

Ep #10: Building Up Your Confidence to Have a Life Outside of Sales with Kathleen Black



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Crystal Cooper

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Welcome to Net Worthwhile, Do More with Your Wealth, a podcast designed to explore financial topics from a broader perspective than just the numbers. We'll look at the emotional impact of financial decisions and how you can use your wealth to live a great life. Thank you for tuning in.

Crystal Cooper: And, we're here today with Kathleen Black, author, speaker, and consultant of Kathleen Black Coaching and Consulting. Thanks so much for joining us today.

Kathleen Black: Oh, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Crystal Cooper: Now, you have out a book called The Top One Percent Life: The Real Estate Agent's Guide to Free Up Your Time and Build Your Business With Confidence, and Finally Have A Life Outside of Sales. And, we are talking today about performing at your highest level, both personally and professionally. And what I love about this book is, it kind of dives a little bit into how you can figure out how to sort of do the ultimate of what we're all trying to figure out to do, which is have that kind of work/life balance.

Crystal Cooper: But, I think what I really love about your book is that it gets very transparent in how you figured out the need to do this. Can you just give a quick overview a little bit about where you started figuring out that it was imperative to kind of free up some of that balance?

Kathleen Black: Well, you know it's been, I think, for myself personally, I used to sell real estate. I got into real estate for investment properties, and being really busy with two

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young children, I mean, I found it was just necessary to have help. If you're lucky enough to be successful in sales, which the majority of the percentage of people who get involved in real estate sales, and they're involved in mortgage or any of those types of industries, the majority don't sell a lot. They're not busy. They're busy trying to get busy, but then the other side of the coin is, you get busy and you realize that when you can turn that tap on, it can consume your entire life.

Kathleen Black: You can be busy 24/7 and after coaching top producers for well over a decade and helping them to build the mega teams, the reality is you can build a highly successful team in sales or in real estate, and still be unbelievably busy.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah.

Kathleen Black: So, I think it was, how do we go towards actual quality of life and use our businesses to build that, instead of just constantly searching for another sale, another opportunity. Because some people, I mean, it's endless for them. And the ability to take a break becomes really difficult.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah, well I think you kind of hit on something there. You think that, as a real estate person, an entrepreneur, right, you're always thinking well, once I get here, then I will take a break. Once I get here, then I'll take a break.

Kathleen Black: Yes.

Crystal Cooper: But the reality of the situation is the more successful you get, the more the meter continues to move. The

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barometer continues to move, and you are never going to take that break unless you dedicate yourself to doing so.

Kathleen Black: Well, absolutely. And I think in the sales industry, it's usually so scarcity mindset. Like, you're conditioned for answer your phone. Jump. You might not have another opportunity. And I mean, you see people have been 15 years top ten percent of the top one percent, and they still have this conditioned mentality of I need to jump at all costs. And it's like, well, you've been busy for 15 years. I think you're going to keep being busy. Let's structure it a different way.

Crystal Cooper: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you think that it's a ... I would love to hear your thoughts. Is it a lack of trust in the team that's been built? Or a fear of failure? Or a combination of both? Or something else?

Kathleen Black: With not putting, continuing to stay so busy, even when you have a team?

Crystal Cooper: Yeah, yeah.

Kathleen Black: I think it can be a combination, depending on who the person is. I mean, I think sometimes, it's a lack of training. It can definitely be a lack of training where we haven't fully taken the time to set any clear expectations to train on the skillset to achieve those expectations, and then to get the heck out of the way.

Kathleen Black: I mean, people are going to stumble a little bit as they're learning. There can be a lot of egos in sales. When you get to the point that you're very successful, it's hard to then take aspects of that business and hand it to

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somebody else and say, "Oh, wait, they didn't need me all along. I'm not as special as a unicorn as I thought."

Kathleen Black: And the ironic part is letting that ego side go is what allows us to have the quality of life, instead of just our identity being successful in our careers. So I think it can be ego. I think it can be training. I think it can be lack of systems or management skills. You know, a lot of people in their business get very successful for being great face to face with people, or great negotiators. And they weren't necessarily needing to manage or have systems outside of themselves, because they did everything.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah.

Kathleen Black: So, creating that is a whole new skillset, and I think it can be an uphill battle. And when you don't see it, it's hard to know what to invest in. I'm not going to invest in systems when I just kind of think somebody else should be able to figure out how to help me.

Crystal Cooper: Well, it sounds like it's a little bit of thinking that success, part of being successful means that you're busy all the time. There's a mindset, it sounds like, that I'm only successful if I'm constantly on my phone. I'm only successful if I'm needed. I'm only successful if I'm checking emails. Maybe there's a connection for people that success has to mean this, which is a little bit with the whole success means X amount of dollars. Does that sound familiar?

