

10. Storytelling for Impact with Candis Hickman

Michelle Harris: [00:00:00] From Bosstrack, it's Her HypeSquad, a show about amazing women who've made incredible strides as leaders in their industry. They're here to support you and your leadership growth to encourage you and hype you up as part of your hype squad.

Hello and welcome back to another episode of Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack. I'm your host, Michelle Harris. In this episode, I'm talking with Candis Hickman. Candis and I talk about storytelling and how it can help new leaders communicate more effectively and build trust. We talk about her slow year experience and what she has planned for 2023.

But before we share a conversation, let me tell you about Candis. Candis Hickman is a spiritual life coach and marketing mentor for heart-centered business leaders. [00:01:00] Over the past seven years, she has helped hundreds of clients to more deeply understand who they are, what they have to offer, and how to share their story in order to inspire and connect with others.

In December, Candis and her husband Elber will be launching a life and wellness program called the Slow Year with a Mission to help people reimagine the way they live, work, and lead. And we'll talk a little bit about that in this episode. So without further delay, I uh, present to you my conversation with Candis Hickman.

Hi, Candis. I'm so excited to have you on. I've been looking forward to our conversation because we not only talk about, um, leadership related skills, but also wellness, which is a nice blend, uh, for our audience and really what Bosstrack, uh, really tries to promote. So I'm excited to have you on here, so thank you very much.

Um, I would love for you to tell the audience a little [00:02:00] bit about who you are and what you do in your background, if you don't mind sharing.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, of course. Loaded question. Then I, yeah, so I'm Candis Hickman and I have, um, I've been kinda in the personal branding and marketing world for the last, uh, seven years.

Um, but started my career in health. Right. I started as an occupational therapist and I entered the coaching industry, uh, back in 20, uh, 14 as a health coach. And so I've seen kind of multiple evolutions throughout that time and now am returning, um, to my roots with health and wellness and as we're getting ready to launch a new, uh, wellness and spirituality program called the Slow Year.

So that's what I've got going on.

Michelle Harris: Okay, great. And like I said, we're, we're excited to have you on because one of the, uh, underappreciated parts of leadership is the ability to tell stories and how effective [00:03:00] that can be in getting people motivated or, you know, explaining how to do something or, you know, really a number of different things.

So, uh, one of, and I'm, I'm not sure if it comes from the personal branding aspect, but I know. You are somewhat of a specialist in storytelling, so I'd love for you to share kinda how storytelling can help a leader, uh, especially a new leader as they try to make their way, uh, leading a new team.

Candis Hickman: So, Yeah.

Yeah. Well, sta storytelling is something that, um, has been central to my work, particularly when it comes to personal branding, cuz I've spent a lot of years, um, you know, the last kind of seven years working with a lot of different leaders in the self-help industry. Both rising and established leaders, helping them to understand who they are, what they have to offer, and then how to communicate, uh, the value of what they offer in a way that feels really resonant.

And we do that through storytelling. And so that's what the connection is there between the storytelling and [00:04:00] the work that I've done in personal branding. And so storytelling is just like one of those. Um, incredible skills to have because we're all connected through stories. You know, when I tell a story, you might glean some type of lesson from it.

The person sitting next to you might glean a totally different lesson, completely based upon, um, their own personal. Experience and their relationship to the story that you're telling. And so storytelling has this really powerful way of kind of breaking down barriers. It requires that the person telling the story is willing to get vulnerable.

Um, it it, it is this opportunity to kind of connect with people on a deeper level that maybe just like giving information or providing education doesn't always have the capacity to do. And so, uh, telling stories is something that is both powerful when it comes to branding yourself or marketing your services as it is to actually connecting [00:05:00] with people and holding space as a leader.

Um, and so yeah, storytelling has. It's a huge, um, part of, of what I've been doing over the years and helping people to really drop into who they are, understand better who they are, uh, in order to communicate the value of what it is that they have to offer.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Thank you. And I have to admit, for me and my career and I, 25 years in leadership, I mean, I generally know about storytelling and kind of how to, uh, make something I'm communicating a little more effective, but it really hadn't been a focus of mine.

And, uh, kind what you said about helping new leaders and businesses, I, I can. See now where it's even become, it's like so much more important to have, to be able to tell a story so that people really understand and, um, and take what you are saying, um mm-hmm. In, in a, in a, in a positive way. [00:06:00] Um, But I'd love for, I'd love to know how you get people started.

So once somebody understands, okay, I need to start, uh, adding story in my communication, but if somebody is maybe a little more analytical, like, like I was my fin, I had a finance background, so my brain wasn't always going to telling a story. Like, how, how did they get started?

Candis Hickman: Hmm. Well, I think a big part of this is understanding, uh, who you are understanding, um, kind of the background or where you come from.

Um, Specifically in relationship to the audience that you're in front of, right? Like the story that I tell, um, in different scenarios, my personal story, it might come out in different ways. And so there is this kind of balance. Firstly, we wanna understand what you believe that you're here to do. [00:07:00] Right.

What do you believe that your purposes or your call is, or what is it that you believe is your function in the workplace? Firstly, we have to understand that there is like the who am ips, right? That I think is really important. And then all of the elements around how did I actually get here? Why am I here?

