



TRANSCRIPT

Episode 40: A Daily Routine Filled With Grace & Realistic Expectations

LAURA SMITH *from* GET ORGANIZED HQ

WELCOME TO THE PODCAST

Tasha: Welcome to the Get Organized HQ podcast. I'm your host, Tasha Lorentz. Every week we share practical strategies for less stress and more peace as we dive into all topics, life and home organization. I'm so glad you're here for this week's episode.

INTRODUCING LAURA

Whenever I bring a guest onto the Get Organized HQ podcast, I ask them to walk me through a day in their life. And we've had all sorts of people come and share their story here on this podcast over the last several months. And I wanted you to get a little bit of time to sit down and get to know Laura and her life a little bit better.

A SURPRISING STRATEGY

And I really think that this might surprise you and some of the strategies that she implements and that she shares. She actually, at the end of this conversation, is going to share a kind of unusual thing that she's doing to keep herself accountable that she said she had no intention of publicly sharing.

But here we are. She shared it all about how she handles the highs and lows of everyday life. I'm so glad you're here to listen in.

WELCOMING LAURA

Well, I've had a lot of guests on the Get Organized HQ podcast, but I wanted to bring Laura on, who I know so many of you already watch the Get Organized HQ YouTube channel and read the newsletters, and I thought this would be a fun opportunity for Laura to kind of share her day in the life. So, Laura, thank you for joining us today.

Laura: Hi. Happy to be here.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Tasha: Yes. So, all right, let's just walk through a day in the life of Laura. I feel like people maybe who have watched your YouTube videos or been around get organized HQ for long.

We have a good idea for your principles of organizing and decluttering the systems that you set up, but I want to talk about how that works its way into your day. So just what are the components of a typical day in your life?

SCHOOL DAYS VS. NON-SCHOOL DAYS

Laura: Well, for me, I would say it depends a lot on whether the kids are in school or not, because I have two school age kids, so summers, breaks, weekends look very different than like school weekdays.

And then I also am not actually that structured,

which might surprise people. And that's kind of why I built some of these systems is because I'm really not. I'm not someone who's like, we get up and we do this every day and then we do this and then we have. I like to be more, I don't know, less structured and more just, a little bit free flowing, I guess.

HANDLING MORNINGS

And so, yeah, so they all look different. In the school year we have tried a lot of different things, but, one of the things that we're doing now is having my husband take care of the mornings because I, as we all know, I'm not a morning person.

And, I just cannot tell you the stress that comes with trying to get two children out the door for school when I'm also exhausted and just waking up and only half there myself.

SHARING MORNING DUTIES

And it just eats a big chunk of my time because I get up and, you know, on the days when I do get up and ready, well, then there's like trap time. I've got to be, you know, getting them out. Then I got to take them to school, and then I come back and I can't really get started on anything. And so not having that responsibility, has just frees me up to immediately get started.

So, like, I get up a lot of times I will go straight to the shower and get ready, but sometimes I will just come straight downstairs and start working. Like, I'm not wasting time. Like, we are getting down, like we're going to get things done now. What I'm not doing is talking. Like you don't want to talk to me in the first hour. But I can work.

DIVING IN RIGHT AWAY

Like, I can sit down and do things that involve thinking or I can like, you know, get ready or something like that. So I'm just getting. I do not want to interact and socialize that first hour. So I'm doing something, that just gets. Right, just gets. We're just diving in, we're getting started.

That has worked so much better. And then because I do that, then I am responsible for most of the evening stuff like picking them up from school, getting them food, taking care of them. You know, my husband's still at work. A lot of times he'll work out or do something after that.

NIGHTTIME RESPONSIBILITIES

So I'm more the person that does that. Also, I'm more of a night person. So if they have extra needs at night, you know, after they go to bed, I'm usually not always, but often the one that's like, you know, taking care of that because I'm just not that. Yeah, I'm more. More human at 9 pm than like 7am.

FIGHTING YOUR SLEEP SCHEDULE

Tasha: Yeah, for sure. And I know just from things you've shared with me, can you talk a little bit about fighting or not fighting your sleep schedule? Because I think some people listening would resonate with that idea. I think it's easy to get the idea that we all need to be up by a certain time of day and firing on all cylinders.

But I know this is something you've kind of wrestled with yourself and I'd love for you to share a little bit about that.

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WISHING TO BE A MORNING PERSON

Laura: Yeah. Okay, so about that is like first of all, you read all these things online about the miracle morning or the 5am morning and about how the most productive people get up early and I tend to be someone who, there's what I actually do and thrive on and there's what I wish I was.

So I wish I was one of these highly disciplined people who gets up at 5am every morning, goes straight to the gym while drinking their morning smoothie, works out, does, you know, like, I wish I were that person with that kind of structure that actually looks nice and that identity to me I'm like, oh wow, you know, so that's what I wish that I were.

FORCING YOURSELF

But, but I realized I could wish that all, all, all my life, but I'm never going to be that person. And even I have at times like forced myself to do that. Like you can force yourself to do things that are not really, you know, your favorite.

And I never thrived. And especially about being a morning person, I mean, I had a, like, you know, a traditional job, where you, you know, go into the office and I need to be there at a certain time every day. I think I left my house at like 6:30ish every day for about six or seven years.

ACCEPTING YOUR NATURAL RHYTHM

And you know, very little time off. I mean, you know, I got the typical couple weeks or whatever, but like, this is what I was doing for six years and never ever did I get used to it, you know, because a lot of people say, well, you just gotta try it and you'll get used to it. Nope,

never. I was always miserable.