Kathleen Black: Well, yeah. I think technology, we condition ourselves to, you know, your phone's not beeping and you're not getting emails, what's happening?

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Crystal Cooper: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kathleen Black: We want to be into with this pulse of the business. So I think there is a little bit of that, that it's an adjustment that we can still have successful businesses and have times where we're not connected to our phone or the phone's not out at the family dinner. But I think for a lot of the people that I work with, and even for myself, I mean, those were big goals. It doesn't sound like a big goal to go on vacation and not have your phone out all the time to be connected to home. Or be at a family dinner and not have your phone out in case there's an emergency with your team. But people who run businesses where their commissions can be 10, 15, 25, 30 thousand dollars, dropping the ball in small details can seem really scary. And it requires a lot of trust to have other people orchestrating things for you.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah.

Kathleen Black: And you know, have the peace of mind that not only am I not on my phone, but the sky's not going to fall, right?

Crystal Cooper: Yeah.

Kathleen Black: It takes some work to build that up.

Crystal Cooper: Well, I think it takes some work to redefine what success means.

Kathleen Black: Yeah.

Crystal Cooper: There's nothing wrong with success meaning a certain amount of money and financial freedom.

Kathleen Black: No.

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Crystal Cooper: That is absolutely okay, and it should be. But it sounds like what I'm hearing from you is that, you kind of started redefining what success meant personally, too.

Kathleen Black: Well, yeah. For myself, we actually start there, right? Because again, having so many people say, "I want this top one percent business," or, "I want to sell this many homes," or, "I want a team who can sell this many homes." But really in the end, that's not really what they wanted. They wanted that because either they wanted to help more people, or they felt they were bringing something unique to the market, or like you said, they wanted to be able to make enough to be able to go on a certain number of weeks of vacation. Or you know, to have more philanthropy involved in their businesses. Or be able to be home with their families more.

Kathleen Black: And I think success is a unique definition for every single person. And I come from an industry where it's just, no, if you sell the top one percent, or you sell this much, you're successful. But that's a really limited definition. And we try to meet people where they are and say, "Hey, what makes you happy? Where do you want to be two years, five years from now? How often are you working? What parts of the business do you love? Do you love managing people? Do you love selling? Do you love the vision of the business? Do you love training other people? What actually makes you happy?"

Kathleen Black: And it's amazing how many people often are taken off guard with that question. When I say, "Hey, when your business sells 150 homes, you know, what are you going to do with it? Why do you want that? Why is it important to you?" And how many people have said to me, "I haven't

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really asked myself what makes me happy or why I want it. I just feel like I'm in an industry, and that's what success is."

Kathleen Black: And you know, when it gets hard and we get tired, I think it's really important to say no. I'm my own unique fingerprint on what success is, and my business should support that, and there's nothing wrong with that. It can be different from everybody else's definition. That's okay.

Crystal Cooper: It's kind of similar to a little bit of what we do with this sort of, we call it the why behind the what. A lot of if you're coming to us and you say, "I'm leaving X firm." Or even if I didn't have ... I wasn't with a wealth advisor before, but I want to invest in this. And the normal answer might be, "Okay, great. We'll do that."

Crystal Cooper: But what if you just stopped for a second and said, "Why do you want to do that?" What I'm hearing almost is, you want to start with the why. You're not even saying start with the goal. You're saying start with the why behind the goal, and then you'll get to what the goal is going to be to get to that why, almost.

Kathleen Black: Well, yeah. What is that ideal vision? If we actually gave ourselves the chance to say, "Hey, I'm just going to get creative, and what would that dream look like one year from now, two years from now, five years from now?" And then looking at personal values, which to me is our deepest why, right? Our deepest unconscious why are our values, and they're driving the show all the time. And it's amazing to work with these people and go back over their biggest accomplishments in life and their biggest hurdles they've overcome, and talk about why they pick those stories. To say to somebody, "You've been alive

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how many years, and of all the stories you could have picked for your biggest business accomplishment or personal accomplishment, you picked this one. And wow, look at how many similarities there are in all the stories you picked. Because at the end of the day, we all have this internal compass of what makes us feel alive and valued, and what feels important to us.

Kathleen Black: And when you help people kind of figure that out, maybe it's challenge. Maybe it's contribution, or it's I'm just helping and caring for those around us. Or it's knowledge acquisition. Whatever it is, it's really cool to uncover it and see wow, you know, everything I do to try to pursue something in life, usually has this same formula. So now, I can consciously set goals that allow me to feel fulfilled and complete and happy. And now, I understand why I struggle with some things that I try to say I want, because they're not actually in line with deeply the places I naturally put my time, energy, money, or focus. Because those are the things we really value, right? When we're not thinking about it, our mind just wanders there anyways.

