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I DON'T TRUST THEM: TRUSTING PEOPLE AT WORK

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Hey there, everyone. Thanks for joining me. I'm Mel Savage, your host of The Career Reset podcast, where I help you fall back in love with the career that you already have. It's not sexy, but it's so relevant because so many people think they need to start over or quit their careers. They're not happy and they're not having fun. Let me tell you, I did that and it doesn't work. All that drama that you had in the job that you don't love, you bring to the next job. Believe me. Done that. Been there.

My role here is to just help you press reset, a little reset, get re-grounded, and really focus on helping you love the job you have. Across this podcast, we'll be talking about things like how you love your role, love the people you work with, love yourself, and welcome and love the success that you deserve. Today, I really want to focus on loving the people you work with. That's what we're going to focus on today. Specifically, I want to talk about trust.

Trust is such a big part of relationships when you're working with people. It's kind of a foundation. If you don't trust the people that you work with, then it's really hard. We find it really hard to focus on loving our job because especially if you are working with someone closely like it could be your boss or a peer or someone on your team or someone cross-functionally, that is a key part of what your department delivers and you don't trust that person, that can get in the way of you showing up and doing your best work.

I really want to talk today about trusting people at work, the power that you have, and the control that you have over whether or not you trust someone. We're going to talk about this whole idea around trust being earned, which I don't buy into. If you do buy into it, stay tuned. Let's talk about it. Let's hear another perspective. See if there's some room there for a different point of view. We're talking about whether trust is earned. We're going to talk about how to handle situations where someone does something that you perceive to be untrustworthy, and how to show up at your best in those situations.

I'm also going to give you a question, this one question that I ask myself every time I sense if there's something shady going on here. What do I want to do with this information? What do I want to do right now? This is a question I ask myself all the time, but sort of snaps me out of it, and gets me refocused on showing up as the

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best version of me in those situations so that I can feel at the end of the day, it's about me feeling great about what I'm achieving. That's really the most important thing. It doesn't matter what everyone else thinks.

I know, it's really easy to say, because I still worry sometimes about what everyone else thinks. But at the end of the day, if I feel like I did the best that I can do; if I can focus on that; if I can have the integrity in that, that goes a long, long way. And bonus, a lot less drama. There's just a lot less drama. And when there's less drama and you're creating less drama with your own feelings, then you have the space to focus on what you love about your job.

It's pretty simplistic in terms of a logical path on this. It's just not always easy to do. That's why I keep talking about different aspects of your job all the time and how you can show up in each of those different circumstances, how to think in each of those different circumstances in order for you to show up at your best, be your best, achieve success, and limit the drama.

When we talk about trust, specifically, I think there are four major categories for me and there might be more, obviously, but there are four major categories for me that impact the trust levels with someone that I work with. The first one is if they lie. If they actually outnote lie, and I catch them in a lie; if they say things behind your back, if they don't deliver what they say they're going to deliver, then I don't trust that they're going to do what they say they're going to do.

It's not quite as obvious, but it happens a lot. It happened to me a lot. I perceived that it happened to me a lot. My clients talk about this a lot–if someone takes credit for your work and acts in a way that you think is sort of dishonorable or untrustworthy in that way. I had some experience with this. There was a person that I used to work with. We were peers, and our teams crossed over a lot on the same projects so our teams worked so closely together, not just my people, but that person's team as well.

So often, when we were presenting our work to our stakeholders, sometimes I would present it and sometimes the other person would present it, depending on what the focus of the presentation was. But almost like nine times out of 10, the content, the solutions, the recommendations that we were putting forward, were a combination of the work of everyone that was on my team and on that other person's team as well.

Sometimes what would happen is that person would do the presentation. And someone in the audience, one of the stakeholders, quite often, because we were awesome, would say things like, *nice work, great job, fantastic recommendation, this is exactly what we needed…*, something like that. Not just like, *Thank you for your presentation, nice work.* It was some really emphatic appreciation of what was being presented. And the person presenting would say, *thanks.* That's it. Thanks. In my mind, I was like, *Not thank you so much? I want to just recognize the entire team and this other part, Mel's team, too…,* and all this kind of stuff. *Here's what we did together.*

This person would just say, *thanks*, and I would get really pissed off. I would get so mad. I was thinking, *This person is taking all the credit. They're just standing up there and saying thanks like they did it themselves. That is so sneaky. It is so unethical. I cannot trust them.* Those are all the thoughts that are going through my mind at this moment. That's and it would happen a lot because that was a common answer this person would get. Maybe you've had a similar situation.

