

**On Your Terms Episode 47:**  
**Losing my Dad, Emergency Plans & Push Rest**

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:10] Hey, friend. And welcome back to On Your Terms. Well, maybe not welcome back for you. I mean, welcome back if you normally listen to the show and now you're listening again, if so, thank you. Otherwise, welcome back to me, I guess, because you didn't go anywhere. I, however, have been off of work since May 2nd. And I am still not back really full force, or at least my version of full force. Although, my friend, the other day, said to me like, "You're 25 percent is everybody else's 100." And I was like, "Okay. I take that. I accept that." But I am not fully back for the reasons that we'll talk about today.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:00:50] But, honestly, since I've been off, there have been a couple of big things in my business that I have missed the most. I love my business and I love being in online business working, being an entrepreneur. I just love what we do. I naturally love what we do, maybe you can guys can tell that sometimes. But the biggest thing I really missed was the podcast and just chatting with you. Because like I always tell my friends that I feel like I have not gotten as much and as engaged of a response as I have to had to this podcast so far in, like, a little less than a year. Can you believe it, this is Episode 47? We've had only 47 episodes so far and I have really loved it. So, I'm just really grateful today to be back here chatting with you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:01:37] I did want to give you a little bit of, like, a heads up trigger warning situation. I'm going to talk today about losing my dad to cancer. I'm going to talk about cancer. I'm going to talk about grief. I'm going to spare you from the goriest details for both my dad's sake but also for your sake. Just because I went through it, doesn't mean you'll have to go through it. I am just sharing my experience today. But for any reason, of course, you don't want to hear about those things or it's too much for you, it's totally okay. This might not be an episode for you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:12] But I actually talk about three different things in this episode. So, I share a little bit about what happened, just to kind of catch up with you a little life update. I give you a set of tips of things that I have in place or had in place that led to a very seamless month off so that you can put them in place in your business. And then, at the end, I'm going to talk with you about the push-rest phenomenon. Something I have spent a lot of time thinking about. So, if you need to go, it's totally okay. If you just want to skip this first part where I catch up with you, that's okay, too, because I think there's a lot more in the episode that could be really helpful.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:02:52] So, before I get into it, let's read our On Your Terms Review of the Week. It's from Jenna RD. And she said, "I've been listening to Sam for a while now and have enjoyed every single one of her podcast episodes. I love the natural down the earth way she presents information. And I really appreciate her consistent reminders that growing my business can be done on my terms. I've used her Ultimate Bundle of legal templates to get my business up and running and has relieved so much stress knowing I'm set up from a legal standpoint. Thanks, Sam." Well, thank you, Jenna. Thanks for leaving that review.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:03:23] And if you leave a review inside Apple Podcast of my show, On Your Terms, you will be entered to win a \$20 Starbucks Gift Card. All of you have to do is leave a review. We pick a new winner every single month. And I read a review here on the show every single week. So, you might even get a shoutout on a future episode.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:03:41] So, with that, let's just get into it. A little life update. Ready? All right. Well, normally, I would say grab your coffee, but whatever you got. I just got water because I'm woefully behind on water today and I was, like, out and about this morning. But here's the deal, so if you listened to Episode 43 of my show, I recorded that the day before the last Friday in April. I recorded it on the day that my dad came up to New York.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:04:08] So, like a full rewind, is that, I'm from Philly, born and raised. I just moved to New York back at the very early fall last year. And my dad has had cancer for the last three-and-a-half years. So, I didn't want to move. I didn't want to leave because of him being sick. But I also wanted to come here. And my husband, Ryan, had gotten a new job here. And so, I made it work. I was going back to Philly all the time, my dad was coming here, we were bringing him here. So, we made it work.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:04:35] So, my dad was coming up here that last Friday in April. He spent the weekend with us here. He loved it up here. He really loved it. We live on the water. It's really, really peaceful. We have animals everywhere. There's so much to do. There's a huge emphasis on outdoor activities. And every single place that you go here, you just see water. It's, like, ocean, and harbors. And it's so gorgeous. I've never