What brought me here? What experiences in my background have driven me to this place and this time that I exist in right now? So when we can kind of understand the background, the who are we piece to really be anchored, uh, in that aspect, that's kind of the first step in understanding, um, where we're at in terms of telling stories.

The next thing we have to understand is like why we're telling the story, right? Like, if I'm gonna get ready to tell a story, what would be the purpose of this story? Is this something that I'm trying to sell? Right. Do I have something that I have on offer that I wanna sell? Do I have a, um, an idea that I'm trying to communicate in the [00:08:00] workplace, um, that I need people to actually buy into is the purpose of me telling this story for connection and entertainment and to break down barriers and create more, uh, vulnerability and a sense of, a deeper sense of connectivity with people in a social setting or even in a team environment.

So it's understanding who am I, the background that brought me to here, the why and what it is that I'm actually trying, like why would it be important for me to tell this story? And then the third component here is like, who needs to receive the story, right? Like who, who is on the other end, the receiving end of the story, and what is it that they need?

What is their per, what is their story like broadly as an audience? What brings them to this moment in time where they need to hear your story? You know, are they here to be entertained? Is there some type of pain point when it comes to marketing? Is there some type of pain point, some type of struggle, some type of

[00:09:00] Pleasure that they are seeking that in you, in telling your story allows the person to either feel inspired or move to action in some type of way. So we are not, in order for a story to really be effective, uh, we firstly have to understand the background that brings us to this place and time where we are ready to tell the story what it is that we are trying to.

Uh, communicate around or why we feel the need to tell a story to begin with. What's the thing that we're trying to sell, the interaction we're trying to have, and then who is it that we're actually communicating? What's their story? And where those things bridge, where all of those things come together is the point of like a really effective and resonant story.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, that's, uh, that's great. One of the things I think that was a little intimidating for me is that I thought a story had to be like, some kind of

fable that I had memorized. So it was some, you know, not a [00:10:00] story about me or my experiences, but a story, uh, another story that I just had to kind of keep on tap.

Uh, but it doesn't sound like it, it has to, to be that. It sounds like it could be more personal.

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Well, oftentimes that's not even necessarily the story that I teach. Like as someone, as the, the type of storytelling that I teach is somebody who, um, has always encouraged people to learn how to tell their own personal stories.

Um, that to me is the thing, because when you tell a personal story or even when you tell a story that's maybe not personal, but you have a personal relationship to the story, there is a certain emotion that can be. Infused throughout the story because if we take ourselves back into the moment, if we, if we can actually drop ourselves back into the moment of the emotion of what was happening, uh, as this story was actually developing in real time, then when we're actually telling the story, [00:11:00] emotion comes through, we feel connected to it, that energy translate and transfers to the people that are listening.

That's what Resonance is about. Right. And so it could absolutely be a story maybe that's not personal to you, but that you have a personal relationship too, because when we tell those moving stories, that's when, uh, they have the impact that storytelling can actually have.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Um, I'm, I'm wondering how.

Like for somebody that is new to storytelling and they're not necessarily good at thinking on their feet, like is it, is it a good idea to kind of ha have, take some time to like really pull together what all of your stories are so that you can be able to kind of talk about them or, or tell them at any given moment?

Candis Hickman: There could be some value in that. [00:12:00] Um, from a, from a practice standpoint, I think perhaps the most value when it comes to storytelling is bringing your awareness to the fact that stories actually happen in every moment of every day. Like a lot of times people get caught up around this idea of storytelling because they think like, well, There was, they think that their life has one story.

Like there's just this one big story of my life when in actuality, like every minute of every day, there's little micro stories that are happening all of the time and, and if you pay attention, you'll notice that there could almost be a lesson in every moment that happens, but that happens when you start paying attention.

So, I think that that's one thing to note. I think also when it comes to like, well, should they pull together a bunch of potential stories to pull from, that's entirely possible and true and, [00:13:00] and certainly a way that you could go about it if you understand what the purpose of you telling any given one of those stories would be.

We don't just tell stories. For story's sake. Although I will say, you know, I have a local storytelling event and we tell stories for stories' sake, for the sake of entertainment, and that doesn't necessarily always have to be a lesson. Um, but for leaders, um, who are trying to connect better with their teams or market the value of a service or, um, you know, any, any reason that that a, um, a leader might tell a story.

We just wanna stay connected to like, If I'm gonna sit down and write out all my stories or a bunch of stories, in which scenarios, what might these be relevant and who might be listening and why might they care? Yeah,

Michelle Harris: I love that and I'm glad you brought up the event that you have about storytelling, because I'm [00:14:00] wondering if.

Putting yourself out there and attending events like that, or maybe even joining like a Toastmasters would help kind of somebody new to storytelling start exercising the ability to draw from their experience and tell, tell their story.

Candis Hickman: Mm-hmm. Absolutely. I think anytime we're, anytime we're immersed in, um, In the thing that we wanna learn more about.

Um, I think we get a greater opportunity to actually learn and, and hear from other people. I mean, I think, I wouldn't even say that. Um, I mean, I've been to Toastmasters in the past and it's, I've, it's very structured kind of experience is very, um, specific, in particular, the way in which things are laid out, uh, for me.

My experience of storytelling, I think it's been much less, um, structured or [00:15:00] learned per se. Rather than embodied, because I, growing up, I read a lot. I would read a lot of books, a ton of stories. I always had my head in a book. If I'm watching movies or listening to speakers, um, on like Ted Talks or, um,

watching motivational talks or, you know, even you can see like the Moth Live storytelling series in, in, uh, in New York, based out of New York.