It wasn't good. Nothing I did could get me used to it. So I just had to own that that is not how I thrive. And I mean I thrive on about 11 to 7 or midnight to 8. Like, and even when I try to go to bed earlier, what do I end up doing? I end up staying awake for two hours and worrying about how I'm not going to sleep.

WORKING WITH WHAT WORKS

And then, but if I don't fight it and I just own that, hey, I'm going to be going to bed at 11, so I may as well just get something done and then I'm going to let myself sleep until 7 or 8. Then everybody's happy. We're all doing well, you know, and we don't always have that luxury. Like, I said I had a job where I needed to be there earlier and I managed.

I did it. Did it go well? No. So if you do have the flexibility, why not just go ahead and work with what you have? And when chronic illness entered the picture for me a few years ago, that also really affects things a lot because it starts to affect your sleep.

ARBITRARY TIMES

And anyone who's dealt with that understands how that is just another complicating factor. So just putting some arbitrary. I need to be up at 5am to be a productive person on top of all that just doesn't really serve anyone.

Tasha: Yeah, definitely. And like you said, there are seasons where we have more control of that and seasons where we don't.

DOING YOUR BEST

So I definitely empathize with anyone who

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is saying I'm just like that. But I still have, you know, the 9 to 5, the 8 to 4 job and have to get up at this certain time. And yeah, like sometimes it's a matter of just doing the best that you can.

If, if you got to get up at 6:30 and it's not your thing, the fact that you are doing it is in and of itself a success. Like it's okay if you don't find your rhythm. It's okay if it's not your ideal schedule because you're getting done what needs to be done. But if you have the flexibility, maybe try something different.

DIFFERENT ENERGY TIMES

Try what works for you. It's funny, I'm like the exact opposite. If it is after 8:30 and you ask me to do something, I am like, excuse me, like you are keeping me from my bed. Like, but my favorite time to work is like 5:30 to 7:30.

Nobody else in the world is up. Like you don't get interrupted by anyone. It's quiet, it's dark. Like the sun comes up and you're like, look at the things I already got done. But I mean that means that when Laura's up at 10 o'clock at night and she's sending me messages on slack like, hey, what do you think of this thing? I am sleeping through them, so.

OPPOSITE SCHEDULES THAT BALANCE

Laura: But then you're up early in the morning, so by the time I get up you can answer them. And like when my kids were little, basically what I would do is I would put them to bed and they'd be to bed by like 7:30-8:00, you know, typical little kid schedule.

And I would work from about eight to midnight. And then I would just sleep right about until they got up at 8. That wasn't a problem. Like a

lot of people say I need to be up before my kids. Now that might be the case. But when they were little I didn't feel that at all. And because when they're little it's just a different thing.

WORKING DURING QUIET HOURS

And so we just got in a rhythm and it worked so well. And you know how everybody talks about how you have those quiet moments in the morning before the rest of the house. That was what I had at night. Like, I just kind of thought of my day as starting at 8pm. So I was getting a head start from 8 because my brain is working so much better than it's going to work.

You know, and it wouldn't always be till midnight, maybe 11, but like, for a while when we didn't have as much childcare and we had little kids that worked super well because everything was quiet. I wasn't going to be interrupted and I could just like, get like that focus, work, done.

USE RESOURCES YOU DO HAVE

And I mean, I feel like, you know, for those who don't have as much flexibility, I think you use whatever flexibility and resources you do have. Sometimes, like, I feel bad, I feel guilty. I'm like, well, maybe I should be getting up early and I should be the one, you know, taking my kids to school. But I'm like, yes, I have this flexibility. But there's a lot of flexibility that other people have that I do not for various reasons.

There's a lot of, you know, things that are just not, you know, I don't have that. So, like, maybe you cannot, you wish you could, sleep until seven, but you have to get up at whatever time you have to get up. But maybe you have the flexibility of, you know, hiring someone to help clean your house. Or maybe your husband is

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excellent at, cooking and making meals and you can just hand that off.

USE YOUR RESOURCES WITHOUT GUILT

And like, I don't know, they're like, use whatever, whatever resources you do have. Like, sometimes I think I almost feel bad for taking advantages of whatever resources I have available.

Tasha: Yeah. And I think the Internet actually contributes to kind of making us feel bad for any sort of blessing that we might have.

IGNORING OUTSIDE JUDGMENT

I mean, certainly be grateful for the opportunities that you have, and realize that not everyone has all of the same opportunities. But it's one of those things where it's almost like, oh, like, if anyone knew, like, you know, that I'm not the one who takes my kids to school in the morning. Like, can you imagine the social media posts and all of the comments?

Well, if it's what's working for your family, and if your family is functioning best with it, then who cares what the social media comments would say, right? So, yeah, it's really just about finding what rhythm works for you.

UNSTRUCTURED DAYS

So you mentioned earlier that you don't have a whole lot of structure necessarily from day to day. Like you're not necessarily the person who's going to be time blocking and saying, all right, every morning from, you know, 9 to 10, I do my workout and 10 to this time I do my emails. So how do you figure out what is getting done each day?

THE THREE BUCKET SYSTEM

Laura: Okay, so we've talked about this a lot. The three bucket system is kind of what I came up with. Because if you are someone who has not got like a ton of structure, then you, what you don't want to be doing is just always flying by the seat of your pants and not knowing what's going to get done. And so this is a way that I said like every day, here's like my top three.

