

TRANSCRIPT

On Your Terms



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Episode #: 157

157. Personal Catch-Up (Grief, Travel, Fall + My New Big Dream)

Sam Vander Wielen:

Hey there, and welcome back to On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen. I thought we would just do a little bit of a personal catch-up today. I'll be honest, I was supposed to record an episode on business tips that I'm sick of hearing, which I would love to follow up on. I will record that episode if you would like me to. Just today, I needed a coffee chat, you guys. I just did.

So, I have not been doing great grief-wise. I promise not to talk about grief this whole episode, but I do have to mention it because, frankly, it's the biggest thing in my life at the moment. I've really not been doing well and I feel like I've been trying to hold that together and not really tell anybody and not let it on. And, hopefully, by the time that this episode airs, I'm feeling a little bit better than I am here in mid-September.

But right now it is not good. I've had to start to wave the white flag and say, "Guys, I am not okay," and back down from some things and just kind of recalibrate, I guess. You know, the funny thing about losing both my parents back-to-back both in May is that I remember that last year, after having lost my dad in May, it was September when things started to get bad for me. And then, it was, like, September through the holidays because basically it was September, October were bad. But then, my birthday's in November - Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday for obvious reasons - and then the holidays. It was a lot at once. And now, going through this again with just having lost my mom, it's just a lot.

So, how have I been dealing then with this and the business? So, I would say that one of the ways I handled this in my own business is by really, really zooming out and focusing on big picture priorities. Like, what are the main, main things that I can do that actually help? So, creating big long term, long form pieces of content, like a podcast episode, is so much

more important to me right now than making a single Instagram post, because this can have lasting power, it can drive traffic to things. But I don't need to be doing lots of little things. I don't need to say yes to every opportunity. I don't need to extend myself. I can hold firmer in my boundaries. I only do paid trainings for people, and I've done that now for years. So, I have to turn certain things down and all that kind of stuff.

So, I think just getting really big pictures, zooming out, being like, "This is all I can do. This is great. This is enough," that's really important for me. I mean, I do have to say I wouldn't have been able to do all of this at the very beginning because I wouldn't have been able to afford to. However, I will say to you that, I mean, I knew my dad was sick almost within a year of starting my business, so I kind of built my business in a way that the business would continue to run itself while I'm going through all of this, that the business would continue to generate a lot of revenue.

And so, it's like, yeah, on the one hand it's easy for me to say, but on the other hand it was really intentional and I built it this way so that the business is making a lot of money while I'm not doing very much. I also now have a team because I built up so much capital that I can pay people now to continue things running and they're doing a really good job. And we have the right systems in place and we have good people. And so, yeah, that's just the reality of the situation.

But I would just say that, yeah, I have to prune big time. I cut out a lot of things as much as possible. I have to be okay with things not being perfect. I have to be okay with everything not being the exact way that I would do it if I was doing it, because the point is I can't do it. And then, I really just focus on those big picture items.

So, that's kind of - I don't know - how I'm doing overall. I would say, honest to goodness, I'm still sugarcoating it because nobody wants to hear the reality of the situation of what's happening. But, you know, I think this is good for now.

I've been spending a lot of my time talking about big picture items, writing my book. Just in the last episode, I just shared a little book update specifically about that, so I'll kind of leave it at that. So, I'm deep in the writing process, and then starting pretty soon I'm going to be doing edits as well, because I'll be getting my first set of chapters back from the editor, and then still writing the new chapters. So, that's kind of cool. That's like a new arena for me.

And then, I have a little bit of travel coming up next month. Yeah, this is a month of a little bit of travel for me, which I'm both excited and not excited about. I'm excited because I want to unplug a little. I'm not so excited because it's been hard for me to travel since losing my parents. I think, I want to be in my bed, be at my house, have a routine. But this month in particular, I'm going to places that are my soul places, so I think this is going to be good for me.

And I'm really trying to take those two times I'm going to be away to really, truly unplug. So, first, I'm going to Vermont, which is just my favorite place now. I just love it there so, so much. And if you follow me on Instagram, you see that Ryan and I have been going there a lot. I love it there so much. It's so peaceful. It's so healing there. And then, towards the end of the month, I'm going to Mexico. I'm going to the west coast of Mexico again. I find it also so peaceful, so beautiful. I'm going to just lay around. And they have this chocolate smoothie where I'm going. I've been there before. It's like this cacao smoothie. It's insane. And they put cacao nibs on top. It's so good. So, I just can't wait. So, I'm really looking forward to that.

By the way, I don't know if I've ever told you this, but my big picture goal - when I started my business, I had a number of goals - I wanted to buy another house - I wanted to move, I wanted to be close to water - I wanted to write a book and I wanted to buy an electric car. Those were my three big things. So, since having my business, I've bought two different houses, and then I have bought my electric car a couple of years ago, and then I'm obviously writing a book.

So, I was really surprised the other day, I keep my long term goals in Asana and I was like, "I haven't added anything else." So, one of the things I really want to do now is I really want to buy more land, like different places. I'm really into buying land. I guess I'm really into very peaceful and slow things at the moment. So, I really want to buy land, and going to Vermont so much has made me really want to buy land in Vermont. I mean, I'm talking giant hunk and piece of land, like giant.