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lived anywhere like this. I really, really like where we move on the North Shore of Long Island. And we're, like, all the way out east. It's gorgeous.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:05:12] So, my dad came and we just had the nicest weekend. I mean, we didn't do anything. And my dad was not in good shape. He had leukemia. My dad wasn't in good shape. And that trip in particular was pretty hard, actually, for me because he just wasn't himself. I was seeing such a huge decline. I had just been in Philly the weekend prior to spend the weekend with him. And I had noticed a decline prior that I had seen him back in Philly two weeks before that. So, I was watching him decline. But you have to keep in mind, decline was pretty normal for me at this stage of the game because he's had cancer for three-and-a-half-years. He's been through, like, a kabillion rounds of chemo and blood transfusions and all of this stuff. And I was getting used to him being sick and him outlasting his diagnosis, his prognosis, really.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:06:14] And I think what's been so weird - I won't go into deep detail - my dad, when he was originally diagnosed with leukemia in August of 2018, they told us that he had 11 months to live. So, I really prepared myself at that time. I took months and months off of the business. I didn't have anybody working for me at the time. So, what I'm about to share with you today, I didn't have in place at that time, that's why I learned. But I took a bunch of time off and then I kind of gotten the groove of things. It was like, "Okay. He has cancer. I'll take him to chemo every, like, three weeks." I think, actually, in the beginning, it was every six weeks, now it was three weeks. And I would take him to those appointments. It was all day. You guys, all day. So, it was, like, every three or four weeks, I was missing a week full of work. And then, I'd be exhausted. And then, he would feel like crap after that. So, I was helping to take care of him.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:07] So, it was really hard but I got into the groove of it. And, eventually, we passed the 11th month mark, then the 12th month mark, then 24 months, then 36 months, and it just kept going. And we had lots of little blips along the way where it was like, "This is going to be it." He got a staph infection during COVID in his chest, it was like, "This is it." The leukemia spread to his lymph nodes in his chest, it was like, "This is it." They said, "This is not good when this happens." It's six months, that was a-year-and-a-half ago. That was my dad in a nutshell. He was just an Energizer bunny.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:07:44 ] And it's so funny because I really, really struggled with my dad having cancer over this last three-and-a-half years. It has made me very depressed. It made me like I was just constantly on edge, you know, waiting to hear that something happened to him. I was really protective and paranoid about him. Like, I didn't want anybody to be around him if they were sick. Like, this is all [inaudible]. It was a really tough three-and-a-half years.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:08:17] And it's just kind of funny because I feel just recently - maybe this was like the universe has jawed on me - he was going to therapy every week and stuff and it was like, "Okay. This is just going to be it." I have to sit with the discomfort of the fact that my dad was given this prognosis that nobody ever lasts this long with AML leukemia at his stage, with this type, where it has spread, and all this stuff. People don't last this long. It doesn't make sense. His oncologist think it's hilarious. She was just like, "I can't believe it." She was obviously very happy for him. But she was also just like, "This doesn't happen." And I feel like just recently I was just working towards this acceptance, I guess, this surrender of "This is just how it is."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:09] And so, he came that weekend, the last few days of April, first day of May, I think, and I could tell that something was off. He physically wasn't doing well. He was falling and stumbling. He seemed very disoriented. And he was very tired. He was very, very tired. But all of those things were pretty normal for a guy who's been through, like, 40 something rounds of chemo and has outlived his diagnosis or his prognosis, like, three-and-a-half times. It wasn't that crazy but I was definitely seeing this decline.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:09:42] And if you go back and listen to Episode 43, I said to you, "My dad is coming this weekend. He's not doing that great. I'm kind of concerned that he could fall." That's what I've been really worried about. Well, my dad left Sunday evening. He was back home in Philly for, like, 12 hours. I am at home working and I was still in New York. I was feeling really heavy all day, because just having seen my dad like that - I mean, for any of you who see a parent, a love one, anybody who you care about decline, it is freaking heartbreaking - it's heartbreaking. It's awful to watch someday who was quick on their feet, and athletic, and strong, and capable, and never

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asked for help, not be able to walk to the bathroom, not be able to take themselves up to bed. It's awful. So, I was feeling it that day. It was Monday.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:10:39]. And I was actually working on a new product that was supposed to come out on June 1st, and I was reviewing a copy for that product that was, like, 60 something pages. And I was, I think, on the second to the last page. I have been reviewing it for a while that day. And my dad called. And, you know, he called me a million time a day. We spoke a million times a day about everything constantly. And we just have that kind of relationship. And my dad called and I just hit ignore because I was like, "I am almost done. I just need to get through this one more email or two for the copy and then I will call him back." But as soon as I hit decline, my phone rang immediately again. And so, I was like, "Oh, shit. I better answer," because I want to make sure he's okay.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:11:29] And I will never forget the sound of his voice when he picked up. He was panicked. He had fallen at his house and he had broken his hip. We, obviously, didn't know at the time but he told me that his leg was pointing in the wrong direction, it was completely bent. And when you really know somebody, when you really love somebody, just the sound of their voice can tell you everything. And I just panicked because I could tell by the sound of his voice that something was terribly wrong.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:12:02] And I hung up with him quickly. I called 911. I got all of that stuff situated. I helped them to be able to get into his home, because he obviously couldn't move. He was lying on the floor. He couldn't move. By the way, he called me from his Apple Watch - I'm not sure if I mentioned that. But he called me from his Apple Watch, so shoutout to Apple. That is why I got him that watch. Actually, I got him the watch for fall detection, so it called me automatically which is exactly what it did. And then, when I hung up, he called back, he just hit callback. So, shoutout to Apple Watch. I highly recommend getting it for anyone you're concerned about, especially who lives alone.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:12:36] So, he stayed on with me with his Apple Watch. And I helped navigate the EMS people to his home. I told them how to get in and all that stuff. Meanwhile, the whole time on the phone with them, I am like throwing shit in the bag. It's so funny, because I basically packed all these pajamas and then at leisure. It was