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And all those things, it wasn't a fact that this person was taking the credit. It wasn't a fact that they were being sneaky or unethical, or whatever they were doing could have been a month bunch of things. They could have been nervous. They could have been thinking, *Yeah, I'm speaking on behalf of the team when I say things…,* whatever. But in that moment, or in those moments, I would think, *Oh, they're taking all the credit. They're just standing up there and thinking, this is all about me.*

I think this kind of thing happens all the time. I mean, I actually just had a client call me for an emergency session this week because there was a peer that she's working with, that's presenting the work, and they take the credit, and she was wondering what to do about it. Now, there are lots of things you can do.

But I'll tell you this, how effective is it for me at that moment to think this person is sneaky, this person is unethical, this person's taking all the credit. Imagine someone with that energy. How am I going to deal with this situation? Do you think I'm either going to blow up at this person? Or what I would usually do is just hold it in, get really mad, and avoid the confrontation. What else would I do? I would complain to other people about it. I would talk about how untrustworthy and conniving and unethical it was and I would say that to people that I "trusted" at work. Like I said, I avoided talking to her about it. I would just put on this face and say, *Great presentation. Thanks. You did a great job.*

But I wouldn't actually say what I was thinking. That, my friends, is a form of lying. I'm not telling her an out lie, but I'm basically lying because I'm not telling her how I really feel. I'm saying like, *great presentation* and I'm avoiding conflict. That's kind of lying. And complaining about someone behind their back is to me, very untrustworthy. It's one of the four things that I said, that really creates a sense of mistrust with people. By the way, I'm going to be using mistrust and distrust and untrustworthy–all wrong grammatically. So the grammar police out there just needs to chill because I never know which one to use when.

What's interesting about all of this is that when I thought that this other person was acting in an untrustworthy way, guess what I did, I acted in an untrustworthy way. And you might say, *Look, that's justified because that person did this. And so, therefore, you behave this way.* But guess who that hurts? It just hurts me. It's my choice, whether I act that way or not. It doesn't feel like a choice but it is my choice that I'm acting that way.

I have to ask myself, is that the kind of person that I want to be? Is that the kind of behavior that I want to have? Is that the kind of leadership that I want to show because, at the end of the day, I am responsible for how I feel, how I think about things, what I perceive about things, how I feel about things, and then how I act out on those feelings? And I call that, of course, emotional accountability.

I always like to think of myself as an accountable person. And I'm sure you do, too, because you are successful. That often means that you are doing what you say you're going to do. You're putting up your hand when you make a mistake. That's what people think accountability is. If I say I'm going to do this, then I'm going to do this. If I make a mistake, I own up to it. And that is part of what accountability is. But I want to offer you that there's also accountability around your emotions.

It's so funny that we will stand up, put our hands up, and say, *Yes, I do this wrong* when we do something and we take an action that creates a consequence that maybe goes sideways or whatever. But when it comes to how we feel about things, we put the blame on everyone else. It would be really easy for me to blame my untrustworthy

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behavior on the fact that my peer, my colleague acted in an untrustworthy way. That's bullshit. That's the same as me blaming someone else for something going wrong on the team. I own that, my bad.

Why do we have such a hard time doing that when it comes to our emotions? When it comes to that same situation that I'm talking about, it's not about what that person did by saying *thank you* at the end of the presentation and not sharing the praise or not recognizing the people. You can make your own judgments of whether that's right or wrong. I'm not saying it's right or wrong. I'm not even saying that how I felt about it was right or wrong. That's not really what's important here.

What I'm saying is, however I thought about it and however I felt about it, that's on me. It's not that other person's fault that I'm feeling this way. I have the accountability for my own emotions. It's not because this person said *thank you* when someone congratulated them on the presentation. It's not because they said *thank you* that made me not trust them. I made a choice at that moment when that person said *thank you*, I started thinking that they were taking all the credit. That thought made me act from mistrust. I started feeling mistrustful and distrustful.

