshing for me in a lot of different ways, professionally and personally, is you can still be an emotional, empathetic person, but you don't have to allow those things to weigh you down day in and day out. That's been a really big revelation for me over the last year, especially.

[BREAK]

[0:23:13.5] CS: Mysweetpoll says after I found the Creative Empire girls, I am hooked. Can't stop listening. Whenever I am working on something that allows me to listen to a podcast, I do it. It's me investing in my business and myself. Christina and Reina are my friends. Friends that I haven't met yet. You know you have them too. Thank you so much, and we are honored to be considered your friends and a business resource. It was always our intention to create a great, free resource that was worthy of being a paid content site, but free, obviously, because we've been there in our businesses.

We know where you're at, we felt the struggle, and this is our way to make it a little bit easier on all of you. If you have been inspired, or if you have just enjoyed the episodes that we're putting out there, please leave us a rating or review on iTunes. It's a little thing that makes a huge difference for us as podcasters. Thank you all.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:24:05.5] CS: This is so brilliant, Rhiannon, because as a lawyer, half the time what I'm asking people to do is not to sue each other or to get deeper into some kind of conflict, but just to listen. It's amazing. 90%, I'd say, of the problems that my clients have that they come to me with are easily solved by just really putting on their big girl pants and having those hard conversations with people.

Maybe it's not a hard conversation, maybe it's a situation where someone's not paying them, they've gone MIA, and it's just a matter of being like, "Hey, what's going on? Obviously, there's a life factor that's affecting you," and typically they come back and they say, "I'm so sorry." When you approach them with that kind of kindness, or as you called it, loving on someone, they come back and they're so much more acceptable to talking to you rather than ignoring you when you say, "What's going on" rather than, "Where is my money? Why haven't you paid me yet?" or whatever the situation is.

I love that this is something that you're acknowledging, and I think it's another way that you are more of a disruptive force in the industry, is that you take this time to be intentional. Not just with your business and with yourself, but with your clients. In your business, what does it look like for you when you're maybe working with these high-end clients, and they have these situations where they come to you?

What does it look like for you to love on them well? Do you set that out from the beginning, or do you kind of just allow each client to go on a different path or a different journey with you? Since there are only four, is it something that's a full-time endeavor, where you're constantly in contact with them, or is it more of like there are certain periods of feasts and certain periods of famine with them?

[0:25:45.0] RB: Yeah, great question. I feel like I'm in a potential client phone call. I love that. I think there's a pretty loose, general structure that I follow with each client, and that's just how I do things, but I also like to adjust my communication style to fit the needs of each client. So an example is I had a bride a couple of years ago, her mom hired me. The bride was very hands

off. She knew what she liked and what she wanted, but she wanted nothing to do with the logistics, emails, phone calls, things like that.

If we had a decision, run it by her, that's great, but at the end of the day, very hands off. I actually had to ask her, request that she create an email address just for the purpose of being able to center things. Kind of a unique planning process, but it was a lot of fun, because I got to work with a mom who was fulfilling, I think, a lot of her own wedding desires in planning this wedding, which is really cool.

With that wedding and the planning process, there is just a lot of different communication barriers that I had to overcome. Instead of a lot of the emails, it was a lot of phone calls to justify things. On phone calls, I had to be really to the point with this mom, because they would go on and on, because mom wanted to just talk and be heard. I almost had to be really a better listener than normal, if that makes sense, and be able to tell when she was calling to be heard versus when she was calling for information, if that makes sense.

It's just being really aware and in tuned to what people need. If I have a client who, let's say she's older, and she's been waiting a really long time to get married. Sometimes those brides just need a little extra love. Sometimes if my brides are really self-conscious on the physical level, those are the brides that I really love going to their dress fittings with, because that's an opportunity for me to love on them, and tell them how beautiful they are, and to let them know that they look incredible in every dress that comes out.

To remind them that somebody in this world is choosing to marry them for who they are. Those are opportunities, again, where I can really love on someone well. Communication wise, with my clients and the planning process, it's pretty similar throughout each wedding that I do. The same check lists and things have to be done with each client. I treat each client the same, regardless of your budget, but it just comes down to like, serving them really well, and it's treating them with respect. It's listening to what they like, where they met, what their biggest concerns are, their touch points that I need to meet in the planning process.

Is it budget, is it distance, is it you're overwhelmed with your full-time job? Like I said, big into the gifts. So they're getting a lot of gifts throughout the process to let them know I'm thinking of

them. There is a lot of periods in the planning process. If anyone is familiar with planning a wedding, where you're not really doing a lot, because a lot of the big decisions are done, and there's things you can only do so close to the wedding.