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like "Where do I think I'm going?" I was panicking. And I think I got enough sense, I threw my toothbrush in and all my toiletries with me. And thank God also I don't need many things. I don't wear makeup and stuff like that. So, I just threw all this stuff in the bag as I'm on the phone with them. I booked into my car and drove like a bat out of hell down to Philly.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:17] And anybody who knows about driving from Long Island to Philadelphia, meaning that you have to go through New York City and, like, 17 boroughs, I mean, it's not an easy feat. And I left at 4:45. My dad called me at 4:34. So, from 4:34 to 4:45, I got ready and left from Long Island, drove through New York City, and got down to Philly where he was in the hospital within just a couple of hours. I don't know how. It was like the universe parted.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:13:46]The funny thing is Ryan said to me, "Oh, you're so lucky that there wasn't bad traffic." I was like, "There was bad traffic." I don't even know what I did. I drove in the HOV lane, which I actually I'm allowed to do because I have an electric car. And in New York, you can drive in the HOV lane if you're by yourself. But I drove, like, faster than I normally would. I'm kind of normally like a grandma and I like to be calm while I drive. I drove like crazy. I got down there.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:12] My poor dad was in pain. And they had given him some stuff and whatever. We were in a very tough neighborhood in a hospital. That entire night was very traumatic because there were a lot of people coming in who were victims of gun violence, of drug overdoses. It was like straight out of a movie. I stayed with my dad until about 3:42 in the morning in the hospital, because it was really scary where he was and I didn't want him to be by himself. It's like the worse. It's already bad enough being in the hospital. And they hadn't move him to a real room yet. They had just admitted him into the ER and they're just waiting to take him into surgery.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:14:51] So, basically, that was on Monday. He had the surgery Tuesday morning, it went well. They fixed up his hip. They put a metal rod on his leg. And they were like, "He's good to go. He's got this metal thing in his leg, blah, blah, blah. We just want to make sure he can stand up first before he can leave." And they were telling me had to go to a rehab facility and that this was probably where he was

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going to live. That we should send him to a place where he could transition to assisted living.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:21] It's so funny looking back on it now because I was just processing that part and I was distraught about that. I was just like, "Oh, my God. My dad might not walk again. He's going to have to live in this assisted living thing." And my dad, he wanted to come up to New York. He was like, "Try to find me a place up there." And it was just so much to take in ,and to deal with, and to manage. I never left his side this whole week.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:15:43] But the weirdest thing started happening. When he was in the hospital that Monday to, essentially, Friday, Saturday, his leukemia number started going bananas. For any of you who knows stuff about leukemia, his white blood cell count was bouncing all over the place. His lymphocytes were shooting up. His blast count was shooting up. His red blood cells were going down. His hemoglobin was going down. Everything was all really bad. This is what happens when his cancer has flared up in the past or when it spread.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:15] So, I get on the horn with his oncologist team and his hematology oncology team at Penn. And I'm like, "What's going on?" And they said, "Don't worry about it. This happens to people who have cancer who have a traumatic event, if they get into an accident, if they fall, get injured in some way, sometimes the cancer just bubbles up." They gave me kind of like a benchmark of, "Call us if it hits this because that's bad." And I was like, "It already seems kind of bad." But they were just like, "No. This is still normal," or whatever. I'm not blaming them by the ways. This is all a very complicated situation.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:16:53] So, basically, the whole week that he was in the hospital, I just kept noticing he was getting worse. He was physically able to do less everyday with physical therapy. He actually did the most on the first day after his surgery. And then, every subsequent day from there, he was not able to stand, that it became like he couldn't scoot to the end of the bed. It was just getting worse to the last day that it was still up and talking. He said, "I don't want PT to come today." And if you knew my dad, I was like, "What did you just say?" Like, my dad doesn't want to PT to come? No way. My dad was super athletic, really into sports, really pride on himself on

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being super steady on his feet. He was so angry at himself that he had fallen. And I knew then. I was like, "What is going on? This is just weird. And I am assuming this has to do with the fact that your cancer is acting up." But they're saying like, "Don't worry about it. It's going to come back down."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:17:55] Well, finally, Friday night going into Saturday, his numbers did start to creep up and they were getting awfully close to that, like, oh, shit limit that the hematology oncologist had told me about. I came in on Saturday morning - and every morning when I would come into the hospital, the nurse or the doctor who is there would tell me what the latest blood results were - they took his blood in the morning, and that one had skyrocketed way past the oh, shit limit. So, I freaked the hell out. I freaked. I got on the horn with his hematology oncologist, and I told them, "You need to do something now."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:18:37] I'll tell you, guys, everybody needs an advocate. Like, I don't even understand what would have happened to my dad if somebody like us wouldn't have been there for him. They were ready to send him to a rehab facility. And my sister and I were like, "He can't go into a rehab facility. He has cancer. And his cancer is spiraling out of control." He was sleeping all the time. He wasn't moving at all. He was all slumped over. It just wasn't good.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:09] So, thank the heavens that I got a hold of the oncologist on call, who was like a godsend. And he was just like, "I just went in and looked at your dad's chart, he needs to get to Penn immediately." And I was like, "Thank you. Like, I can't even tell you how much of a relief because I had been fighting for him all week to get over there."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:19:37] I should have mentioned this earlier, but University of Pennsylvania, Penn, there in Philly, is not only a wonderful institution and an incredible hospital, but it's where my dad has been going for the last three-and-a-half years for his cancer treatment. And I just love them and I think they're all amazing. And they're like a family to us. And I just wanted him to get there. I just didn't want him to be at this other hospital, where nobody knew him, nobody knew his case, they weren't taking the cancer part seriously. They wouldn't even let me talk to a hematologist. It was very, very frustrating. So, I just wanted him to get there.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:05] So, I finally get a hold of this guy on Saturday, and he was the on-call hematology oncologist, and he said, "He needs to get here now. I'm arranging for transport immediately." And it was just such a relief. So, they put everything into action. They got him shuttled over there super fast. My dad got all tucked in at Penn. A new gorgeous hospital. If you follow me on Instagram, I shared about his room. Because at the time, I just thought he was going to be there getting cancer treatment. I had no idea that anything was going to happen. But I shared his room, it was absolutely stunning.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:20:44] And we got him tucked in. I stayed until, like, midnight, maybe 12:30. And he was kind of delirious and they had given him some stuff just to relax from the transport. And I went back to my hotel. And they said, "Keep your phone on in case anything happens in the middle of the night." But I'm sure it won't, which is always when you know that something is going to happen.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:04] So, at 2:47 a.m. going into Sunday, May 8th, my phone rang. And Dr. Tang said, "Don't worry. Everything is okay." And I was like, "Well, why are you calling me then at 2:47?" And he said, "I just need your consent to get an emergency plasma transfusion." I was like, "Sure. Yes. But why do you need to do that?" And he's like, "Your dad -" I don't know. All this stuff was happening. So, I gave my consent because, like, what else am I going to do? I don't know any better, right? And they gave him two plasma transfusions, actually, it turns out.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:21:38] And, basically, from the 2:47 mark from when they called me until about 6:00 a.m., I just laid in my hotel room in bed having what I would call a series of recurrent panic attacks. It just felt like it was over and over and over and over again. It was awful. It was awful. I was shaking. I was having trouble breathing. I was just freaking out. I was like, "What the hell is going on? Why is this stuff happening? Why is this cancer doing this? I don't understand what's going on." And I went to Lehman's and I bought a whole bunch of food. I bought protein shakes and Hummus packs and the most random stuff, because I was like, "If we're going to be in the hospital all week, I want healthy snacks for the week."