Then, I started doing all the shitty behaviors–complaining behind their back, lying to their face, not approaching them, not being honest with them about how I felt, and having a discussion about if what I felt was even credible. I thought this person was taking all the credit, and that they're not trustworthy. And then I started acting in untrustworthy ways. All my choice. It's just that that thought of her taking all the credit happens so fast. We don't realize that it's a choice that we're making. I didn't realize back then that it was a choice I was making. It's only since I became a coach. It's only since I've been studying cognitive behavioral therapy that I realized these are choices that we make, and the more aware we are about these choices, the more we get to control whether we choose them or not. We get to decide.

Sometimes you might decide, *Yeah, I'm going to think she's taking all the credit. There's nothing wrong with that.* But it's a choice. That's the thing. I want to make sure that you understand it's a choice that you're making. It's not because that other person did whatever they did. It's because you're choosing to think a certain way about it. And there's nothing wrong with any of your choices. But you got to own them.

You might be thinking, *What is the big deal? What's the difference? What's the difference in whether I own the thought or not? If I choose to think she's taking all the credit, the outcome is the same.* I think the really big difference here is that it shifts the balance of power. In most situations, when we say, *Because they said thank you, that's why it's their fault that I'm feeling mistrustful or distrustful now. They broke my trust. It's their fault.* That puts the power in their hands. They have the power now to help to make you feel something. And what I'm saying is take your power back.

When you have all the power over how you feel about things and when you learn to take control of that power, that is huge. Imagine when you don't care what people think about you and you don't care what people say; when you are in control of how you show up; when someone says something hurtful or mean, and you actually don't feel hurt because you choose not to; because you manage how you think about what people are saying. When you are able to do that and when you take the power back about how you feel, imagine, you get to choose how you feel about things. That is such a superpower. That is so different than relying on the people around you to

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behave in certain ways so that you can feel happy. That's hard trying to control what everyone does, thinks, says, and feels around you in order for you to be happy or feel safe.

I know we all do that. I've done it for years. I still do it. Sometimes I catch myself doing it. We're all human beings here. But when you take the power back for how you feel, it changes the total game and you realize, Look, I can trust anybody I want to trust. I can not trust people I don't want to trust. I can love any job I want to love. I can not love any job. I can not love my job, it's entirely in my own hands. It puts you in the driver's seat of all your work relationships, and really anything that happens in your life.

The very first thing I'm going to say bottom line, but there are a few bottom lines I want to make in this podcast that I want you to take away or that I offer you to take away from this is you get to decide how you show up. How could I have handled that situation with my colleague better? Because the irony is that we want other people to be trustworthy. But when we perceive that they're not being trustworthy, we actually respond in an untrustworthy way.

For me, I was lying and complaining and all that stuff. So you don't trust them all of a sudden and what happens is your brain loves to be right about stuff. So once you've decided, like with my colleague, they did an untrustworthy thing, I can't trust them. I've made that decision in my mind whether I know I'm making it or not. All of a sudden, my brain wants to be right. So it starts to look for all the things in that person that are untrustworthy. See, not only do they do this thing in the presentation, but I can't trust them to come to meetings on time, or they didn't deliver this thing when they said they were going to deliver it or whatever.

I started to look or one will start to look for all the things in the relationship that are untrustworthy. And of course, when you start doing that, what happens? The relationship goes into the toilet really fast. On top of that, every time they do this new thing that your brain is perceiving, looking for the evidence, it finds it. When your brain wants to find evidence, it totally will. So when this person inevitably does something that you decide is untrustworthy again, what happens? You start acting in an untrustworthy way more. It's just like this terrible cycle that you put yourself in.

The challenge that we don't realize at the moment is that we are creating all of this. It doesn't matter whether this person stood up in front of the room and said *thank you,* versus sharing the credit. It doesn't matter. I get to decide what I think about that. I can decide if they're a sneaky liar or I can decide something else. I can decide, *I wonder why she did that. I need to talk to her about that. That was weird that I could think that.* Instead, I could think, *maybe she was nervous.* I could think, *I wanted to understand that more.* I could think of a bunch of other things instead of going right to that sneaky, *what's she trying to do? That was unethical.* All that stuff. I don't have to go there. That was a choice that I made among all the hundreds of other thoughts that I could have had at that moment.