Crystal Cooper: Yep. Yeah, and I think that also would help with any the letting go of things. Because I think if you're starting with your vision, and your vision is to feel X, then it's never going to be to feel stressed. I don't know anyone who's going to say, "My vision is to feel like I'm just feeling really overworked and burned out."

Crystal Cooper: The vision is going to be to feel like I'm giving back, or all of these things. And when you start to feel out of alignment with that vision, you can gut check yourself, I think, a lot better.

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Kathleen Black: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's the vision and the values, and then how do you get there, right? And the values and the why. So yeah, I agree, for sure.

Crystal Cooper: So what is ... And I'm someone who's completely guilty of this. I will raise my hand and fall on the sword all day, because I am definitely someone who leaves the office and will eat a quick dinner and hop online. I am someone who will wake up on Sunday mornings and check my emails. I'm completely guilty. How can someone begin to shift their mindset if they're in the crux of doing that right now? Is it just kind of sitting down and starting with that vision? Or how do you stop that behavior?

Kathleen Black: So, are you saying kind of in a way, because I know you're saying fall on the sword, like self sabotage?

Crystal Cooper: Yeah. If you're somebody who does that right now where you're just constantly, essentially operating in this fear of failure mode, how do you get out of that? How do you pull yourself out of that?

Kathleen Black: That's a great question. I mean, fear of failure, there's so many different ways you can look at it. You can look at what is the worst thing that's going to happen if you do decide to move forward. What's the worst thing that's going to happen if you don't decide to move forward? And then, what's the best thing that'll happen if you move forward? And what's the best thing that'll happen if you don't move forward?

Kathleen Black: And that's kind of like a mindset. It comes from NLP, but looking at all four sides of things, because usually, if you do move forward and it doesn't work out, it's usually not

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as bad as you think. Most of the time if you move forward, we don't get it.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah, yeah.

Kathleen Black: People are worried about the worst circumstance if they do move forward, but often what they figure out is your worst circumstance is standing still and not moving forward. So you know, looking at all four angles of a situation kind of helps us to do that. And I think how often in our society, but around entrepreneurs, around people in business all the time, I'd have people say to me, "How do you run your schedule the way you do?" And like, "Don't you feel so robotic or tied down?"

Kathleen Black: I said, "Well, that doesn't make any sense. Because I set my goals for the year, and I broke my goals down, and I know exactly to have the lifestyle I want both personally and professionally, this is what I need to do with my time. Why would I do something that I consciously know would sabotage getting what I said I wanted?"

Kathleen Black: I think it's a really powerful thing to ask ourselves that. You know, if I really want something, why am I going to sabotage my best possible changes in getting it? And at the end of the day, usually 80 percent of it or more, it's probably 95 percent of it honestly, is mindset. I worked with people who have said they wanted to build really strong careers in sales. And they kept not doing their calls. Or they were fighting it in their coaching time.

Kathleen Black: And finally, we did visualization work, and I said, "Who do you envision who has what you want?" And there also, this person was mother, and they had other aspects. And we started to break down and describe this person that

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they knew who had already achieved what they wanted to and that they looked up to. It was supposed to be a mentor that we could emulate. And it started to come across that wow, this person misses dinner a lot with their family. They're not a great parent. You know, they're obsessed with their business. And what started to come out was, there were all these limiting beliefs of if I step into who I say I want to be, I'm actually failing in other areas of my life that truly are more important to me.

Crystal Cooper: Mm, wow.

Kathleen Black: And people play that out all the time and don't realize it, is why I'm such a big believer in coaching and mentorship for myself. And I support it in others, because sometimes we don't connect those dots, and we just give ourselves a hard time, or we tell ourselves we can't have both, right? These limiting scenarios. I would say if you can't look at all four sides and realize that the most dangerous thing we can do is stand still, then I'd start to listen to your thoughts and your choices, and ask yourself a lot of questions. And brainstorming your ideal self can really help. It's shocking what comes out sometimes.

Crystal Cooper: Yeah. Wow, that's awesome. Well, thank you so much, Kathleen. And, our listeners, Kathleen has been so kind to offer us a free digital download of her book, *The Top One Percent Life: The Real Estate Agent's Guide to Free Up Your Time, Build Your Business With Confidence, And Finally Have A Life Outside of Sales*. You can download that at thetoponepercentlife.com. Percent is spelled out. And thank you again so much, Kathleen, for taking the time to talk with us and be on our podcast today.

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Kathleen Black: Thank you so much for having me. And, I hope the book will help some of the listeners to live their top one percent life. Thank you so much.

Crystal Cooper: Thank you.

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