You know, there's. Ways that you can immerse yourself, where it doesn't necessarily mean that storytelling has to be so structural, although it can be, but more that you're just. You're taking some, we, we tell stories every day. Like I, we tell stories to each other every day, right? Like every conversation we sit down.

At the end of the day, your, your partner goes, or your, your friend or or whoever says to you, Hey, how was your day? And you go into like this big, you go into [00:16:00] storytelling. It's really actually natural. I think the part where people get caught up is they think it is something different. I think one of the most powerful ways that I've developed my storytelling skills over the years has literally been by sending emails and writing, uh, social media posts to my, that, that to, to my audience, telling them what's going on, sharing a story, and then what's the lesson?

Sharing a story and why does it matter? Sharing a story, and this is why I'm telling you this. And I think if we just get into a habitual practice into the habit.

Michelle Harris: So if, I think about how this could apply to someone who is in like a corporate leadership role and mm-hmm. They, um, don't know that somebody comes in and asks for advice or they, they come in for a one-on-one and wanna know how to approach something.

Mm-hmm. Storytelling could really just mean. Well, let me [00:17:00] tell you about my experience when I did X, Y, Z. Yeah. Is that.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, you could be. Yeah. Let me tell you about a time when, um, I did X, Y, Z or maybe you've had a supervisory relationship, um, in which you've seen that scenario play out in the past. If you could share stories anonymously from, from other experiences, um, you know, it could be an opportunity to.

Be deeply curious and draw the story out of the person that is sitting in front of you. Um, you know, and what does it look like to ask them the details and to ask them like, so how can we connect with each other, um, through the power of storytelling.

Michelle Harris: Got it. So it doesn't need to be, let me tell you about the story about that rabbit in the turtle.

Candis Hickman: And this is the, this is what you learn from that. No, no. I think personal stories is one of the most [00:18:00] powerful, if we can get into the habit of like learning how to tell our personal stories. Um, and, and all you have to, and I, and I mean I guess it's easier said than done for somebody that maybe is a little bit less experienced with.

With, um, telling stories in what might feel like a more formal way? I think we have to remember firstly, that it doesn't have to be formal. Um, and then we have to remember secondly that, uh, we tell stories in order to connect that your story is valid, that your story is, has the power to move people.

That your story has the power to connect with people that, um, you don't have to have some crazy rags to riches or like overcoming the monster or any type of, you know, outrageous story. For it to be valid, for it to be interesting, for it to have the capacity to really help you to connect with people. Um, and it doesn't have to be about the.

Tortoise and the hare.

Michelle Harris: And I'm [00:19:00] wondering for people like, I think I run into this a lot as well, when you live your experience, it's just be, it's just something that happened to you. Like how do you get pa, how do you, how do you know when it's something to share? I don't know if I'm asking that right, like, because for like, for me, it might seem like, oh, it's something that happened and it's no big deal.

That maybe to tell somebody else like it, it is something that might help them in a moment. Um, I don't, do you, do you run into that?

Candis Hickman: Does, does, yeah. I think, well, I think that as you begin to start using storytelling as a tool, you start to intuitively sense when is the right and appropriate and most powerful time to share, um, a story like that.

Um, but I also think that it comes down to, um, I have stories now that I share more now about like how I was raised and, you know, [00:20:00] things my dad did growing up that were like central to like my experience as we get ready to kind of launch this new wellness and spirituality program. The stories that I share around my upbringing, um, that I have really never shared before.

Uh, because as I slowed down, as I create space for inspiration to kind of come in, um, you start to feel into stories that seem relevant to the moment. And I think that that comes. From getting out of your head and into your heart, and

when you say like, well, how will I know when it's the right time to share a story?

It's like when you slow down and you create space and you really listen to people, or when you understand what people need, and this is a huge part of it that I really think is so important to be said. Remember that every [00:21:00] story has an audience. And particularly when it comes to like leadership, you know, operating like on a relational level or, um, you know, personal branding in the corporate world or otherwise, um, we have to remember that um, a brand is essentially a perception of you that exists outside of you.

That's what a brand is. In that way, when we are trying to, we're being in positions of leadership, or we are branding ourselves in the marketplace, or whatever it might be, that we have to remember that the stories we share helps to shape a perception about us as much as it helps us to connect to people.

And so knowing what's the right story to share means knowing who the person is that you're talking to. So I've always said the work is never really about us. And so when I [00:22:00] teach storytelling, when I teach personal branding or. Anything that I teach, I, it's, it's that remembering that the work is never really about me.

Me telling a story, while it might be an outlet for me, it's not really about me. It's not really about my story, it's maybe about the lesson or how the person that's on the other end is gonna receive it. What is the lesson that maybe they could glean from it? What is the lesson that I'm trying to convey with it?

What do I wanna impart with it? I also think that when we start to operate from that sense of the work is not about me, it alleviates much of the pressure to feel like, is this story valid? How, how is this going to, um, make others feel, becomes the larger question.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. And I, uh, going back to you brought up about listening and that is one of the most overlooked skills in management or leadership is active listening and really [00:23:00] just kind of opening your mind and taking that time to hear what the other person is saying.