Once I've decided someone is untrustworthy, I'm going to keep looking for all the untrustworthy things that they're doing. And every time I find it, and I think, *Oh, there it is. She's untrustworthy again.* Guess what? I started behaving in that way. So that's one thing, and two, what happens is I'm not behaving like the leader that I want to be, which I get to be in charge of. There are so many great sayings out there when you're looking for them, like as much as your brain wants to look for evidence that you're right. So if you believe that someone is untrustworthy,

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your brain is going to look for reasons that are untrustworthy. Your brain will look for reasons that you're right for good things, too.

So if you want to believe that someone is just doing their best, for instance, not saying that's the case, maybe you can't believe that in a situation, that's fine. But let's just say, you are believing. If you think about your child, and when your child makes a mistake, and you think they're learning, they're growing, they're just doing their best, your brain will look for evidence of that as well. When you're looking for improvement, like when I train my dog and they learn to sit and they learn to roll over, or they learn to not bark, which one of my dogs just does not want to do, she wants to bark all the time. I look for improvements. I don't look for all the problems.

Your brain will do that no matter what, whatever you believe your brain wants to reinforce. So be really careful with what you decide to believe because your brain is going to look for it. And remember, you get to decide. That's the main thing. What I would say to you is, when you're in a situation where you see someone doing something, like in the situation where the person said *thank you*; if I wanted my result to be that I act in a trustworthy way, regardless of what they're doing, I want to show up as in a trustworthy way, I can tell you for sure that what it doesn't look like is talking about someone behind their back and lying to their face. That's not me being trustworthy.

A trustworthy version of me might say, *Hey, I saw this in the meeting. You said this and you said thank you. I would have thought we would have given the team some kudos or some credit. What do you think about that?* Just having a question, having a dialogue coming from a place of understanding, knowing that no one's perfect, and not leaping to judgment, that's me being trustworthy, being honest and forthright and sharing my thoughts with someone and questioning my own thoughts, like giving space for me to be wrong. That's me being trustworthy, just having a conversation about it.

The question you can ask yourself is, *what does trustworthiness look like for you whether it's in that circumstance or another circumstance?* I can't control what someone's going to say or do but I can control what I think about it. So let's say you're in a situation, and one of your reports or people reporting to you, or someone's supposed to deliver something to you and they don't do it. I said at the beginning, that one of the reasons we stopped trusting people is because they keep saying they're going to do something and they don't do it.

Let's say that happens to you. What does the trustworthy version of you do? For me, it would just be being direct and understanding like, *Hey, you said you're going to get this done. What's going on? Why?* And if they keep doing it, if it's chronic, especially if they're reporting to you, then it's having an honest conversation. *Look, you keep saying you're going to do it. You're not doing it. We've had this conversation. These are the reasons why. We talked about areas for improvement. This can't go on like this. What do you think?* That's just an honest conversation. And treating the person with respect and dignity, that's, that's me being trustworthy. We can do that but it's so hard.

We think it's hard. We're worried about what the other person is going to say and how they can react and if we can handle it. But if you're coming from a place of understanding, then people mirror back what you feed them. If you're coming from a place of true understanding, not like, *I'm angry in my head, and I'm going to pretend to be understanding for a second.* No. You have to let go of the anger and really believe what you want. You're curious, you want to understand what's going on, you care about this person, you care about the team, or whatever it is.

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If you're coming from that place, usually, the conversation can go fine, because you're just trying to understand. You just care about them. It's not like you're trying to attack them with, *Hey, you did this? Why the hell did you do that?* That's going to be a different kind of conversation.

Another one that's really hard is if you catch someone saying something about you behind your back. What do you do with that? Because your instinct is trying to protect yourself, you don't feel safe. But how can you change your thinking to get to a place where you can come to them and just be honest and say, *Hey, look. I actually heard you saying this stuff. I walked in on you. I overheard it* or so and so said, whatever. You don't have to share names. You do you. *Why? What's going on? Why wouldn't you come to me about this? I want our relationship to be good.*

You can have honest conversations, and that person can react however they want to react. They can deny it, they can lie, they can have a fucking shit fit, whatever it is You get to decide how you want to show up. You can be offensive, like be on the offensive with curiosity and compassion and understanding versus on the defensive with anger and resentment and judgment and mistrust. Because when mistrust becomes your fuel, when mistrust is fueling your actions, nothing good comes from that. Not in terms of how you show up as a human being. And this is really all about you.