And I need to get this done no matter what. So that prioritizing of like my top few things, is really something that helps me make sure that I'm doing the important things even with a little bit less structure. So I think that is one of the things.

USING A PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

I mean, another thing that I, is really helpful to me is I do have another, like project management system and I check it almost every day. So like, for work everything is in one system with due dates and there's one view where I can look at everything that's assigned to me.

And almost every day, I mean there'll be a day or two might go by, but like, I am not going months and not looking at this thing. So I look at it every day. And I also add, I mean it's for work, but I'll add personal things in there that are really important. So, so like, you know, if I need to, I don't know, you're gonna laugh at me.

NOT FORGETTING SMALL TASKS

I always use the example of changing my air filter because I'm paranoid. Like one time someone didn't do it, that I know well. And it

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caused a lot of problems and required extra maintenance. So I have this like, fear of, not getting it changed. And so like, I will put things like that on there because I know that's where I'll look.

And then it doesn't mean I do them all, but it means I looked at it and I said I couldn't do that today. I'm going to move that to tomorrow. Or I can totally move that to next week, but. But, that way, what it means that I'm not having just things that fall through the crack that I'm not aware that I'm not doing.

STAYING AWARE OF WHAT'S UNDONE

And, I mean, there are times when I have something on there and I can't do it for whatever reason. Like, either. I'm very good at doing this. I was delusional when I planned it. And I was like, yeah, I'll have time to do this project and that. And then I realized, oh, wait, no, there's just not enough hours in the day.

Or maybe other things are going on that I didn't plan for. Like, both kids are sick and I'm not feeling well and, you know, whatever.

So sometimes I can't do it, but I don't not do it without knowing it. Like, I know, okay, I had to either say, I'm not doing this or put this off. So I think just having something that you always go to so that you don't feel like everything, because you shouldn't keep it all in your brain.

THINGS NOT FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

Like, you don't feel like everything is falling through the cracks. And then the next day, if I plan to do something and I didn't, well, then I'll move it to, you know, whatever day that I did.

But I'm not just, like, just waking up and being like, oh, I wonder what I might have forgotten today. Like, that. I don't know that that works. Maybe it works for someone.

Tasha: But it's funny because it's kind of the idea that if you know what you're not doing, you actually feel more confident about what you are doing. It's the type of thing that I think before you're in that situation, it might be like, no, no.

KNOWING WHAT YOU'RE NOT DOING

Like, if I know what I'm not doing, then I'm just going to beat myself up all the time and feel super guilty about it. And I'm. I get that. And I have days like that, to be honest, like, where it's like, oh, man, I really wanted to get more done, but it's a lot worse to not know what you're forgetting.

Like, you know that feeling where you're just like, I know there was something that was really important that I was afraid was going to, like, harm my house or that if I didn't do this, like, something bad was going to happen at work. Like, I was going to miss a major deadline, and I have no idea what it was.

AWARENESS OVER AVOIDANCE

And, you know, like, it's frustrating to me when I have times where I'm like, oh, no, I'm going to really have to cram stuff in next week in order to make this deadline because I didn't get this done today. But I know what I need to cram in. And I think that feeling is still better than this vagueness of I know that I need to do something.

And the other thing is, if you know what you need to do at, your next opportunity, you can do it. If you don't know what you need to do,

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you still have to figure out what you need to do before you can ever do it. And you might find out after bad things have already happened. I mean, that's the phrase you use all the time, Laura. That makes me laugh. You're like, I have to do this or bad things are going to happen.

"BAD THINGS WILL HAPPEN"

Laura: Yes, I do. I do kind of think, think, in those terms, like, okay, if I plan to pay my bills on Friday, but I wait until Monday, nothing bad happens. But if I put it off for three weeks and then I'm going to be late on a bill and I'm going to have a late fee or they're going to shut off, I don't know, something they shut off when you don't pay the bill, you know?

Yes. I mean, like, that would be bad things happening. So, yeah, I totally, I totally do that. But, yeah, I think just knowing what it is you are, like, knowing is so much better than not knowing. It's a little hard because I find for myself I am someone who, you know, my eyes are bigger than my stomach, my dreams are bigger than the time that I have to get it done.

FACING LIMITATIONS

They just are. I mean, I have so many things that I enjoy that I'm involved in that I want to do. My, body puts a lot of limitations on me that I didn't have to deal with like 10 years ago. And, and, you know, and having a family puts, you know, other. Other things, you know, considerations and things that take your time.

And so, I am always feeling like I wish I could do that. You know, I wish I had more time. But it's never better not to face it. Like, it's always better to just own it and be like, this is exactly what I got done and this is what I didn't.

IMPERFECT PRODUCTIVITY

And not even beating yourself up about it, because I have days where I'm on it and I'm like, wow, like, I am checking things off the list. I'm uber productive. And then I have days where for no particular reason, I am super unproductive. Like, why did it take me two hours to write this, like, you know, three paragraph email?

Because I rewrote it and then I thought about this and then I worried about this and I went off on this tangent. Then I listened to this, you know, 12 minute voice memo and then I, you know, and then I'm like, seriously, all day and I got like two things done and am I happy about that? No, but that is the reality. I mean, if somebody knows of a way to never make that happen, I mean, like, I'll be your test.

ACCEPTING REALITY

Tasha: You should be recording a podcast.

Laura: Exactly. And I'll be your test subject. But like, that is a part of life. And so realizing that that is the case and dealing with the actual realities I think is so much better. I also am a big fan of using my reminders app.