So, I mean, I. I think like as you said, that's like step number one is to make sure that you're opening up that space to listen and hear what the challenge is or you know, really where they're coming from so you know how, so you know what story to share.

Candis Hickman: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Absolutely. Nailed it.

Michelle Harris: Um, can I ask you, with your personal brand and clients, without kind of talking about who, is there a, um, an experience that you can kind of recall that might be helpful to the audience to say, like, what is the process you go through mm-hmm.

To really help them know their story?

Candis Hickman: Hmm. Yeah. Um, well, I think that one of the biggest parts that I. Um, start, it's kind of how, what we spoke about earlier, which [00:24:00] is like, who am I, what do I have to offer, and then how do I actually communicate it? Um, the reverse can actually be true. When I'm working with clients, one of the first things I'm say I'm asking people is like, what do you wanna be known for?

Right. Like what? Let's, let's talk first about like, what is it that you actually wanna be known for, and, um, who do you want to be in your audience? Do you, are, are you somewhat established or you've already got people in your audience, or who would you want to be in your audience? Um, And so once we can kind of define that, we can define the different elements of the person that's existing in my audience.

Okay? So why are they here? What are they struggling with? What do they actually need to learn? What do they need to understand, um, if they achieve success doing this thing? What will their life look like? What will transformation look like? What did they look like before they [00:25:00] came into contact with your story?

What are they like now after they've come into contact with your story? And so understanding kind of the arc of a story to begin with, which is that there's always somebody who wants a thing. There's some barriers to them getting it, and then eventually they get over the hump and then life is different.

And so firstly, we have to understand all of these different elements of the person that's actually sitting in front of me. So there's, there's that. So that part first is that a lot of the times some people when they're like, oh, I can't answer this, Candis, I feel confused about my identity, or I feel a little bit confused.

It's okay, well let's figure out then who's in your audience first. Maybe that is an easier route, and for a lot of people that's an easier route to take. Right? Once I

understand now, like who's there sitting in my audience, I can say, what do they need to hear? Right. Is there a list of lessons that they need to hear?

Is there, what are the things that they need to understand? What are the steps maybe that they need to go through in order to [00:26:00] experience this transformation or this experience that my work or my story can provide for them? Once you understand all of those pieces, then stories start to form. Cause then you think back and you go, well, what have I experienced in my life?

When it comes to that aspect that they need help with, what's my experience of understanding that lesson? You know, and then as, as you can kind of make sense of those things and of that person's experience and what they need, your stories start to unfold cuz you go, oh, they need to understand this lesson and here's a story that I went through and experienced, I had, or that somebody that I worked with or knew went through that I know would be supremely helpful for them to hear.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. And I feel like this is like a therapeutic session for me here, so. Oh, good. I appreciate that. [00:27:00] Oh, good. Um, and what, so you already, you already kind of mentioned, um, the slow year and I, and I, that's maybe is a good time to switch over to. The slow year experience and really what you're building and you know, how you've taken the last year to kind of make that space to, to build what you're building.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, sure. Yeah. So I, um, at the end of, uh, last year, I kind of had this moment where I thought, oh my goodness, I just. Well, there was a couple of things I said. I don't know if marketing and branding is necessarily something that I wanna be known for anymore. So back to that question that I ask of my clients don't really know that this is something that I wanna be known for.

I think that there's something different that I've been called to do, and I've felt this for many years, but I didn't really know what it was. Um, I felt like I'd gotten to a point in my life, in my business, in my health, um, even in some of my friendships where there was just like this plateau where I felt like I was doing the same things, having the same conversations, um, making the [00:28:00] same amount of money that I had been making for many years.

And so at the end of last year I said, you know what? Something needs to give. I had this moment, um, with a friend where I was like, why are we having this conversation again? I feel like we've been having this conversation every like

week for. Three years, like I can't keep having this conversation cause nothing will change.

And so I said, you know, I think I'm gonna have to do something differently. But I've tried the work harder thing. I've tried the work smarter thing, I've tried all these things and I don't think I can work any harder. Do anything more. I'm gonna do the opposite. I'm gonna slow down. And I'm gonna slow all the way down.

And like for me, I don't think that I can just slow down for eight weeks or two months, or three days. It needs to be for a really long time because I just need to fully learn how to embody, have faith and trust that things will continue to run smoothly even if I'm slower. And so I embarked on a journey at the end [00:29:00] of the year last year that I was called the slow year, and I said, this year I am ready to like reconnect with people.

So, In person again. And I want to, um, really prioritize my health and my wellness and tending to my spirit just above all else. And I, I, I really just, um, Yeah, I just wanna be, I wanna be slow. And so I embarked on this journey and as I kind of have gone throughout this year, uh, people started asking me pretty early in my year, well, I wanna do a slow year.

What does it mean to do a slow year? And I said, well, look, I'm, I'm just taking me my own year right now, but next year, maybe next year I'll do it. And, you know, I'm a certified. Spiritual coach. I'm a trained life, um, life coach and a trained health coach. Started my career, went through the Institute of Integrative Nutrition back in 2014, um, and an, and a former occupational [00:30:00] therapist.

So I have actually quite a large background in kind of the health industry, um, but had been, had gotten kind of a bit further away from that cuz there's, um, there's so many things that I just love to talk about. Um, but yeah, I've, I've embarked upon this journey and it's been such a. Profound and transformational year.