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:22:22] I get to the hospital at 9:00 a.m., which is when they allow visitors to come in. And they said, "Oh, good. You're here. The oncologist wants to speak with you right away." I was like, "Okay." So, I put my little pretzel snacks and Hummus and all that stuff in the mini-fridge they had in my dad's room. This whole team of people comes in, like six people. And they're like, "We need to talk to you about what's going on." I was like, "Sure. When are we starting treatment? Are you going to start today? Or you guys want to wait a little bit? Or does he need another blood transfusion first?" And they were just like, "I'm so sorry. There is nothing that we can do."

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:23:00] And it's just like, "No. No, no, no. I think you are confused. We moved him here so that you guys could do something about this." And they were like, "No. His blast count is 88 percent." Like, 88 percent of his blood is cancer. And it had been like - I don't remember - I think, maybe 40 something percent, which is still horrific. It wasn't that the night before. So, these things were doubling every couple hours when they were taking his blood. And his white count was, like, 157 or something. And I was like, "No, no, no. So, what are you saying? Are you going to start the treatment and then see how it goes?" And they were just like, "No. We can't do the treatment." I was like, "What do you mean you can't do treatment? Like, you can't do chemo for him?" And they were like, "Not if you want to say goodbye to him." And I'm like, "Goodbye? Where is he going?"

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:24:08] I was so confused. It was so confusing. And I had to make a series of decisions that I would never want you to make for your parent. And I had to make them on my own. You know, I was by myself and I had to do what I thought was best for him. I want to keep him comfortable. And that was around 9:00 in the morning when they came in to talk with me. I called everybody I could in a panic so that they could get there as soon as possible. I gave the authorization to give him this medication called Hydroxyurea that would just give him a couple more hours to let the cancer calm down a little so that people could come say goodbye. And everybody got there lightning fast, I don't know. The whole day was a blur.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:00] Sorry. Well, no, I'm not sorry that I'm upset. But I'm sorry if this is difficult for you to hear. But it's just real life - at least my real life. I, basically, spent the whole day wailing. And if you think this is bad, this is nothing

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compared to what actually happened. And I'm just gripping my dad's arm and just sobbing on him. And he was only awake for the first few hours, not even until lunch I don't think. And after that, he was out and he didn't speak or opened his eyes again. And so, we were all with him for the rest of the day. And he passed at 9:00 p.m. So, it was like 12 hours since they told me. So crazy, right? Maybe it's just me, I don't know.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:25:56] On the one hand, maybe people are like, "Why are you surprised? He had cancer." But I don't know, it doesn't matter if you had tons of heads up, it feels like you got hit by a back truck. And, honestly, it's only been three weeks now that I'm talking with you since this happened. And I still think I haven't totally - I don't want to say accepted it - and those of you who have been through this before might have felt the same. A lot of you have been sharing with me on Instagram that you have very similar experiences, and thoughts, and feelings - but I can only describe it as feeling like he's on vacation and he's going to give me a call soon. I don't think I fully accept the finality of it, or at least I don't want to.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:26:50] So, yeah, that's been my last three weeks. How about yours? It's been brutal. I don't know what I thought grief was like. I mean, I think that in a different way, the few weeks and months after he initially got diagnosed were just as bad but different, because he was still here. But that added a different heart element. And I was really busy taking care of him. But I think that this sadness, the immense sadness and the hole that it leaves, especially when it's somebody who you spend a lot of time with, you communicate with a lot - I really kept him involved in our life here. I was always sending him pictures and videos and Facetiming him - and I think if you have a relationship with somebody like that, the hole is that much deeper when it's gone.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:27:44] And I thought a lot about how the grief hurts so badly because the love was so strong. But that also sucks because, well, the love was so strong and that's why it hurts so bad. And because the love was so strong, I miss him so much. He was really my everything. In terms of both parents, he was the whole package for me. And so, this is an insanely huge loss for me.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:11] I appreciate you listening and letting me share. I'm sorry, I guess, for getting emotional, but that's just how I am, and I'm always honest with