USING REMINDERS

I'm a huge reminders app person, for urgent matters. So it's going to pop up. And you know, I've talked about this in different places online. I give myself threats in my reminders.

I know that sounds kind of scary but okay, so for example, let's say that I sign up for Netflix and I want to watch one show and I know that we're never going to watch it again, or at least for a while, so I want to be sure I cancel it in a month.

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Right? Well, okay, so if I just say cancel Netflix, what am I going to do? It's going to pop up and I'm like, snooze, snooze, check it off, whatever, I'll get to it. And then I never get to it. And I paid for like six months of Netflix and we never even logged in. And I'm like, why did I just waste \$97, you know?

ADDING CONSEQUENCES

But, if instead I say cancel Netflix or be charged \$17 for something you don't even want, it actually makes me take action. So I love like putting the consequence of not doing it or, schedule dental appointment or risk, you know, getting worse cavities in your teeth or something. So I will like give myself the motivation to get it done.

But I reserve reminder. Reminders are not popping up 12 times a day for everything I need to do. We're not talking about routine tasks, we're not talking about normal work tasks.

RESERVING REMINDERS FOR URGENT TASKS

We're talking about extra tasks that desperately need to happen. And if I end up moving something on, like my to do list, like from day to day to day and it really needs to happen, I make it a reminder.

Like, let's, you know, we've got to put it in there because certain tasks, such as phone calls, as we all know, I am particularly averse to. So I have to give myself that extra motivation or we would never see a dentist or a doctor or anything, or I would never even get my hair cut because that requires calling and making an appointment.

EXPLAINING THE THREE BUCKET SYSTEM

Tasha: Yeah, I did want to circle back real quick. I'm going to put a link in the show notes. You have a whole video you've done before on the three bucket system. I know we mentioned that really quickly, but that is like the signature Get Organized HQ system for planning your days. And I know there may be some listening who are like, hey, you, like, mentioned that and then totally, like, breezed by it.

And I don't know what a three bucket system is. Are there literal buckets involved in this planning system? So I'm going to put a link to that video, in the show notes. But essentially it's just a way to categorize your tasks for today, so that you can prioritize what is most important, which is just a really.

OWNING UNPRODUCTIVE DAYS

It kind of circles back to what we've been talking about here, right? That you know what you're doing, you know what you're tabling, and we're moving forward with that.

And I really appreciate what you said about, like, having unproductive days for no particular reason. And, like, can we all just own that we have those days?

Because I think the Internet is a place that has lots and lots of grace for people who have really busy days with, like, family emergencies that pop up. Right? Or like, oh, my neighbor, you know, needed some help with something and, like, they needed.

THE REALITY

Their car broke down and they needed me to

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go help them get their prescription. And like, it kind of turns us into the hero whenever, you know, we have an unproductive day. Because, like, look at all the things I was doing. Like, do you know that I've had flat out unproductive days, for no heroic reason whatsoever?

Like, I was not helping my neighbor go pick up a prescription because their car broke down. I was not saving the day or, like, investing really heavily in my family. Like, I was just. I was just not having a productive day. You know?

Like, I probably was super educated about some, like, rabbit hole on YouTube. But that's about it. And just acknowledging that we all have these days and they look different. But you can have an unproductive day without a really good excuse for it.

SO MANY REASONS

Laura: I do. I mean, yeah, I definitely do. I mean, there's just so many reasons. A lot of it is, like, emotional. Like, I just can't get myself involved in the task or something frustrated me or energy levels.

So many, so many reasons. And sometimes there are reasons why I might not have a productive day that are, like, I would say valid. You know, like my kid was sick or somebody needed me.

RABBIT HOLES

Tasha: When you weren't also going down the YouTube rabbit hole of, like, some language only 200 people speak, plenty of YouTube rabbit holes.

Laura: But then there's just times when they're not. It's not productive because for no

particular reason. And then that's when I get really frustrated. But one thing somebody said, and this is so true, one unproductive day every, every so often isn't going to make or break you. It's when you string those together. So I really work hard on pulling myself out.

BREAKING THE PATTERN

And I'm not saying that I've never had an unproductive week or something. I mean, there's a lot of, a lot of reasons. But I really, really try. If I had a bad day, I'm like, we've got to put extra, like, safeguards in place tomorrow, so that I don't have.

So it doesn't become a pattern. Because if I have a pattern, then I'm just. Life is not going to go well. Like, I'm not going to get my work done. I'm not going to get, you know, things done that need it, like, kind of need to happen.

And I'm not going to feel good about myself because one or two days of doing less is fine. But I think most of us, if I go many, many days in a row for whatever reason, and I'm not really accomplishing much, I'm going to start to feel worse about myself and then it's going to be even harder to get up the motivation.

PUTTING SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE

So I really try to put extra safeguards in place. The next day, like, I give myself very specific goals. I pick a task that I know, will be easier to get into positive momentum. Like, this is a task. There are certain tasks for me that are, like, I find easier to do and I get a lot done quickly.

You know, so I'm going to pick those. I might even pick. A lot of times for me, it's cleaning is a more rewarding task than sitting on the

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computer and creating stuff on the computer because, like, you're creating something with your hands or even going on errands to get you out.

So I kind of try to safeguard that. And the other thing I will say about, like, productive and unproductive days is, this is something I don't do perfectly, but that is I've really worked on.