Uh, for me in my life, I've realized that the more that I slow down, the more space that I create for inspiration, the more creativity comes in, the more connected that I feel to myself and to others, the more vibrant I feel in my health. I feel more vitality, more energy. And so I realized that, man, if I could like.

Work with, and I've also worked over the last couple of years, primarily with business owners and business leaders in the self-help industry. And I sit there and I watch them frantically, marketing themselves, frantically trying to get clients just frantic and stressed and [00:31:00] pushing all of the time, which is actually counterproductive.

And I would see that time and time again, and I would tell people to slow down. And they would slow down and they'd experience breakthroughs. Um, the over this, over this past year. And so, so now, like this is the thing we're getting excited now to like launch the slow year, um, program in 2020. Um, three, well, in December is when we'll actually do our, uh, summit and then invite people to enroll.

Uh, and the focus is on people in, uh, first and foremost in leadership positions because we feel that like if we can encourage leaders to take good care of themselves, to slow down, to prioritize communion and connection with other people, then it will just create a ripple effect.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, so, so, so important.

I mean, I even struggle with trying to get people to take [00:32:00] an hour out of their day just for themselves so they can think. So, I mean, I can imagine you have, uh, for people that aren't. Really aware of what a slow year can give them. Um, mm. Some, some convincing to do, but what, um, I don't know if this gives everything away, but can you share like a few things that you did this year that really helped you slow down or things you did while you were slowing down that really benefited you?

Um, in the last year?

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Yeah. Look, one of the, one of the really special things that I did at the beginning of the year, and this is where everything comes full circle, right, is that we decided to really prioritize our storytelling and our local community. And that initially was like, oh, I want people to be able to tell my story, their story.

But then pretty quickly it came to this like, this is about communion. Not just like, how do we network or how do we. Um, [00:33:00] you know, be in community, but like the actual communion piece with people. How do we sit with people? How do we do life with people? How do we, we started hosting dinner parties and book clubs and doing our story for telling event and inviting

people to come over and eat with us if you know, after storytelling and, um, because communion was such a big part of it.

So this year I returned to communion as one of the very first things that I started doing. I started, um, Spending more time, uh, taking my time in the kitchen. Like we had a baking a day a couple of weeks ago, you and I, Michelle. And, um, and I, uh, that's something that's been true for me. I've been cooking with friends and spending more time like cooking whole foods and soaking my beans and taking my time and not being always in a rush because it's just like a little way that I can add some slowness, um, into my life.

I've been prioritizing. Breath [00:34:00] and what it means to be connected to my breath. Um, and with a variety of, um, different ways that I've been doing that. And then the other thing is retreats. Like I've been on, um, three retreats this year and, uh, just been taking that extended time where in the past I just always felt like, well, I can't fully disconnect all of the way.

And so there's these little, you know, and those are all big things, but I think that there's just even little things. And one big thing that I would say to people, uh, that can't even take that hour out of their day to just think is, um, one of the principles, you know, there's 13 principles that we've developed that have underpinned the slow year, um, for, for me and my husband, um, in the last couple of months has really been slowing down as well.

And one of the first principles is permission. And I think that, you know, a lot of people, they don't give themselves permission to slow down. They think that everything is just gonna [00:35:00] fall. And so it's kind of diving into those elements of fear and guilt and worry about what will happen if we slow down.

You know, will everything just cave will, nobody else will be able to like, Pick up the slack or, you know, um, all these, all the guilt around. Well, if everybody else around me is like frantic, I should be frantic too. Yeah. And there is this element to which permission is like one of the first principles that will be exploring next year, um, um, as a, as a, as a precursor to slowing down.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, definitely. I mean, it just, I mean, you can't even see it when people don't wanna take a vacation or they take a vacation, but they feel like they need to check in. Every day and not giving their themselves permission to just kind of take that time that they need for their own wellness. There's, you need to take care of yourself before you [00:36:00] can take care of the people around you.

So, yes, I, I love so much what you're doing and I wanted to ask you with the, um, the retreats that you went to, is there anything that stands out that was, Most interesting or kinda not life changing, but like something you took away that you're like, I, I just can't believe that this is, has existed and I haven't implemented this before.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, I went on a trip to Tulum actually, and I, I know Tulum has this, you know, this where everyone goes, and I kind of just went down there. I stayed in this jungle, uh, wellness retreat outside of Tulum called Holistica, and I went to a Temazcal ceremony. And I think that that was just a, i, I left there, not the same.

Um, that experience was something that I didn't realize what I was getting myself into. Um, if you don't know what a temazcal ceremony is, basically it's like a clay dome. It's like a sweat lodge. [00:37:00] And they heat up these big rocks and they put 'em in the center of the, of, of the, of this clay. It was like a clay hut.

And then, um, You're in there for like about an hour and a half, um, and it's hot and it's pitch black, and there was about 20 other people in there with me. I was by myself. I was with strangers. I thought that I was kind of going in there, oh, it's gonna, I thought it would be hard, but I thought, oh, it's gonna be detoxifying and purifying.

I didn't really understand kind of like the other spiritual elements of like an emotional element of what happens. When you're in that situation, like, I freaked out and thought to myself, I'm claustrophobic. I can't breathe. I started freaking out and there was, um, the guide that was in the, in the, uh, Temes Cal with us kind of said, you know, the fear is not yours.