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you. And I have shared this whole time since he's been sick because I didn't know what else to do because I was like, "Well, if he's going to be sick and I'm his caretaker, this is such a huge part of my life." I was writing content from chemo rooms for years. So, I appreciate you listening. I appreciate you guys being there for the last several years, if you've been around, or if you're more recent, or if you just wrote to me recently on Instagram. So many people have been so nice. People sent me cards from all over the world, and little gifts, and the sweetest emails and notes, and DMs, and everything. And I just appreciate every last one of you.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:28:56] Speaking of appreciation, my team really jumped into action. I was really lucky to have such a great team of people working for me. And whenever people say, "It's so nice that your business is just able to keep running," yes, it is. And it's definitely that way because I have set it up in a way that allows me to be off or to just have super flexible schedule and don't have to worry that much. But it's also nowadays able to run that way because of an incredible team.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:29:27] So, thank goodness I hired my first fulltime employee, Lindsay - shoutout to Lindsay - who's been a lifesaver. I mean, she's just been a lifesaver overall, but she's also been a lifesaver in this situation, and has allowed me to really take my time and do what I needed to do.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:29:44] And the same goes for Margo, my marketing manager, who also jumped in on all things marketing and fills in the gaps everywhere she needs to. And coordinated with my new social media manager, Lauren, to pump out really helpful content the whole time without skipping a bit. We didn't miss a podcast episode. Not that there would be anything wrong with that, by the way, but it's kind of cool that the business can keep running even without me.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:30:09] And the content that they created was really real looking and in real time even though it wasn't. They were sharing things on Stories. They were creating Reels with video that we have taken a long time ago. They have created podcast episodes out of audio from elsewhere, like, it's really cool. So, shoutout to everybody on my team. Leanne held down everything with our customers. She's our customer success manager. Everybody on the team was just so immensely helpful. Lydia handles all my tech behind the scenes. Kim handles all of my personal and admin

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stuff. Christina does all my graphics design. Like, so many people that are working so hard and all this stuff all the time. So, I really appreciate it. And my podcast team, obviously, YouTube team with Katie Steckly. Everybody has just been amazing and I really appreciate it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:05] So, on that note then, I just want to share with you kind of what's been going on in terms of taking time off from work and what I see kind of in the future. And then, I'm going to share some tips with you about what I had in place and what you can put in place in your own business that helped me to do this, so that if something this bad happens in your family, you can take time off. But, obviously, we should be prepared for those kinds of things. But, also, so that if you want to take a vacation, or you just want to take the summer off, or a month off, or whatever, you could.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:31:38] So, basically, once all this happened, as of May 2nd, I was out, that's the day he fell. I thought I'd be out for a week or two as he recovered. Obviously, that turned into then bereavement leave. And I had always said I wanted at least a solid three weeks. That just what sounded good to me. It's kind of funny, looking back, like, I didn't know anything about bereavement. And I don't know why I thought three weeks was enough. Now, I will probably tell somebody a month at least. Because I, honestly, don't feel totally ready to be back. I feel ready to do certain things. But at least my biggest symptom so far of this, beyond said, is being exhausted, which is probably related to [inaudible].

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:28] But I am just exhausted. I feel like I run a marathon everyday even if I didn't do anything. So, it's hard to have a lot of energy, especially in our line of work where it's a lot of outward stuff. And for any of you who are working with clients still, then that's really hard too. You have to have a certain energy and awareness for you to do that. So, I don't feel ready for that at this moment. I feel ready to do certain things. Like I said, it's only been three weeks since he passed.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:32:56] Well, I know a little bit about how this will impact my business. One thing is that that product that was set to launch on June 1st will not be, obviously it's June 2nd right now as I'm recording this. It's not even going to launch when we had hoped. I had planned to just push it back a little bit.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:33:16] And I think the biggest thing I've taken away from this experience so far is, it's time to rest. I found myself, like, I kept telling my dad that, when he was passing. I was just like, "You've done so good. You did so good. It's time to rest." I feel the same way towards myself. I feel like I have worked my ass off to, not only build this business, but to protect my dad and to be his advocate for the last three-and-a-half years. And if you had ever been a caregiver or you know someone who's been a caregiver, it is so hard. It's so hard because it's physically demanding but it's also emotionally and mentally demanding as well. It's very stressful, especially if you handle the financial aspect, insurance stuff, which I did. That's a lot on top of being sad, all this stuff. So, I am just feeling this immense message cropping through into me to rest.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:34:14] And I'm going to talk a little bit about this at the end, this push and rest phenomenon, what I've been thinking and feeling about that. Because, to me, I had my time where I was like off-off. I didn't do anything. I went out to eat everyday. I walked everyday. I was, like, off-off. I feel like it's helpful to start doing a little bit of things here and there, but really taking my time. And this isn't the season for, like, full throttle Sam. Because full throttle Sam will constantly be building a funnel, constantly launching something, constantly improving my product, coming up with a new idea for a product, doing paid speaker training, doing all this stuff. And that's my status quo. And I just don't feel that right now.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:35:03] I feel like this has changed me permanently. I have no idea. But like the puppy that I wanted to buy and adopt the day we left Panco or something, I had to go buy a [inaudible]. And there was a puppy left for adoption and I said to Ryan, "I'm adopting that puppy." And he's like, "We are not adopting any puppies right now. No. It's not the time to adopt that puppy." I feel the same way about making any sort of big business or life decision in general. It's just not the time. So, I don't know if this will be my long term attitude, but I feel like this has changed me. I feel like it's made me just want to slow down and appreciate it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:35:42] And I don't think that actually means much of a difference in terms of business revenue. I have not ever worked like I had always have prided myself in not working lots and lots of hours. But I always am thinking about the