TWO WAYS TO REST

So. So, okay, there's two ways to rest and not get anything done. One way is to be like, okay, this is a rough day. I'm going to sit down for the next two hours and I'm just going to rest. I'm going to do whatever I want. I'm going to sit outside in the beautiful weather and read a book or I'm going to watch a movie.

In my case, it would be a cheesy Hallmark movie, but, you know, or I'm just going to do this random. Like, I'm going to alphabetize my spices because that's what I feel like doing. That is one way of resting, and that is very. It refills you. Because you said, I'm going to rest. I'm going to set aside my to do list and I'm going to enjoy myself.

HALF-HEARTED REST

But another way of resting is to the whole time be like, okay, in five minutes, I'm going to stop scrolling Instagram and I'm going to start get to work. Okay, just another five minutes. Okay. Oh, yeah, I got to watch this YouTube video. But then I'm going to go ahead and so the whole time you're not really resting, you're feeling bad about it.

You're feeling this tug that you're supposed to go do something else. So. So if you are going to rest, just own it. Like, you know, just be like,

okay, I. At, whatever time it is, or right now, I'm going to rest for the next two hours and give myself nothing on the agenda.

ENJOYING TRUE REST

And if I'm going to rest, I'm going to enjoy it and let it refill my cup because I feel like the worst thing I can do. And I mean, I know we all do this is like, not planning to rest, but then actually just distracting myself. You know, we're watching random funny reels, and then I'm watching a YouTube video about, you know, how to train horses.

I don't have any horses. Like, I mean, you know, and things like this. And then I just end up feeling not refreshed. But I didn't get anything done either.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Tasha: Yeah. And I think that especially with social media, it's kind of one of those tricky things because we can stop at any time, Right?

Like, if I'm watching reels, this can always be the last one and I can go back to work. But if I own it, that I'm going to rest right now and I put on a show or I get on some like, decluttering project or organizing project I've really been wanting to do that isn't necessarily like, what needs to get done today, but would really be something I'd enjoy doing.

THE GIFT OF REAL REST

Like, we don't give ourselves the gift of using our time to do the things we actually want to do with our time because we're kind of in this, in between, where we're not acknowledging that we're taking a break right now. So we can't put our energy towards something that we

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know is going to force us to take a break.

Like, if I know it's going to take me 30 minutes to go mix up a batch of cookies, because that's what sounds like fun to do right now. I won't let myself do that because I can't stop at any time.

MINDLESS TIME VS INTENTIONAL REST

But I will let myself spend 45 minutes on Instagram because every reel could be the last one. And so I think that's a really powerful tool that, like, if you want to rest, if you need to rest, like, declare it a moment of rest and do what would be the most fulfilling in that moment.

And another thing I was thinking about, when you're talking about not stringing the unproductive days together, I was. I literally have my to do list from the entire week sitting in front of me right now.

LOOKING AT THE WEEK AS A WHOLE

And like, Tuesday, I mean, it wasn't the worst day I've ever had, but like, I mean, I can look at what I checked off my list. I'm like, yeah, that was not like my most productive day ever.

Like, that was just a way more distracted day. But I think it's so important to not view our lives in day tight compartments of like, was today a success or a failure? And like, that dictates whether or not I myself am a success or a failure. Because the funny thing is, Tuesday wasn't the bestest productive day ever, but I got a lot done this week overall.

SUCCESS OVER TIME

Like, if I look at the week as a whole, like, totally a success. I'm super excited about some of the projects I got crossed off the list. And

so try not to get so stressed about the day type compartment of like, well, how did today go? Because you can have a, like, eh, there's nothing to write home about about how today went and still have a really great positive week overall.

NATURAL EBBS AND FLOWS

Laura: For sure. I mean, I've had bad weeks and bad months. It doesn't mean the year is. Yes, you know, it's just there's just natural ebbs and flows. And the other thing about resting I want to, I want to say, is that I encourage people, if you're going to rest, try to consume longer form content.

Because I don't know, I mean, you know how much I'm not a short form content person. But I think you're going to find so much more fulfillment in YouTube videos or TV shows or movies rather than a bunch of 3 second reels.

FINDING FULFILLMENT IN LONGER CONTENT

I'm not saying you can, you should never, you know, I mean, I look at reels, I've laughed at some of them, you know, I like them. But I mean, I think if you could get yourself into books, podcasts, I just, I find so much more fulfillment in some longer form content than a whole bunch of time spent on reels that are just so, they're so short and they're just so, they're not very nuanced.

I mean, they can't be like, you know, it's no one's fault. And I just find that I'm so much more inspired and motivated if I get invested in something or really learn what I can learn in a 20 minute YouTube video or I don't know. So I feel like, I mean, I feel silly saying, but like some of what I do is like, I do much better if I watch,

Laura Smith

if I have a TV show I'm watching, watching because then I'm not mindlessly scrolling Instagram.

CHOOSING INTENTIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

I'm like, okay, tonight when I have some downtime, I'm going to watch this 20 minute or this 45 minutes of this show. And somehow, I don't know, I just think there's something to be said for if you are going to be like, you know, entertainment, that's great, but maybe try to make some room for some longer form entertainment.

Tasha: Yeah. And that can be hard to find. I know, like, it's funny because I've definitely been in the times where I have a show I'm watching and then it ends.

Laura: No, I hate that.

Tasha: I don't know what to do with myself now.

Laura: It's so sad.