So it's just sending them a message, "Hey, I am thinking of you. I hope you are having a great week at work. 100 days left until the big day." It's just constantly letting you know that I'm here to serve them and help in any way I can.

[0:28:35.1] CS: Yeah, I love that you are staying in touch with them and keeping up with those big moments. That's huge, and it sounds like you have your systems down and in place so that it's not overwhelming to do that either, which is important. What's been the most fulfilling role that you've filled lately in your work as the curator of Trouvaille, or in your business with Hey Gorgeous Events, or even as a mom to Lachlan?

[0:28:58.1] RB: Oh gosh, yeah that's a big one too.

[0:28:59.5] CS: Maybe we'll take out the personal stuff, because I feel like I just love watching a lot on Instagram, but yeah, I guess just in the business side of things, what's been the most fulfilling role that you've been able to fulfill lately? That's a lot of fulfillment.

[0:29:12.2] RB: Yeah, a lot of filling up my cup here. I mean, I'm going to parallel the two together, because I think it's important, but I think becoming a mom in a year where I've had a strange relationship with my mom. That is something very new, last year and a half, and she's only met Lachlan once. That's been real hard, and I don't talk about that a lot. One of the first times, other than Trouvaille, that I've even shared that, and I've had to really be aware of the kind of parent I wanted to be with Lachlan, so that I don't look back and regret any of my actions or the things that I've done.

I am trying to be selective with my words here, but I know every parent loves their child, but there's a special emotion I have for Lachlan, in light of what's happened with my own mom, and I think that allows me to fight for my boundaries in a different way, and that it allows me to have a certain type of intention with when I spend time with him, and I am really grateful for that. I also think that my relationship with my mom — and it's not lost on me that these brides find me

0-but my relationship with my mom has allowed me to really serve those brides that don't have moms anymore.

It allows me to be aware of the moms of the grooms that want to be included, but they're just not, because they're the groom's mom. I find ways to almost use different words with them now, and there's things that I can do, actions I can take, to include those people that I might not have done before I was a mom. So I think a lot of people say like, "Well my work fell apart when I became a mom," right?

I lost my zest for what I do, or I closed up shop and I just want to be a stay home mom, which is great. We need stay at home moms, we need people at nine to five, we need all the people in the world to do the things that we're doing, but for me, my passion for my work was reignited in a way when my son was born, which was really cool, because I didn't think that would happen. I thought I would just want to close up shop, but loving my son has allowed me to love my work more, and I think that's been the coolest thing and the biggest way I've been fulfilled in the past nine months.

[0:31:07.7] RP: Thank you for sharing that with us. I know that whenever you are going through something personal, it's not easy to share it, and you tied that so beautifully to the current work that you're doing and identity that you have as a mom, and I can see how that translates to the brides that you work with, the grooms that you work with, and how important that those relationships end up being for them as well.

[0:31:07.7] RB: Yeah, I think relationships are — they're messy, and they're awkward, and they require hard conversations, and an older version of me will just turn a blind eye into the hard stuff, because no one wants to confront someone or say, "Hey, you made me feel like, crappy when you said that or did that." I've had people steal from me, and my original response would be to block them, and I swore I was not going to tell this story, but I'm going to tell it.

I had a gal years ago who had some things that looked very similar to mine, and it was in the middle of a really big legal battle I was having with someone different, and I had just gotten very sensitive, and very upset, and reacted probably a little prematurely, and my immediate response was to block her so she couldn't see anything I was doing anymore. I had forgotten about that,

gone on my way. Well, about a year later, I had come across her account and had opened it, and I couldn't see her pictures.

And I thought, "Well that's just weird. She's not private." It didn't say user was private, where you have to request, it just said no posts. But then I saw the number for her pictures, and knew she had posts, and I thought, "That's really weird, I wonder why I can't see anything." Well, I asked my husband, and I said, "Can you check out this girl and see if she's private? I'm trying to figure out what's going on," so he pulled up her account on the phone next to me on the couch, and he could see everything.

So I was like, "That is so weird. She must have me blocked. What did I do? Did I say something?" and again, I can't even remember what had happened a year ago, and so I was like, "I'm just going to call her," because again, my emotional immaturity has changed a little bit. I said, "I'm going to call her, and I'm going to figure out what I did, and I am going to make it right, and I am just going to see what is this happening, because I don't know what I did to make her upset."