You know, let go surrender and. I was [00:38:00] panicked, like terror throughout my body, but I stayed with it because I also kind of had this out of body experience where I realized like, wow, obviously I can breathe. Obviously I can breathe. Um, and obviously this is my mind and my emotions going wild, and if I could just get control of this, I feel like I would be in a better place.

And so I really did. I surrendered, um, Uh, and I, and I dunno what your, if your audience might be freaked out hearing that word, but I kind of let go. Okay. So I let, I let go of the, uh, Need to kind of control and accept that I could breathe and I self soothed and calm myself down. And by the time I got out of there, an hour and a half later, I felt like a new person.

Like I can do hard things. Like for somebody who's so used to going, going, going, going, going, going, going, going, going, going all the time, to be stuck in this place where you can't go anywhere, where you can't be on your phone, where you can't see where you [00:39:00] can't. All you have is your emotions and your mind. And then you start to realize just how, just what your inner world is like.

Um, and so there is, that was probably the most transformational experience that I had this year. Um, because I think in that moment I realized, um, that so much of our pace is often self-inflicted even when the world around us is going fast or even when we have a lot of. Things on our plate. We can find inner slowness and inner softness.

We can calm our minds that when everything around us feels like it's in turmoil, that there is still a source of peace that exists within us.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing that personal, personal experience. So I, I hope that it brings value to, to our, to our listeners, um, [00:40:00] with the, uh, Slow your experience.

I know you're still kind of maybe building that, but what, like if somebody. Was interested, what would they expect to get out of the next year? Yeah.

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Well, we're, we're, it's a 12 month, um, life and wellness program. Um, and so over the course of, uh, 12 months together, we'll be. Um, learning about different principles and how to actually integrate them into our lives, and so I'll be interested using the different principles of creativity and communion and generosity and a number of other principals.

We have different people that are gonna come in that are teachers and experts in that area who will be leading ceremonies. You know, a lot of sound and breath work, and we'll be doing cooking and learning how to prepare and, and nourish our bodies and movement and tending to the [00:41:00] spirit. But we'll also be having opportunity for a community community so that no matter where you are in the world, you can jump on a call, you can have been a part of conversations and storytelling circles.

Uh, and then we'll also be doing kind of these coaching calls as well, um, for you to come in with myself and my husband. Um, And to explore these concepts, explore the concepts of permission, um, explore the concepts of creativity and communion. And how you can begin integrating them into your own life in order to slow down.

So it's gonna be a really, um, special experience. We had calls this morning with, uh, other, um, practitioners that are gonna be involved with it and, uh, some really cool, very talented, uh, people to guide you through, um, the year and the experience. And no doubt that like, Lives are gonna be changed, transformed.

Michelle Harris: Um, yeah. I'm so excited to kinda see how this all, [00:42:00] um, pulls together and really hear about how, um, how, how it, uh, affects people's lives and mm-hmm. I know you're looking at having like offsite retreats as well. Do you think you'll have experiences like the one you had in Tulum that will be kind of life changing?

Candis Hickman: Um, I know we'll have life changing experiences. I'm not sure about, um, the teez cow yet. Um, I would need to find somebody to, to facilitate that. I, of course, wouldn't even attempt to do so. But, um, yeah, we have, we've, we're still, we're still kind of, um, Figuring out the details around retreats. We haven't even settled on our first location yet, but we, although we do have a, a place that we're visiting this week, so, um, but yeah, I mean, I think that one of the coolest parts of like anything that we do, um, from storytelling to, uh, retreats is that we're like really big on.

We're really big on holding space in a way that we hope people feel like they're a part of something that's bigger than they are, [00:43:00] that they have fun. Like, and that's a big thing, like, and that's gonna be a big part of the year as well, is that like, we are fun and we wanna have fun and we want people to have fun and we want, we wanna remember how to have fun, that everything isn't so serious all the time.

That there are gonna be these tools and these, uh, practices that you can integrate into your life, but also that you're just gonna meet. Cool new people and start doing life like with people and have some fun, um, no matter where you are. Um, And so, yeah, I don't know. I went off on a tangent there, but just, just to say like, uh, we're gonna have a good time.

We're gonna have a good time.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. So important. Having fun. You're de you're right. I mean, as we get older, we really lose more of that play. And I wish, you know, I mean, I'm, I'm happy to see that there are things, you know, that are popping up, like the slow year experience that really bring help. Bring people back to, to the play and joy and fun.

Um mm-hmm. [00:44:00] I love that. So I'm not, and so I don't want listeners to pop off, but since we're talking about the slow year, is there, uh, are there, there's a wait list that if anybody wanted to kind of hop on the wait list. Mm-hmm. Do, yeah. Would you like to provide that? Yeah.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, sure. It's just theslowyear.com.

So if you go to theslowyear.com right now it's just a single wait list page, um, that you can go ahead and jump on the wait list. We do have our virtual summit that we are hosting on December 3rd. We haven't really, um, announced that yet. Um, that's still in the works. We're finalizing the things before we open the doors to that.

But I will say, It'll be at theslowyear.com as well. We'll just replace the page. So if you go to the [slow year.com](https://theslowyear.com), whatever you're meant to do will be there either the summer page or the wait list page by the time you, you get there.