SYSTEMS AND HABITS

Tasha: Yes, for sure. So I'm going to ask this question in the reverse because I know we've actually spent a while here talking about like just some of the struggles of real life routines.

Right. And I mean chronic health enters into that and just changes in your seasons of life enters into that. What are some of the systems or even just like habits or just things you see popping up over and over. Right. Sometimes I feel like when we Use the word system and habit.

We think, like, it has to be something I'm doing

every single day. But, like, what are just some of the foundational things you see popping up over and over again in your days, in your weeks that are helping things to continue to move forward and function?

TAKING IMPERFECT ACTION

Laura: Yeah. So I think, some of the themes that I see, is like taking imperfect action. You know, I am someone who is a bit of a perfectionist. And, it's really hard for me sometimes when I can't do something perfectly well.

You know, and I've talked about this a lot. Like, if I'm going to clean the bathroom, I'm going to, like, get the toothbrush and, you know, like, But I need to do a 70% job. And, you know, if I'm working on my health and I'm like, well, I can't eat all 125 grams of protein, why don't I just, you know, go out and get a hot fudge sundae?

PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Well, that's silly. Like, you know, so, like, doing what I can, or I can't eat healthy seven days a week, but five is better than none, or, you know, so I'm really been working on. It's always good to take a good action or do a good thing, even if it doesn't mean that you can do it all the time.

So, I mean, that's just something in the past few years that I have really, really been working on. And. Okay, this is going to sound silly, but I am someone who. I love creating systems. I love planning. I love creating them. Like, this is my happy place. I could be there all day long. I could make you the most elaborate, cool system.

DOING WITHOUT OVER-PLANNING

But, okay, the doing it That's another problem. Then I start to think I can't do the action without the plan. So, like, I need this elaborate cleaning system for my home before I'm gonna, like, open up this drawer and take everything out and vacuum it out, which would take five minutes.

Because, oh, it's not on the system. But I've been realizing that you can just do things like, they don't have to be on the system. You know, so that is something that I've been really. It's hard for, I don't know, certain personalities. I think it's just harder than others. But I've been really, like, working to embrace that.

STRUGGLES WITH MULTITASKING

I also think one of the things that I'm. Okay, I'm not sure whether to call this, like, the one of my struggles or one of my strengths. But as you know, I am horrible at multitasking. Like, of every human I know on planet Earth, I'm. I cannot do it.

Tasha: So I can attest that Laura is so bad at multitasking that if you try to go on a walk and, you know, just like, have a casual conversation about anything, she will end up inadvertently pushing you off the sidewalk because she cannot stay on her half of the sidewalk and talk to you at the same time.

FOCUSING ON ONE THING AT A TIME

Laura: I also struggle with talking and driving, so I'm not like, dangerous. But if I'm on like the interstate and we're on a road trip, I will inadvertently slow down a little bit. I don't know why don't speed up. I slow down. I'm like driving, you know, and then. Which I guess is

good. Or I would get behind, you know, like you get behind a slow truck and most people would.

They'd be, conversing and be like, oh, I need to go. No, no, it's going to take me 20 minutes. And then I'll be like, oh, we're behind the slow truck. Maybe I should go. This is why I got a car that partially drives for me, it's been the most amazing thing ever. And, you know, I'm not usually that, like, my husband is more than one to drive. But, like, yes, it's so true that I do not have the gift of multitasking.

HYPERFOCUS AS A GIFT

It's so bad that it's like I'm not even aware of what's going on. So, like, if I am sitting here, you know, talking to Tasha, like, say she was here in person and my kid is out there screaming, she's going to have to be like, Laura, could you check on your screaming child? I'm like, oh, that is my kid out there screaming.

You know, like, I just don't have this, like, awareness of things that are going on around me and I hyper focus. So this is a pro and a con. But I think in today's society, we could all. Most people, not myself, but most people could use a little bit more of being able to single task.

EMBRACING FOCUS

And one of the things that I didn't realize, like, I always kind of hated this about myself because it's a little bit outside my control. I mean, it really kind of is. I mean, if you're someone who focuses on things, how do you stop focusing? Like, you know, it's. It's a little bit outside my control and it's not normal, especially for women.

I mean, everybody said when I had kids, by the way, my oldest is now almost 11. So it's been

Laura Smith

many years.

Tasha: I'm still being pushed off the sidewalk, everyone.

Laura: Oh, once you have kids, you'll learn. No, I did not. This did not happen to me. And so, you know, it kind of frustrates me, but at the same time, it is a huge gift because I can get so much done.

THE POWER OF DEEP WORK

And one of the things, another way that it's a gift is the world can be falling around, around me and falling apart around me. And sometimes it truly is like I'm dealing with incredibly difficult things. You know, my health is falling apart. Everything is falling apart. But I can sit down and I'm going to do the thing.

And also I get a lot more satisfaction out of the things that I do. Because if I am washing the dishes, I mean, we are washing the dishes like nothing else is happening. We are getting this done. We are really. It's the gift of, Deep Work. I don't know if there's a book by Cal Newport called Deep Work.

FOCUS AS A STRENGTH

It's one of my top 10 all time favorite books. And I realized that while I have a thousand flaws, I think one of my gifts and one of the reasons why I was able to get an engineering degree from a really difficult school and like, have that job and build this business is because without even realizing it, I was doing Deep Work really well before it was even a thing I was doing that.

I mean, I'm really bad. I don't, I'm not proud of this, but I'm really bad at answering

notifications. So, like, if somebody texts me, half the time they're going to get a response and half the time they're not. You know, I don't have any notifications popping up on my phone. Half, the time I don't even have my phone with me.