At the end of the day, we're talking about you loving what you do at your job all the time. And if you're angry, mistrustful, and resentful, and going over the drama over and over in your mind, and you are not showing up at your best, which ultimately impacts your performance and your ability to achieve success, then, of course, you're not enjoying your job. Of course, you're not enjoying it. But you get to control how you feel about all the relationships at work.

I think I've talked about this before on the podcast about relationships, but I'll just give like a quick synopsis here as well. In terms of any working relationship, most people think relationships at work are a two-way street. The quality of your relationship is a two-way street. But it's not. It's basically a one-way street. Because if you have emotional accountability, you experience the relationship differently than someone else. You've been in those situations where you really like someone, and they don't like you, you're still in the relationship, but you both have different thoughts about it.

Or you probably have a deeper relationship with the Chairman of the Board of your organization than they have with you because they may not even know your name but you know who they are, because you get memos from them all the time, or the CEO, or whatever it is, the vice president of your department. So the quality or the depth of a relationship is based on how you think. Because your thoughts create your emotions create your actions.

When you think about relationships at work, the quality of your relationship with someone is basically based on three things–what you think about them, what you think they think about you, and what you think about yourself in the context of the other person. And based on how you think in each of those three areas, that's going to determine the quality of the relationship with you that you have with someone. The good news is, you get to decide how you think in each of those areas. You get to decide what you think about someone. You get to decide what you think they think about you.

If you even care, you get to decide what you think about yourself in the context of that person. And that plays big. How do you think about yourself in the context of your CEO, versus in the context of someone that reports to you

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might be different. Why? Why does it have to be different? These are all things that you need to explore when you want to build trusting relationships with people at work, especially when you don't have to do it with everyone.

But if there are like two or three people depending on the size of your organization that you work with really closely and you really want to improve the quality of your relationship, pick one of those people and explore. What are the thoughts that you have that are getting in the way of you building a strong relationship with someone? Do you want to have those thoughts? Are those thoughts things that you want to hold on to or not?

I just joined this mastermind with a bunch of other coaches and there's just one gal in there that I get really defensive around. My little spidey sense goes up. It's not so much that she's untrustworthy. I just don't trust her because I don't feel safe around her. I feel like she would hurt me to make herself feel better. So I guess it's more like condescending, maybe arrogant versus untrustworthy.

Here's the thing, everything I just said, it's not a fact about this person. It's not a fact that she's untrustworthy. It's not a fact that she's going to hurt me. It's not a fact that she's condescending. These are just thoughts that are floating around in my head. And it's okay that my brain feeds me those thoughts. It's meant to do that. It's trying to protect me. It's trying to keep me safe. I get that. But just because my brain is feeding me those thoughts doesn't mean that they're true and doesn't mean I have to believe them.

Because I have a lot of practice noticing what I'm thinking, I decided to journal about it and do a little self-coaching. I said to myself, look, I can continue to think she's condescending, but where's that going to get me? I'm going to feel defensive, I'm going to debate issues with her, I'm going to not listen to her, I'm going to complain about her, and all these behaviors that I don't love about myself. And then my result is going to be that I begin to start acting arrogantly. I start becoming condescending and I start becoming untrustworthy.

The question is, do I want to behave that way? And the answer is no. I really explored what was really going on. Why am I getting triggered here? And the reason is because she's got a really big personality. She's got very strong opinions. There's nothing wrong with that. It only becomes a problem if I make it a problem. It's not me against her. It's just her being her. And she's allowed to do that.

So when it comes back to those three questions–What do I think of her? What do I think she thinks of me? What do I think of myself in the context of her? And if I'm being really honest with myself, my problem is that what do I think of her? I think she's condescending and loud and doesn't listen and has strong opinions. What do I think she thinks of me? I think she thinks she's better than me. What do I think of myself in the context of her? I don't think I'm as strong as she is. These are the thoughts that are getting in my way of having a relationship with her. And that's fine.

I can choose that. I can stick with those if I want to. There's no right or wrong. I get to choose. But if my goal is to learn as much as I can from this mastermind, get as much as I can out of it, let people be who they are, and show up as my best self, I don't want to think those things. I am choosing not to think about those things. Instead, I can think, she's just a coach who also has goals for this mastermind just like me. I can think, I can learn a lot from her. I know I have a lot of value to add and she's excited to work with me, too. I can think of all of that. I can think it's normal for people to be insecure in this environment and feel competitive.