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business and I wasn't necessarily taking time to relax, which I think is more of what I'd be looking for moving forward.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:36:05] Okay. So, let's talk about what you should have in place so that you can navigate this types of things in your business or, like I said, just even take time off. If you want to have a smoother business that allows you to have this life blips where things come up, first and foremost, you have to have an emergency SOP, a Standard Operating Procedure. I've talked about this a lot before, but you need to have an emergency SOP in place in your business even if you're the only person in your business. If you don't have anybody that works for you or anything like that, I had this before anybody ever worked for me. I will link to the post below that I've done on this. I've done, I think, a Reel and an Instagram post on this, so I will give you all of my best tips there.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:36:48] But, basically, the reason you need an emergency SOP in place is because I wanted something in writing that live in Google Docs that was, essentially, like, once I push this detonate button, these are the things that I want to happen in what order. Whether you're doing them right now or let's say you write this now, and hopefully you don't need it, hopefully you don't ever use it, but a year from now something does happen and at that time you have a VA, then that person will be able to take this SOP.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:37:21] So, in my SOP, for example, it was who I had to notify and then who they had to notify. They had to let other people know. So, in your case, it might be you have to let all of your clients know. And maybe your VA has to let your web designer and your graphic designer know. I don't know, whoever is doing some things for you, or somebody who edits your podcast, or something like that. So, if there's anybody to notify, that was kind of my step one that everybody would be aware of what was going on. And then, they would all have their own little procedures in place based on my SOP. It would be like certain things got shut down, certain things got paused, certain people got notified. So, that was kind of the first step.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:03] The second thing I did was I wrote an email, right in the SOP, that would go out to all of my clients. And it would say like, "Hey. This is what happened. Therefore, I'm going be out of the office." I gave them somebody to contact.

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Or if you don't have anybody to contact, you just say, "I'm out of the office." That's okay. If you want to give them a resource in the meantime or some other thing, that's great. But I had that pre-written so that it was literally a copy and paste. So, when I wrote this, nobody worked for me, so it would have been me doing it. So, at least I would have literally been able to copy and paste that into an email and send it out in one minute. But, now, I have a team and so the team knew to take this email and send it up.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:38:47] I also wrote a social post that went into my community for all of my Ultimate Bundle members. So, that was the same thing, that got posted. The graphic for it was already designed. Everything was done. And I had a list in there of who to notify, what I wanted you to say, what I wanted to do with appointments, all of this kind of stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:07] And then, from there, it was who's going to take care of what. So, as you build out a team, it was who's going to own certain things, what things on your docket are going to get paused, what things do you want to continue. Like, do you want somebody creating content without you reviewing it? Or, if you have a team, is there somebody who could review it for you? Do you have a bank of evergreen content - which we're going to talk about in a second - that somebody could go to and use and post when you're out? You could put a link there to that. Anything that you can do.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:39:41] Basically, you need to be clear about what do you want to keep running, how do you want it to keep running, and who is responsible for it. That's what you need to outline in this emergency SOP. As your business changes or grows, update it. If you get people on the team, update it. Assign certain things to people. And as you hire - this is really important - make sure that people have to review it as a part of their onboarding.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:40:08] So, it was a required reading for our team because, you know, I had the benefit of knowing that my dad was sick. And so, I would have everybody who came on, I would say to them, "Look, my dad has cancer. Something could happen any minute. I've created an emergency SOP. You need to review it." And they had to sign off that they read it. So, everybody was very well-aware. It's like emergency drills that we used to do in school.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:40:30] The other thing, something that's helpful to have in place - and I know this is easier said than done - is to have multiple revenue sources. I think it's a reason to be motivated to diversify your revenue streams now before something happens. For example, if you're only relying right now on private coaching, and that's the only way you make money, if something happens, you are essentially just dried up.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:40:58] For me in the past month, we made almost as much as we normally make in any given month when I'm working full time. And I, literally, didn't show up a second for the whole month. And we probably would have been just normal, except we had this massive issue with Facebook Ads. Facebook Ads kept getting rejected and then they were pulling down all these other ads and all that. It's all straightened now. But if that hadn't even happened, I bet you things would have been really normal. So, basically, it was still a very, very profitable month, even though I didn't do a thing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:41:29] So, it's helpful to have multiple streams of revenue, including a more passive one or a self-service option. If you are wondering how to put that kind of evergreen passive system in place in your business to sell something on autopilot, go back and listen to Episodes 12, 13, and 14 of On Your Terms because I did a little series for you on how to build an evergreen business. That's what I've done.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:41:56] The third thing that I would have in place if I were you is batching, a batching system, a batching habit. Because, essentially, you don't know when something could happen. But, also, the same thing for this vacation situation, or some other happier occasion, or you want to take a month off. Like, I think I just saw Amy Porterfield this week posted she's taking a five week sabbatical. So, if you have things batched and you get in the habit of batching, then you will have things already prepared that can be pre-scheduled and planned to be posted without you doing a thing.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:42:30] I didn't see any dip in the podcast in downloads or listens or anything like that. I mean, the episodes are always batched and planned and posted but, usually, I'm around to help promote them. I didn't see any difference. So, maybe you guys don't need me. I don't know, as long as I record them, I think it's fine.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:42:49] So, I want you to get in the habit now. And if you can stay ahead or you know you want to take a month off, you get in the habit of batching and stuff like that, and then you will be able to take it without stressing and worrying whether things are still going out. I would do this especially for big pieces of content, like YouTube and podcast or blog post if you do that. And definitely for writing to your email lists consistently and making sure you don't go dark if something happens. I think that's super important.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:43:21] I think another tip I'd have for you, too, is that, in an emergency situation, it's very important to prune. So, you don't need to necessarily continue posting exactly the way that you normally do. But it would be great if we could continue your cornerstone pieces. So, like, if you have a podcast, it would be good if a little podcast episode still went out. If you have a YouTube channel, the same thing. If you always email your list, I want you to still have emails going to your list so that they're not being quiet.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:43:51] So, just the big stuff. You don't need to worry about Stories and Reels. Like, the team jumped in and created a bunch of evergreen Reels. But we would be totally fine without it, too. I think it was more important that we kept the bigger pieces going. We always had an email going out. We always had a podcast episode up. That was really all I cared about. And I have a funnel with a free legal workshop called Five Steps to Legally Protect Your Business that runs all the time and has tons of people coming into it all the time. And so, as long as those main pieces are running, I was totally fine pruning and letting the little things fall off to allow the main stuff to grow. So, keep that in mind.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:44:31] If you are interested in starting a podcast or starting a YouTube channel or you want to explore some more of this cornerstone content creation, not relying so much on social media, go back and listen to Episode 38. I did an interview with Katie Steckly who owns Creatorly Media, and she's a podcast and YouTube expert. It's super helpful.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:44:51] The next thing you want to do is keep up with your email list. Hopefully, you're already writing to your list consistently. Ideally, you would batch the emails that would go along with whatever those cornerstone pieces of content