So I cold called her. I remember I was sitting in Lachlan's nursery nursing him, and I was still in my maternity leave. So I mean, I was ready to make this right. I called her and she didn't answer, so I left her a voice mail, and I'm checking this story, because it's so unlikely, but it just is a testament to how I've changed. She called me back half an hour later, and I told her the whole story, and I said, "You know, I came across your account."

I actually found her on my Trouvaille account, because I really try to encourage a lot of wedding planners from that account, not so they can come to my workshop, but because that is part of my mission is to inspire people. So if people can't afford to come to Trouvaille, or it's not for them, at least I am still here to offer some encouragement. So I was telling her this and I said, "You know, I noticed that I think I'm blocked, and I just wanted to make sure I didn't do anything, and if I did, I'd like to apologize or at least talk through it."

And bless her heart, she goes, "Yeah, about a year ago, I don't know if you remember this, but you blocked me, so I blocked you back" and religion aside, I was like what a humbling moment to see a change in yourself, and see an opportunity to talk through something really awkward and

messy, and I remember looking at Lachlan, and I remember thinking I am a new person and this is a really cool opportunity. I said, “You know what? You’re right, I did block you!” I said, “It’s all coming back to me now, and I’m really sorry that I did that.”

I said, “I’m different now. I have a baby right now that I am feeding, and I am just really sorry if I made you feel any way that you don’t deserve to,” and she goes, “That’s okay,” and bless her heart, she goes, “I actually have another account where I do-” she makes ribbons, and she was like, “And I follow you on that so I can see what you are doing all the time, even though you had me blocked.” I was like, “Touché, girlfriend,” and we had a good laugh.

We talked for about half an hour, and it was funny because the next week, I got an email she had bought a ticket to my workshop. She came to Trouvaille in the spring, and I’ve never had like, a warmer embrace from somebody when she walked in that door. Yeah, I get emotional when I tell that story, because like I said, it is a testament to relationships matter, and dealing with things in that awkward, messy way is sometimes the best way to go about it.

[0:35:05.6] RP: So good. I think that even though you weren’t emotionally mature, as you said, but I think that you maybe were. You were protecting yourself from whatever you were going through at the time. So yeah, blocking isn’t maybe the best way, but for you, at that moment, you had to protect your heart, and I think that’s fair game, and sorry, I’m just going to finish this thought...

[0:35:26.4] RB: No, I agree with you because I don’t think we can just really say, “Oh, it’s okay, steal from me, I’ll forgive you.” Not that I am insinuating she was stealing, but there is some discernment when it comes to making the right legal decisions, and Christina, you are probably like, “Yep, yep,” but I think you have to have the knowledge and the education to know when to do the right thing on a legal level.

So if it was a situation like a cease and desist was required, or my dear lawyer who’s on speed dial, that would have been something I would have done, but in this circumstance, it was probably a petty block, but yes, something that I needed to do to protect my heart. I’m just really grateful that we were able to work through that, yeah.

[0:36:10.7] CS: Yeah.

[0:36:10.8] RP: It's so cool to see that transformation, thanks for telling us about it.

[0:36:13.8] CS: Yeah, thank you so much for sharing all of this. One thing that I just want to quickly interject is there is so much pressure, and I love the community over competition movement, but there's so much pressure, I think, from it, because all good things can go too far, and what I've seen is some people that are being criticized because they're not sharing their trade secrets, or they are not sharing something, or they are not allowing someone to use their exact same logo.

I mean personally, I understand that. You worked really hard, or you paid someone a lot of money to figure out what those systems and processes, and paid someone for your logo, and so on the one hand, it's really hard to part with that and share it, and I don't think you necessarily need to, especially when there are opportunities out there like the Trouvaille Workshop that give you the insider's peek without necessarily inviting you in over your shoulder to look at exactly how you run your business and book your brides.

So I don't know that I have a question, but I do want to just acknowledge there's a lot of pressure on people nowadays to share everything they know, and I just think it's wrong to expect that of people. I think it's appropriate to respect their boundaries, and respect what they have built. At the same time, if you can gather any information, or some kind of system that helps you in a way that is in a community with them, then I would encourage that.

But I think there's just this expectation that we should just forgive everybody for everything, and I don't know if that's appropriate or not, but I guess I don't really have a question, Rhiannon.

[0:37:42.4] RP: It's the reality of it.

[0:37:43.9] RB: And I am so glad you brought this up, because I talk about this subject with a lot of people, and might stir the pot a little bit by talking about this to anyone who listens, but I love "community," and I am putting air quotes around community right now, because it is very much a catch phrase that I think we overuse in our industry.