We have land here, I mean, a little bit of land. I mean, considering where I grew up in Philly, you had nothing like 37 feet. So, I think we have a lot of space here where I live in Long Island. But I really want a giant piece of land. I want a farm and I want to plant things. And I just want tons of space and I don't want to see a human for as far as the eye can see. And that is my next big, big goal. So, you heard it first. It's happening. I'll make it happen. I don't know how, but I will make that happen.

And I want a little tiny thing. I don't need a fancy house, big house, nothing like that. A little thing up there. Something that's warm and cozy and has a cute little kitchen, a space to chill. maybe it could have a guest space - that would be cool -but, yeah, that's what I want to do. That's my next big goal.

Speaking of cozy things, I've been obsessed with watching Cecilia on YouTube. She lives on the Island of Svalbard. It's the northernmost inhabitable island, and it technically belongs to Norway. It's basically the North Pole. When I watch it, I'm like, She lives in the North Pole. Her YouTube channel is incredible. And learning more about where they live in Longyearbyen is so cool. And if you've seen it before, you have to tell me. I have some friends who are also obsessed with her.

But they live in this beautiful cabin that's on the water and they're always beluga whales. And she plays the most beautiful music and lights fires. And parts of the year, it's completely dark there. Parts of the year, it's completely light. It's just so freaking cool. I watch her videos all the time. It feels like nature is sav for me, I don't know.

I'll link to her YouTube channel down below, Cecilia Blomdahl. She's like one of my North stars. I'm really into this concept right now of parts of people being like North Stars for you, like different aspects of different people and that lifestyle and the way she is. She's so rugged and capable and grounded. And she's funny and she always does this cute thing in her Reels at the end of her Reels where she goes "Okay, bye" at the end of her stuff, kind of like smartless. I just think she's the coolest and I've loved watching it.

Allison Anderson is another one that I've loved watching on YouTube. She's a Nat Geo photographer, travel blogger person. And she's incredible and super independent and adventurous. And her videos, again, same as Cecilia's, are just so calming, so beautiful. The videography, wait until you see. I will link to them below. I just love their YouTube channels. I think they are the coolest.

With that, I'll just say that I'm very much looking forward to fall. I mean, my parents keep dying in the beginning of every summer so that's been a bummer. The last few summers have really sucked for me because at the very start of it my parents die and then I spend the whole summer walking around in shock and crying. And then, when fall comes, I find that really hard. Like if you're one of my grief friends, you know that the change in seasons can sometimes trigger some of it because you feel like the world is moving and changing and drifting away and it feels really, really weird, so that's hard. On the flip side, I kind of feel like a little bit of a fresh start or something. I also just typically love fall, so I'm trying to look for glimmers. I'll be honest with you, when you're going through what I'm going through, it's very difficult.

This is not a matter of just sitting down and being like, "You just need to write down three things every day that you're grateful for." You have things to be grateful for, just focus on it. I do not welcome that kind of toxic positivity, to be honest. I have a cabillion things to be grateful for. I also have a number of things right now to be very not grateful for. I have been through stuff you don't even know because I'm not able to talk about it, the stuff that I have gone through about losing my mom. If you knew - if you knew. Let me just put it that way - you would not be telling

me, "Oh, just sit down and make sure you know what you're grateful for. Oh, you have stuff to be grateful." Yeah, of course, I have tons of stuff to be grateful for. I am also allowed to take time right now to be completely pissed, completely hurt, completely devastated. And that's just honestly where I'm at with it.

So, I try to look for glimmers, but not to look for glimmers as if the glimmers somehow erase or move over the bad stuff. But just to continue to flex that muscle of there is still good, there is still good. Because I'll be honest, I'm in that place right now where I'm like, Nothing is good. Everything sucks. Everyone's dying. This whole place sucks. The environment's burning up. It's hard for me to see the forest through the trees at the moment. And so, I am practicing that, but not as a way of gaslighting my own pain. Do you know what I mean?

It's a hard balance. It's a hard balance between seeing the positivity and remaining positive and not erasing what you're going through. It's just like if anybody was going through what I'm going through right now, they wouldn't be sitting around making a gratitude list. I don't know. That's just how I feel about it. And I think you're entitled to that time. Everybody is entitled to this time. You're allowed to pout.

And so, that's my take. That's my little update. One day I hope that these updates are super positive and sunshiny for you. But I am always very honest about where I'm at. It's not that I'm not being honest, but I can't say every single thing that's going on right now, nor would I want to. I don't want to drag other people through it, let alone can't. And I just hope that one day, for your sake and for my sake, I feel something like myself or like I used to. I don't know, maybe I don't want to feel like I used to, but I want to feel like myself again, and grief doesn't consume me. And I'm just very, very fresh, I'm very early in the grief stages, so I think it'll happen.

But I want you to know that I know that it's not always fun to listen to this, but that I also know it's the reality of my situation right now. So, I appreciate you listening and sticking through. Of course, I welcome your feedback and your thoughts and comments. You should reach out to me any

time. DM me, @samvanderwielen, on Instagram. Thanks so much for listening and I can't wait to chat with you in a couple of days. I have a fun little quickie episode coming for you about some stuff I overheard some burrows saying at the U.S. Open, so listen for that one. All right. Talk to you soon.

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