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Maybe she is acting out from that. I can allow her to do that and not judge her. Our brains want us to focus on all the negative things. It does that because it thinks it's protecting us if it notices all the shitty stuff happening around us, then we get to be saved. So our brains are wired to do that. But just because they're wired to do that doesn't mean we have to believe all this stuff. It worked fine for us back in the day when lions and tigers and bears and dinosaurs and all that crap was going to come to eat us. But that's not how it is anymore. So we can notice those thoughts and think, *I'm safe, it's all good. Don't worry about it brain.*

I want to leave you with a question that you can ask yourself to reset your thinking in those moments because we all know. The first thing is to notice that we're not behaving the way we want to behave. And you know when that's happening. I can feel it when I'm getting worked up. The minute I start getting worked up about something now, I go from the feeling like, what am I feeling? I'm feeling anger, mad, confusion, mistrust, fear, whatever. I'm getting worked up for some reason. Worry. That's another big one–worry. I've trained myself over time to just notice that and go, *Okay, stop. What's going on? What am I thinking right now that's causing this?* But really the question is that in those moments, when you're not trusting someone and when you're feeling like there's something going on here, I don't trust them, you can say to yourself, *What would acting trustworthy look like for me right now in this moment?*

Because at the end of the day, you can't control the other person's doing but you can control how you show up. When you're getting worked up at that moment, you can just stop and say, *What would acting trustworthy for me look like in this moment? It'd be giving her space. I'd be giving her the benefit of the doubt. It would be about assuming innocence. It would be about being understanding. I like understanding. That works. What would I need to really believe in order for me to be understanding in this moment?* That's what you want to try and focus on and it works for anything, not just trustworthy.

It works for any emotion. What would the patient version of me think at this moment? What would the understanding version of me think at this moment? What would the happy version, kind version, or supportive version think of me at this moment? When you're with you're someone who reports to you and hasn't delivered or with a peer who hasn't delivered, what would a supportive version of me look like at this moment? And then you can change your thinking. I always try to catch myself.

This is a bit of a shortcut. I'm always about first, understanding why you feel that way. If you want to create lasting change, it's about really understanding. Why do I feel like she's condescending? Where's that coming from? Why am I choosing that thought? Those are the things that I explore when I'm coaching people so that we can really start to make some lasting change and let go of all of the bullshit thoughts that are getting in the way of you showing up and being the person you want to be.

For instance, loving your job. What are all the bullshit thoughts and things that you're focused on that are getting in the way of you loving your job? And why are you letting them get in the way? That's really what coaching is all about. It helps you notice what you're thinking, understand why you're thinking it, and then choose new thoughts. And it's a skill. It's like, if you want to learn to work out, you hire a coach. If you want to learn a new skill, like a new piece of software, or you want to be a doctor, or whatever, you go to school. This is a skill, like any other skill, learning to manage your mind. That's what life coaches do.

That's why I call myself a life coach for your career. Because it's really about helping you notice all the thoughts and bullshit getting in the way of you loving the job you have. And when you notice those things, and you start to

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change them, you don't have to start over you don't have to change careers. You don't have to leave the organization that you love and the job that you really liked. But your boss is such an asshole and you can't focus, you can actually make everything that you have work for you. I'm telling you, it is such a freeing beautiful place to be.

So if you want to talk about that, please come and book a session with me. We'll talk about your situation specifically, you just need to go to melsavage.com/chat. We can talk all about you, what's going on with you, and how to help you love the job you already have.

It's not about you staying in this job forever but some people leave jobs because they're running away from a bad situation. I'm saying that's not a reason to leave. You can love the job you have now, stabilize it, and get to a place where you're comfortable. You can be happy. And then you can decide, *You know what? I'm happy here. But this isn't really what I want. I really want it to go do this other thing.* Great. Go to that other thing. This isn't about sticking with the same career forever. This is about not running away, and learning the skill of loving the job you already have so that you can love any job that comes your way. That's really powerful, my friends.

That is all I have for you this week, and have a great one. I'll talk to you soon. Bye for now.

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