FINDING SATISFACTION IN FOCUS

Like that kind of thing. And so, But I have that gift of being able to really focus on the thing that is in front of me and put all of my heart and soul into it. And there is something that I think is so deeply satisfying about that. And like, that book just talks about that.

I think we should all just have that gift of. Because so many times we're so constantly interrupted, you know, with this thing or that thing or this notification or that notification.

And when we can just focus on whether it's like something we're doing for, like, our work or even something like when I'm working on my home, if I am like, really focused on, you know, cleaning the messy space or reorganizing the pantry or whatever it is.

FINDING JOY IN SINGLE-TASKING

It's so much more satisfying because you can lose yourself in the thing that you're doing. And that's what he talks about in deep work, that there's, like, a special thing that happens. And I think it's kind of what we were made to do. Like, we were made for work, not work 24 7, but we were made for work.

So where. Whoever you are, wherever you are, you need to find your work.

Laura Smith

PROS AND CONS OF CHARACTER TRAITS

Tasha: And I really think it's important, too, that most character traits. Most. I'm sure there's some exceptions to this. So let me caveat.

But I think most character traits have a pro and a con to them, right? And so maybe you're listening to this and you're like, whoa, I'm the opposite. Like, I am the multitasker. I'm constantly distracted, when I'm trying to do things. But you also might be the person who is able to be involved in multiple things at once. Right?

EMBRACING YOUR PERSONALITY

And there are benefits to that. And so not seeing whatever set of personality traits and characteristics that make up you as all good or all bad.

Like, oh, like, I wish I hadn't been given, you know, this curse of always being distracted. Well, like, how can you take that and say, here are the benefits of that. Like, here is how I can use this to my advantage, to the advantage of my family, to the advantage of the work that I'm doing.

ACKNOWLEDGING LIMITATIONS

And then also acknowledging. Because I. Either if you're like, Laura, I'm really good at deep work, but I'm really bad at multitasking. Like, how can I at least be aware of the limitations that are there? And just acknowledging that everyone has them, they might be different.

And it's really easy to look at other people and see their strengths and think that they have strengths only. But some people are probably

just better at masking the weaknesses than, But they. Everyone has them, is what I'm trying to say. And I think everyone has things they're naturally good at as well. And so finding what that is and how to make that work for you in your day.

ACCEPTING YOURSELF

Laura: So just learning what is, you know, what is your strength. And then I think, as I've gotten older, learning not to hate myself for it, because when I was younger, I think I just hated myself for all the ways I was different.

I was also a total nerd. Always, have been, always will be. I hated that when I was in high school, that's not cool. But now, you know, I even tell my kids, I'm like, you know, when they complain about being different, I'm like, mommy was really different too. But you know what? Now I have this like, huge business that I wouldn't have had had I not been a total nerd.

APPRECIATING DIFFERENCES

So now I'm happy and glad that I was different. You know, that's just one small example. But I think just learning to embrace whatever makes you, you, and learning to deal with it because you are always going to have to step outside your natural abilities at times.

You know, like me being not a morning person, sometimes I'm gonna have to get up, you know, at 4am and get on a plane or something, you know, okay. Of course, like, you're gonna have to operate outside yourself.

And just knowing this is a little bit of a challenge, but I can do this. But also just realizing, like, this is how I am and learning to work with it instead of against it and just

Laura Smith

having an appreciation.

SEEING YOURSELF AS AN ASSET

Like, I think what changed everything is somehow as I got older, instead of seeing those things as a liability, I started seeing them as like an asset, like, as something that would help me. And I started appreciating the differences about me instead of like, trying to fight them all the time. And I think it just makes me feel so much more like I have nothing to hide and this is who I am and that's okay.

I don't know, I just kind of feel like I, know that's a little philosophical, but. Yeah, I mean, I think that's something that can be really helpful. And that's something I try to think about, helping my kids to do as well. Which, you know, the whole mothering journey is an entirely, you know, different journey.

But that is something that I look for, you know, in my kids to help them, you know, bring out their strengths and to try to help cultivate that appreciation for their differences, at an as early age as I can, realizing that they're still going to be kids and they're still going to, you know, they're still kids, but, you know, we work on that.

LESS STRESS AND MORE PEACE

Tasha: Yeah, for sure. So the question that I ask pretty much everyone, as the last question of their interview about their day in their life is what is one thing that's bringing you less stress and more peace right now?

Laura: Wow. Okay. Less stress and more peace right now. Okay. I'll tell you what it is. So, I have been in a. I don't know, I guess I would say a low place the last couple months, really the last

this year, you know, has not been the best year. Oddly, I feel like even years go well for me and odd years tend to go less well.

CREATING A SYSTEM

But there's been so many things. I've had more health challenges, more other challenges. This, that the other thing I've been pretty overwhelmed. And one of the struggles is, and this is kind of frustrating is the more overwhelmed I get, the harder it is to be productive. But the more I need to be productive, you know.

And so I have just been really struggling to get into that deep work. And then I get really frustrated, depressed. It's, you know, it's bad. So what I realized is, is that I needed to give myself a list of things that I was going to do non negotiably for no matter what. So I made a list. I made a checklist.

DEFINING THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Tasha: A system, would you say?

Laura: You could call it a system. I gave myself a time limit. 77 days. Don't ask me why. And then. Okay, this is gonna sound even weirder. Okay, so I realized, okay, I can sit here, you know, I came up with a list of things.