Community is a great thing when done right. It's one of the driving forces behind my workshop. I felt there was a need to have a community, as a multifaceted wedding planner who started six years ago, and was very alone and isolated. So community is a good thing when done right, everything in moderation, right? But community, I've got to be careful with my words here guys, we can't all be best friends. We're not wired to all be best friends, and we're not running businesses to freely give away things to our competitors.

I've struggled with this, and haven't said anything publicly on Instagram posts, or on the blog posts like I normally do when I'm feeling very strongly opinionated about something, because I've been very fearful of maybe upsetting people, but I have worked so hard with my business, as most people probably have with theirs, and I have given so much in sacrifice, and believed so strongly in our mission and in what we do, and the way we serve our clients, that for me to sit and figure out a better way for people that are maybe getting clients over me, Or for me to give back to the people who I think deserved to work hard and figure it out on their own, I am doing a huge disservice, and I don't think that is fair.

I think we can all strive to be respected by one another, but I think respect is different than being liked, and I think we're all so concerned with being liked by one another that we're forgetting what business is all about. I don't mean we can't lift one another, and share resources, and things like that. I have many friends on speed dial, I have many friends I FaceTme with every day. I ask a lot of people, "Do you do consulting? I want to bounce ideas off of you." I am happy to pay for people's time.

The example I always give is I don't think the CEO of Burger King is going out for lunch with the CEO of McDonalds and swapping recipes for their french fries. It's just common business sense, and we have to be smart about the empires we're building, and be smart about the legacy we are trying to leave for our families and for ourselves, and I don't think that means being friends with everybody.

I know that some people are going to be really turned off by that, but that doesn't mean that you can't be nice, and it doesn't mean you can't be supportive, but it means, again, having that

boundary with what community means for you. So that's my perspective on the whole work competition. I think it really needs to be defined what that means.

[0:40:08.4] RP: Yeah, I appreciate that, because to me what community means is that you pour into other people so they can pour back into you, not just, "I'm going to take, take, take because" name of community. That's not what community is. When you are depleting the well and never pouring back into it, you are not serving community, and I see this so often in Facebook groups.

Not necessarily naming one, but I think in a lot of them that they're either trying to sell their services, or trying to find an answer for whatever their question is, to find the quick and easy shortcuts, and like you're saying, what Christina deals with every day with the trade secrets, and what you're talking about in terms of your processes, and things that you have learned with your time and energy, and all of the things that you poured into your business.

It's not on us, necessarily, and we all have things to learn, obviously, but it's not for us to hand out answers. This is not what this podcast is about, and that's not what community means to you, it sounds like.

[0:41:07.2] RB: Well, there is a study that I loved to read, and I just finished reading, well I have a couple of pages left but it's *Shoe Dog*. It's the biography of Phil Knight, who created Nike. Brilliant story, really cool to read the back story of Nike, and to know when I put my shoes on I think differently about them, but the study I read — and I read a lot of studies, a lot of books, and one of the studies that I recently read is that people are more likely to value their belongings if they paid for it themselves versus being given to them.

I think that translates to the things we learn in business, that we're more likely to work harder for things if we have to work hard for them ourselves versus being given by someone else. I think we are more likely to appreciate what we do and believe in ourselves when we take the long way, instead of looking for shortcuts, and that's what I wish for people. I think that's one of the reasons why I love my business and I believe in it so much, is that I worked really, really hard.

I was 24 in a 900-square foot apartment with no money, desperate for any lead I could get, and I remember my first wedding was \$500, and I was so proud of that wedding because that meant so much to me. That meant confidence from the first bride ever who believed in me, and believed that I could offer something on her wedding day, and I was so eager to serve her well. Almost the same amount of love I had poured into that wedding that I did for this past wedding we just did, which was \$300,000.

I wasn't paid that, that was what the wedding budget was. When you put in the hard work, it's so much more rewarding. So it's like, all the people in Instagram are looking for a quick diet fix. There's these hose, and these detox teas, and these wraps, and it's like, gosh, I wish they worked, because I would be wrapping myself like a mummy every day, believe me, but I would bet you that the woman with the tea and the wraps, who's losing weight, and taking her selfies in the mirror probably doesn't feel as good as the new mom who gets up at six every morning and goes to the gym, and sweats it out, and feels so insecure, because she hasn't looked her best, but she does it every morning day in and day out, and goes home and her husband tells her she looks beautiful.