Michelle Harris: Perfect. Thank you. Yeah. And um, so now if you're okay, I'd like to switch over to maybe some more general questions.

Um, sure. [00:45:00] And one is, you know, one of the, one of our fundamental, um, Uh, one of the fundamental aspects of Bosstrack is mentorship and really helping guide people through their careers and provide advice and feedback when they need it. Give them encouragement, um, hyping them up like we do here on Her HypeSquad with Bosstrack.

Um, do you have a, a mentor that you really, uh, you can look back and really appreciate that they, they were in your life?

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Yeah. The person that immediately comes to mind whenever I get asked this question is, uh, Barbara Barnable. And, um, Barbara is a. She's a casting director and she's a media coach and, um, just an incredible human that I met like a couple of years ago.

Um, and Barbara is just, you know, she's just asked me some of the important questions. I remember a couple of years ago going, okay, so you're a [00:46:00] personal branding coach and you teach people how to brand themselves, but what's your brand? And I think. Is that not, I mean, I help other people to like, is that not a brand?

Like, and it was just that, that question, um, because she, in, in that, she was pushing me to think more broadly because she knew that there was something

else that I was called to do and that I wasn't operating at the highest level of what I could be. I. And that question stayed with me for a really long time, and there's things that popped up along the way, but I couldn't quite figure it out.

And it wasn't until last year when the slow year kind of came to my mind. I said, I wanna experience the slow year. And then everybody started that. I started to find all these stories. And all of these connections to my childhood and to most of my life that made this slow year so much in my truth and in my [00:47:00] integrity.

But it came because I had that mentor that kind of guided me, but also pushed me to think, um, and to stay open, really, to stay open.

Michelle Harris: Well, sounds amazing. I wish everybody had a, a mentor that they can look back at that has been as life changing as as, um, as her. Mm-hmm. Um, in terms of your, so you're very focused on wellness, um mm-hmm.

So I imagine for yourself, you have something you do every day that you attribute your wellbeing to. Is, do you have like a morning routine, a an evening routine, something that you could share with everybody?

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Well, I will say I think that the way that you end your day informs the way that you start your morning.

I just wanna put that out there. I've, um, I have inconsistently, so I'm gonna tell you the thing I did inconsistently, but how much it makes a difference when I do it. And then I'll tell you, uh, one thing that is [00:48:00] changing is that, um, if I, my evening ritual, um, is to. Um, have a hot drink. Dim the lights. I'm, I'm lucky enough to be able to dim the lights in my bedroom and do some type of meditation or listen to calm app or something like that.

This makes a huge difference before I go to bed. I don't have these vivid, scary dreams like I normally do. This wind down about an hour before bed where I shut off my screens. It makes a big difference for the next morning. When I don't do it, I feel it. Like I I, it takes, it's harder to get out of bed in the morning.

There's kind of like my brain activity is like heavy overnight. I'm dreaming like a crazy person. Um, uh, it makes a big difference. But the thing I will say, um, with my morning routine, uh, I leave the house like first thing in the morning. I walk outside. [00:49:00] Um, like even when I lived in Chicago, the first thing that in the middle of the cold, I would like walk outside, even if it's just to stand on the patio for a couple of minutes.

Mm. Um, leaving my house is one of the first things I do. Um, when I leave the house, I'm either, I walk, either walk to the, to the gym to get some exercise, go for a walk with a friend, or sometimes I'll go to a coffee shop and do my journaling. Um, there, I have a whole morning ritual, but that's the most important thing, I think.

Michelle Harris: And what, what do you think leaving the house does for you?

Candis Hickman: Like. Um, it, it, it stops me from getting stuck in cycles of delay. I think sometimes the first thing when you get up in the morning and you like pick up your phone and you start looking at it, or you overthink how you're gonna spend the [00:50:00] morning before you know it, like half an hour has passed and you've done nothing.

And I didn't. I hate it when that happens to me. I love to start the morning with intention. So I think the first thing is just it's intention. I also love the fresh air hitting my face. I just feel like it's just this wake up. I love looking up and seeing the palm trees, seeing the sky. Um, it just, I don't know, the light coming into my li eyes makes me feel more alert.

I don't know, going outside, it's like this spiritual experience for me. I just, I feel into all of it. Whereas a lot of the times, if I get up and I stay indoors, um, for me personally, um, yeah, I just don't, I don't, I don't wake up and move as intentionally.

Michelle Harris: Yeah, I, I like that. And um, I used to go out every morning and meditate on the deck and I ended up, for some [00:51:00] reason stopping that and then meditating inside.

And, and I understand, I don't know really why I ever saw, because that, that something about the fresh air and having the world around you and feeling it is, uh, is somehow a little more therapeutic than. Being closed up inside your house.

Candis Hickman: Yeah, yeah. You realize that you, I mean, I think a big thing for me has been this idea of bigger than me.

Bigger than me, and there's something about going outside. That first thing in the morning makes you realize that like there's this whole world, it's like bigger than you and you, you know, you feel the. The things on your, the wind on your face, and the, if there's a little bit of drizzle in the air, like there's been a lot lately, like I'll even go out if it's just drizzling a little bit, you know, and just that

feeling of the fresh air and bathing in nature, um, even when you live in the city, uh, I think it makes a difference.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. And then, um, in terms of, Maybe when you're feeling down during the day or [00:52:00] you need to get yourself pumped up or need some confidence, do you have any music that is your, kinda go-to music to get you feeling, uh, more confident?