I can tell you what it is. It's reasonable, but like, you know, so I made the list and then I was like, but I'm not going to do this list. I mean, you know, like, you could make a list, but like, I need to actually do it, right? So I did two things. First of all, I wrote excuses.

WHAT'S ON THE LIST

Laura Smith

So valid reasons why I would not need to do these things. I'll tell you what the things are. It's like 7,000 steps a day, 10 minutes of strength training at a minimum, five times a week, logging all of my food, prepping my food in the morning, cleaning the main area completely before I go to bed and doing, putting away one load of laundry.

So these are things I'm going to do every day except Sundays. Okay, this is reasonable, you know, but it's not nothing, you know, like, okay, so, but I just, like, I mean even just having a house a mess is such a stressor, right? So I'm like, I need to do these things. So I committed to do these things. Then I.

THE EXCUSES

The excuses are, er, visit or hospitalization for myself or immediate family. I mean, like, I really thought this through. Nausea, like vomiting or fever for myself would get me out of it. Traveling. So going to bed or waking up not at home. I mean, I was really, really specific.

Like there's no ambiguity. I can't say well, I'm leaving on a trip tomorrow, so I don't have to do this today. It's waking up or going to bed. I put something about natural disasters, loss of electrical power for more than two hours. Like, I got really specific. Okay. Because, like, I know myself.

FINDING ACCOUNTABILITY

And here's what's going to happen. It's going to be late at night. I'm not going to feel like washing the last few dishes. I'm going to be tired. I've got a headache. You know, all this stuff.

And then I'm gonna be like, well, I have a

headache. So surely that, you know, gets me off. So that's why I had to write it down. I took it one step further. Okay, I cannot believe I'm saying this publicly.

Okay, do not go looking for this. But I knew I needed accountability. I wasn't gonna put it on. Like, I mean, I just feel so.

BEING ACCOUNTABLE

Tasha: You just told the whole world, so.

Laura: Okay. But, So I put it on an old Instagram that I have not used in years, that I have, like, three. Three followers on. No one has actually seen it. But, like, I put it, like, I'm doing a daily check in video, and I'm uploading it there. And that is keeping me accountable. Because in theory, someone could find it.

Tasha: Well, now we all know, and we can go hunting.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SELF

Laura: You're not going to find it. I'm going to hide it really well because, the reason. Why do I not want people to find it? I don't know. I'm just embarrassed that I have to do this to myself to even get myself to, like, clean my house every day. Like, this is the length I have to go through. And then also, my videos are terrible.

Like, I showed up with no makeup. Yesterday I filmed right after I'd been crying, you know, and part of it is for myself, because I want to go look back and be like, Laura, you were really, really sad, and you couldn't stop crying, and the last thing you want to do is get up and do anything. But you did it anyway.

PUSHING THROUGH

Laura Smith

DISCOURAGEMENT

And by the end of the day, you felt so much better. And I. I'm just really struggling with that right now of, like, getting going because I'm so discouraged about some things that I can't control that are truly discouraging. But, I need to know that, like, what I need to do is get started and do it anyway.

So, like, I'm. Yeah, I guess I'm kind of doing it for myself, too. But since I look so terrible, I would be mortified if anyone found this. So my secret hope is that one stranger will find it and follow along. Told me accountable. So I don't know.

A STRANGE CONFESSION

This is a really strange confession. I wasn't planning on sharing this.

Tasha: But truth comes out. You got to do what you got to do.

Laura: And I'm not saying everybody needs to do something that elaborate, but sometimes I think the point is having a small minimum set of I do this no matter what.

THE FIRST DOMINO HABIT

You know, and I've talked a lot about how many, many years ago I did the clean sink challenge. And that was just so helpful. That meant every day before I go to bed, it was right when I had a newborn and like, things were crazy. I'm like, no matter what, I need to get the dishes cleaned every night. Because that's a first domino.

Because when I wake up and the kitchen is a mess, the dishes are a mess, then I don't want to eat a healthy breakfast, and then I don't do that, and then it just snowballs. So those

first domino habits are so important. And so I just have to have non negotiables that I do no matter what.

KNOWING YOURSELF

And then, I'm bad at following through. Like, let's just be honest, I'm really good at talking myself out of things, you know, all sorts of excuses. And I just need. Not everyone needs this, but I need the black and white of like, you're either doing this or there can be no gray areas.

So if that's what I need. And like, I am feeling already better because now I know that I'm never going to walk into a total disaster zone and it's already like, improved my mood and like, made me feel better. But I think, yeah, that's the point is if you need non negotiables, do that. And if you need accountability, do that. Because sometimes that's what it takes to really get it done. Yeah.

WRAPPING UP

Tasha: All right, well, I'm so glad you shared. And now I think we're gonna have a bunch of people going stalking Instagram seeing if they can be your one follower.

Laura: That would be awesome. If you find that old account. Oh my.

Tasha: If you find it, You have to comment and let her know that you found it off of our podcast. So we'll wrap it up there.

But thank you, Laura, just for sitting down and talking through this and talking about the fact that life is not always glamorous and it's not always super smooth sailing.

Laura Smith

All the things you see on Instagram, but strategies that can help keep going every day, checking a few things off the list, even on rougher days. So thanks for sharing your time with us today.

Laura: Thanks.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Tasha: Well, thanks so much for tuning in to this episode of the Get Organized HQ podcast, and I'll see you for our next episode next week.