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are. So, if you have a podcast and send out an email about it every week, then I just want you to be able to keep up with that. So, what was helpful to me was that I batch record my podcast. And then, when I record the podcast, I write the emails that go along with them right away so that, not only is the podcast fresh in my mind, but I was always doing that so that if something happened with my dad, these things would have just been able to be scheduled. So, even if I had not had a team, it obviously would have been a lot more work on my end, but at least I would have had the content that I could have copy and pasted and batch plan them in ConvertKit, which is what I use for my emails.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:45:40] If you need some email tips about building an email list and all that kind of stuff, you can listen to Episode 45 of my podcast where I talk about legally legit email tips.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:45:49] It's also very helpful to keep a bank of evergreen emails on deck so that you can easily just hit schedule for, so you could draft emails in ConvertKit and leave them there. And maybe they point people to a piece of content that you've done, like a blog post or a podcast episode, or to your website, or to your offer, or to your Instagram. It doesn't really matter. But if you have a little bank - let's say, if you have three to five - that gives you almost a months worth of emails that would be in there and you could just leave them as drafts. And if something happened, you could just go in there, boop, boop, boop, put in the dates, and you'd have a month's worth of one email per week going out to your list. That would give you a month off of that.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:46:30] And that alone, like, we kill ourselves going all over the place in social media and all that kind of stuff. If you were just actually emailing your list with good content, and creating engagement there, and asking for a sale, blah, blah, blah, you'd be doing much better than running yourself ragged on social media. That's my opinion. So, keep up with that email list.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:46:45] The last thing that you should have in place in order to navigate this kind of thing is a team or hire someone. I'm not saying that you should hire somebody now if you're not a position to so that you plan for some sort of emergency. I hope nothing ever comes up. But if you're putting off hiring, I want to tell you to stop it

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right now. I wish somebody would have told me that before. I can't tell you how immensely helpful it has been to hire Lindsay, my first time fulltime hire, knowing that I have somebody there. And you don't even have to hire an employee. Obviously, it took me years and years too.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:47:21] You know, I had a pretty big team of contractors that has ebbed and flowed as I've learned what and who I need and all that kind of stuff. But even just hiring my first VA - Leanne was my first VA. She's now our customer success manager - Leanne was just such a huge relief to somebody else there. Somebody else who could have stepped in. Somebody who could have contacted all those clients. Somebody who could have scheduled those emails for me. But having that emergency SOP in place, that I talked about earlier, is what she would live by. Let's say, you just had a VA, that's the document that you would give to your VA to know where those emails were, to have the link to them, to have those emails pre-written, to know what tag to use in ConvertKit to send those emails to those people. All of this stuff, any of the information that somebody needs to get the job done should live in that document.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:48:17] So, I'm just here to say, if you've been considering hiring, don't put it off, because it will be immensely helpful for this types of situations and/or to getting you removed from the little day to day stuff in your business so that you can focus on the bigger picture stuff. Because I think that has been the biggest benefit to me so far.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:48:37] Last but not least, I want to talk to you about this concept of push and rest. So, I talked about this on Instagram the other day in Stories, and then all these people were like, "Yes. Please do a podcast episode on this." So, there are times that we need to push and there are times that we need to rest. I don't think this is any sort of amazingly unique idea that I have here.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:48:56] But I sort of talked about this in Episode 32, when I asked whether we should always be in growth mode. And what some other options were for ambitious people like us. And how in our industry, in a capitalist society, there's always this emphasis on more, more, more, bigger, faster, better, stronger, more money, more revenue, eight kabillion figures in 60 minutes. The figures get higher, the timeline get shorter, the amount of work gets lost. It's ridiculous. And it's all being