Candis Hickman: Yeah, I love, I love anything Bruno, Bruno Mars, Showtime is like my showtime song, like it's Showtime.

Um, and then lately I've been really getting into, like Leon Bridges. He's got that song, Take Me To the River, which is when I'm feeling like I just need this, I need to be moved in some way. I'll actually lay on the ground and listen to Leon Bridges. Bruno Bruno gets me up and like hyped and Leon's like, you know, gives me the inspiration.

To feel, I feel moved.

Michelle Harris: Perfect. Perfect. And I think, uh, Leon Bridges came up before in one of my calls, so just Oh, yeah. Uh, yeah. I, I don't, I don't listen to too much of him. I think I've got one song on a playlist somewhere, but I'll have to check that. I'm more of that out. And Bruno Mars, it's one of the [00:53:00] few concerts that I've actually been to and it was pretty amazing.

So I'm with you. I'm with you on the Bruno bars.

Candis Hickman: Awesome. He's good. Always entertaining. Yes. Definitely,

Michelle Harris: um, is there something, so one of the things that we like to do is really help women, uh, out in some small way to make their lives better. And part of that can be just something that they, uh, could buy or invest in that will make their, their days just a little bit better.

Mm-hmm. Um, is there something that you. Spot in the last year or two under a hundred dollars, like more affordable, that that has changed your life in some way that you might recommend somebody consider? Yeah,

Candis Hickman: I think one thing that I regularly do for myself these days is buy flowers. Um, yeah, I go to Trader Joe's and get myself a \$6 bunch or, you know, and just have them in the middle of the, of the table next [00:54:00] to my.

Um, candle. I think there's just something about buying yourself flowers and coming home and like trimming them and filling the water bars and seeing them bloom, arranging them how you want, that just, I don't know, is really soothing and calming for the spirit. So I think flowers, I think, have, have made a difference, especially my slow year.

And then I think from a productivity standpoint, um, I, I have a great planner called, uh, Michael Hyatt's, full focus planner, I think is a game changer as well.

Michelle Harris: I'll have to check that out. I, I'm, I'm with you on the flowers. Like what? Do you have a favorite flower? Um,

Candis Hickman: I like Lilies. I, I'm not, I wouldn't say that I, there's not real, I mean, I, I love.

So many flowers. I'm not, I'm not fussy with my flowers, honestly. If they're bright, I would opt for, like, the last ones I had were bright orange roses. I'd never even seen an orange rose before. Mm. And I walked in [00:55:00] and I, so I love roses. I love lilies. I think I've got hydrangeas on the, we've got hydrangeas right now.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. Yeah. Hydrangeas. And, uh, I love peonies.

Candis Hickman: Oh yes, me too. Yeah. Oh, and dahlias. I didn't even, Ooh, they're so pretty. I saw them at the retreat. I was at a retreat at the end of September in Martha's Vineyard, and, um, they had dahlias on the table. I didn't even know. I mean, I'd seen it before. I didn't, but rarely.

And I showed my mom, actually. I took a picture and sent it to my mom, and she's big into flowers. I thought, wow. So those are gorgeous.

Michelle Harris: So everybody buy more flowers and treat to yourself. I, I'm, I'm with you on that one. Um, and then you mentioned earlier that you read a lot or you did read a lot. Mm-hmm.

Are there any books that stand out or maybe something you've read recently that you would recommend to the audience? Um, it ha fiction or nonfiction?

Candis Hickman: Um hmm. [00:56:00] Yeah, I'm reading the Artist's Way right now, um, by Julia Cameron. Um, it's really a special book. I think no matter if you're a business owner or you're in corporate America, um, or you're

an artist, um, bringing more creativity into your life is just such a special way to feel more connected, I think, to the essence of life.

Um, so that's a book I think that. I would, feels really true and a good recommendation for me right now.

Michelle Harris: Yeah. I think, uh, the universe must be telling me to pull that back out and reread it because I was at a book event yesterday and the, um, the host of the event also talked about reading the artist's way and how life changing it was.

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Wow. Amazing. Definitely go pick it up.

Michelle Harris: Yes, definitely. Um, well I think our time, we actually apologize, we went a little bit over, but I'd love, [00:57:00] um, before we kind of say goodbye, is there anywhere besides the slow year.com that, uh, our audience can reach out to you if they wanted to say hello? Have any questions, have any comments?

Yeah.

Candis Hickman: Yeah. My website is candishickman.com. Um, so they can find out more about me there and the work that I've done. Um, and also feel free to connect as well.

Michelle Harris: Great.

Well, thank you. I, this has been such a great conversation and, um, you provided such value to our audience and, um, I'm looking forward to everyone getting to hear it and the feedback and, uh, also looking forward to your slow year experience and, um, that, that, uh, yeah, I think so needed for everybody and, uh, can't wait to, to see how that, how that, uh, unfolds.

Candis Hickman: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much, and thank you so much for having me. What a, what a pleasure. What an honor.

Michelle Harris: Well, [00:58:00] great. Well, I hope you enjoy your day. Okay. All right. Bye-Bye. Bye. Hi everyone. This is Michelle again. Just one more thing before you take off. If you've enjoyed this podcast, sign up for our free weekly newsletter.

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