That's the woman that's going to feel motivated to get up and do it again the next day, and I guess that example parallels to me, my approach with business when I need to figure something out. I want to take the long way sometimes. Yes, I don't think you should struggle through things, and there's resources and outsourcing.

There's ways to make your life easier, but I think some things have to be figured out the long way, and you have to fall flat on your face, and you have to make mistakes to better yourself and your business in the long run.

[0:43:28.7] RP: Thank you.

[0:43:29.7] CS: Yeah, this is just brilliant, and I just love how we looped back around to where you're defining not just your own version of success, but also your own version of community and of what it means to be intentional. Thank you so much for coming on today. If you were to look at your empire, I know we talked about what your empire looked like at 24, and now to the

age of 30, now looking ahead in the next six years, what do you see for yourself and what do you see for Hey Gorgeous Events or Trouvaille? What does your empire look like?

[0:44:00.3] RB: These are good questions, guys. I feel like you're my life coach pondering these things with me. You know I would love, I always had a dream to write a book. I believe in putting things in the universe, so I put so many things out there in this call live, I'll that out there too. I'd love to have a flower shop one day. I have a really cool idea in my head of what that would look like, and how it would be different, and how it would go beyond serving clients like I do now in serving the community as a whole.

I was just awarded the Grand Rapids Business Journal — there's a "40 Under 40" every year, and I was picked as one of the 40 winners, and I was the youngest woman who had gotten an award this year out of the nine that were picked, and the second year, I was youngest of the all the winners. I felt really silly when I got the award, because I am thinking to myself, "Okay I am not a banker, I am not a doctor, I'm not working with kids in low income areas. I am not in schools."

I feel like I did something that's frivolous and fluffy, but I was sitting at the gala the other night and I thought, "I am making a difference. I am making a big difference in my bride's and groom's lives, and the parent's lives. I am teaching my son a lot of really great things that he's going to look back on and remember how hard his mom worked to provide for him, and how she fought to have Fridays off and spend time with him. I am giving the parents of my brides and grooms the gift of time, and stress-free time leading up to the wedding by helping them with decisions that they would obviously be stuck with without me. I am doing a lot of really great things for my community. I am giving business to vendors when I bring my clients to them for things like rentals, and things like catering, and it's a ripple effect."

So the things that I am doing are, in theory, helping everybody else, and that was a really big aha moment for me, that some of the little things I am doing right now might not be super conceptualized or tangible, but they are ultimately leading to bigger things down the road. So a flower shop would be amazing. I also think I am in a maintenance role right now with my business, where I really like where we are. We're not so big that I can't manage things. I have a

really small team that I love. They have things that they do on the side in addition to working for me.

So I feel like they have a good life, they're not constantly at my beck and call, and I have time to spend with my family. What do they say, "The days are long, the years are short," and there's so much truth to that. I look at Lachlan and I'm like, "You're a teenager, you need to borrow the car now?" He's nine months, but I am going to look back and be grateful that I soaked up these moments, because they really do go by fast.

So I don't have a big picture goal right yet. I think for me, I'm in a season of savoring and just being really content with where things are.

[0:46:27.2] RP: That's beautiful, thank you. I think we can all use a dose of that intentionality and living in it right now, rather than looking so far ahead all the time. So thanks for being on the show. Where can people find you?

[0:46:38.5] RB: Yes, so Instagram. I'm always sharing lots of fun things and the realities of my life on Instagram stories and Hey Gorgeous Events. So it's just heygorgevents.com. Right now, all of my websites are down and splash pages up, because we're actually getting ready to re-launch the Hey Gorgeous site. We, at our last wedding, had hired a videography company to follow us around and do the behind the scenes video, so we can show to everybody what goes into making an event of that caliber come together.

So I am really excited to re-launch that, hopefully in the next two months, that video, and then just all new portfolio to really show what we can do. My Trouvaille website will be launched with all the main details for our next workshop, which we're in the finalization stage of contract. So you can't give away a lot there, but really exciting next workshop that we're doing.

It's a very different, a lot more internet than what we are doing, and I am just really grateful of how those details are coming together, and I am launching a new website which is going to be my home base for all of the different things I do, and there will be some surprises and treats in there. Like some private workshops, and some consulting, and just some other goodies where I can share my mission and share the things that I think I am good at to gift others with.

So lots of places to find me, and I'm really grateful for being here with you guys today. You got my wheels spinning with all these great questions.

[0:47:57.5] RP: Thanks so much for answering so deeply and looking really far into some of the hard questions. So we really appreciate it. For everyone listening, go be a little bit more intentional today and go build your Creative Empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:48:10:7] 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 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.

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