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pushed on you to buy more stuff and spend more money on the very coach, that's telling you that it's the whole thing, which actually is next week's episode all about whether or not you need a business coach, but I digress.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:49:44] But I feel like the last month has just been a really good lesson in this push-rest balance. It's a careful balance because sometimes we can confuse avoidance with rest, in business especially. And so, sometimes what I see are a lot of people putting certain things off because they're like, "I'm going to wait. I'm going to wait until this thing is perfect. I'm going to wait until I feel better. Wait until I rest. Wait until whatever." And they're not going to show on camera or not start a podcast until they have a larger audience. Or not email their list until they have more people.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:50:23] So, I think there actually is a time and a place for pushing yourself. And I've thought about that a lot in the last month, where I didn't want to do a damn thing. I just want to lay around. I want to cry. I would love to just watch Netflix. By the way, watch Senior Year on Netflix if you haven't yet, it's amazing. But I didn't really want to do anything. I knew that that wasn't good for me physically, mentally, emotionally. I also knew it wasn't what my dad would want for me because my dad loved that I was so athletic. And he took a lot of pride in how interested I was in sports and how I could pick up any sport so easily and all this kind of stuff.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:51:08] So, there have been a lot of moments over the last three weeks where I've been like, "No. You need to push yourself to do this." And I'm not talking about, "You're exhausted but you keep pushing through it anyway." I'm talking more about coming to a crossroads where I have an opportunity to do something, but I can choose to either go out there, be uncomfortable, put myself out there, try something new. In my case, be social when I don't feel like being social. Exert myself when I feel like just crying under the covers. I physically sort of have the energy but it's just like I'm at this crossroads and I can kind of decide. I know you know what I mean.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:51:49] And I think that other times, we push so hard that we then force ourselves to have to rest. People like me, what I used to be like - hopefully, I won't go back to this - is that I would go so crazy that then rest was a requirement, because I literally couldn't take it anymore. I am now trying to find some more - since

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this is a podcast, not a video, you can't see what I'm doing with my hand - of a squiggly wavelength type situation where you push a bit and then you rest a bit, .so that you're ready to push if and when you want to. And you're ready to rest if and when you want to.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:52:32] So, there have been a lot of times over the last month where I have gone and showed up to tennis lessons. And I didn't want to, not because I was tired, but because I didn't want to try something new. I was frustrated with being embarrassed over not knowing what I was doing and I can't, for the life of me, figure out how to keep score or pay attention to it. You know, I didn't want to be social. I didn't want to have meet new people and carry a conversation. I didn't want to do any of that. And sometimes I listen to that. I gave in to that. And that's okay, too.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:53:06] But there were other times where I was like, "I know that this is a good thing to push myself to do." Sometimes we need to push ourselves outside of our comfort zone. And I have been doing that a lot since my dad past. It's kind of been nonnegotiable for me that I do one thing per day that I don't want to do. Some days it's been eating, some days it's been going for a walk, taking that new tennis lesson, playing in a tennis tournament, having some neighbors over for fresh watermelon margaritas - which I did on Sunday. I didn't feel like doing any of that. Like, nothing sounds good to me right now. This is, honestly, where I'm at in this grief journey. Not of it sounds good. Everything just feels like it has a cloud over it. It's normal. It's okay. I go to therapy, don't worry.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:53:51] But it sometimes is good to push ourselves outside of that comfort zone knowing that I also have that opportunity to relax whenever I want to as well. We need to listen just as carefully when it's time to be quiet and to rest. And I feel like after the last couple of years, people are tired. I don't know, you tell me if you're feeling this way either for yourself or you're observing this in a lot of other people, I just feel like there's this overarching desire to slowdown, to quiet down, to be more inwards, to get off social media more, to start living your life more. Maybe it's just me, I don't know. You can send me a DM, let me know if I'm totally nuts. But I think that's what I've observed.

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:54:39] And I think that it is a careful balance. Like I said, pay attention to when you're choosing rest because you don't want to go outside your comfort zone versus you truly need to rest. Are you pushing yourself to do some things that are uncomfortable in business too? Because not everything is going to be comfortable. It might not ever be comfortable for you to show up on camera. It might not ever be comfortable for you to hit send on an email that goes out to a bunch of people who you don't know and you don't know what kind of response you can get back.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:55:10] And I do think there's a certain reality in running your own business that you're not going to love every part of what you do, and that's okay. There might be times when you have to push yourself to do things that don't feel super comfortable. Make sure that you're also taking advantage of the rest components of being an online business owner. If you're following some of the tips that I talked about in this episode, like building out an evergreen business, then you will be able to take advantage of those even more.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:55:39] And I, for one, need to take a dose of my own medicine and take advantage of this business that I've built and the people that I've helped. So, I think that's what I'll be doing this summer. But I'll keep you posted. I'd be curious to hear your thoughts after listening to this. I would love to know what you're walking away from this episode, and what your thoughts were, if you've learned anything, if you have any sort of reflections, will you send me a DM on Instagram, @samvanderwielen. I would really, really love to hear from you. If you think that a friend of yours would like this episode, could you do me a favor and go ahead and text them this episode right now. Right now, it only takes a sec. I would really appreciate it.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:56:18] Thank you so much for listening to On Your Terms. I can't wait to chat with you next week about whether or not you need a business coach. I'll talk to you then.

**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:56:29] Thanks so much for listening to the On Your Terms podcast. Make sure to follow on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to listen to podcasts. You can also check out all of our podcast episodes, show notes, links, and more at [samvanderwielen.com/podcast](https://samvanderwielen.com/podcast).

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**Sam Vander Wielen:** [00:56:42] You can learn more about legally protecting your business and take my free legal workshop, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business, at [samvanderwielen.com](http://samvanderwielen.com). And to stay connected and follow along, follow me on Instagram @samvanderwielen, and send me a DM to say hi.