

Ep #9: The Reality of Being an Entrepreneur Couple with Jake and Whit Roehl



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Ellie Frey Zagel

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You are listening to episode nine where I talk to one of my favorite couples about working together.

Welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. A podcast for multigenerational family business leaders who want to become the leader they were meant to be. If you're ready to learn how to develop your own authentic leadership style, successfully lead your family business and create your own lasting legacy while still honoring theirs this is the podcast for you. I'm your host, Ellie Frey Zagel, family business leadership coach and third-generation family business leader. Let's get to it.

I just had so much fun interviewing my guests, Whit and Jake Roehl. I cannot wait for you to meet them. I seriously was laughing through pretty much the entire interview. I apologize ahead of time. Whit I've known for years and then I met Jake through Whit. And I just love them both. And you know that I work with family who works with each other and obviously husbands and wives.

And I've really wanted Whit and Jake to kind of share how they work together. And they look like they have so much fun and they clearly love each other but yet they are almost right next to each other for basically the entire day. And they live together, and they vacation together, and they parent together and all of that. And so I just could not wait to have them on the podcast to kind of share how they do it. I think we can always learn from other people.

I often have people come to me especially when they're working with their significant other and just want to be on the same page, and they're not, and they're fighting more and they don't want to fight because they truly love the person that they are working with. But it's just like they are feeling very depleted and not at all energized. And so if this is you or you know somebody like that who is experiencing that, working with their significant other, this is definitely the podcast episode for you.

So Whit and Jake are both life coaches, they're master coaches. They have been awarded one of the Top 10 Life Coaches in 2021 with Tony

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Robbins, Yahoo News. They are featured all over the nation. They are very interesting because they are husband and wife and they coach together. And they have very different coaching styles. Their company is called Steadfast Life Coaching. They take people from pressure to peace, high achieving leaders from pressure to peace.

One of their main programs is called Trust University; another is helping people lose 30 pounds or more. They are just really, really good at what they do. And so I really wanted to introduce you to not only a couple of great coaches but also a couple of great coaches who work together and they understand mindsets. You'll hear a lot of the mindset that they employ as they are working together. So I hope that you get a lot out of this, as much as I got out of this quite frankly. I hope you get a lot out of this. And without further ado I'd love to introduce you to Jake and Whit.

Ellie: I, of course, have a frog in my throat. So Pavel's always dealing with scratchy throat, with frog in throat. I'm like, "Wait a second, Pavel, hold on one second." I totally sound like a smoker. I've never smoked in my life.

Alright, let's do this. Hey Whit, hey Jake, how are you?

Jake: We're outstanding.

Whit: We're great.

Jake: Couldn't be better.

Whit: Thank you Ellie.

Ellie: I am so glad to have you both on talking about working together. This is going to be so much fun. Are you ready to get started?

Whit: Let's do it.

Jake: We're ready.

Ellie: First I want you to tell my audience a little bit about yourself.

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Jake: Well, I in my former life I was a teacher. And I've taught high school math for 20 years. And then I met Whit and fell in love with her obviously. She was on an entrepreneur journey and so I was kind of hearing about that and getting excited about that. And at first just thinking I was going to support her in that and then I was like, okay, I want a go. And so jumped out of the teaching career and into this business world to try and spend more time with the woman that I love the most and not have to leave and go to work during the day.

Ellie: Oh my gosh, that's so awesome. I often talk about what you just did Jake as jumping out of a perfectly good airplane. It's like skydiving. You're jumping out of a perfectly good job. You probably didn't hate being a math teacher for all that time.

Jake: Yeah, parachute to the prom, let's see how they work.

Ellie: And here we go. What about you Whit, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Whit: Yeah. I was in medical and tech sales prior, bartending and service industry. And so always enjoyed working hard, doing sales, being around people, just had this inner drive to find a solution to a problem and make a business out of it. Before I even knew coaching was a thing I had done probably about five years of creating a fitness and social solution, and creating this idea and going and talking to other business owners and getting them onboard and working two jobs and really just that entrepreneur life for five years before ever hearing about coaching.

And then when Jake and I met he loved the idea that I'd been working on for the last five years and failing miserably at. And he's like, "Yeah, let's do this together." And we became entrepreneurs that we're going to fail miserably together.

Jake: Together, that's how we do it.

Ellie: I love that so much. I feel like I'm going to laugh my way through most of this podcast episode, so much fun. So tell us who you coach and

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how you coach them because you have something very specific that you do.

Whit: We bring a lot of our faith into it but we have both Christian and non-Christian clients. And so with high performers we take them from pressure to peace, from fear to freedom and so just really teaching them how to live in more empowerment.

Ellie: I love it. I feel like every single person can just kind of raise their hand right now. Who doesn't want to go and who doesn't understand going from being in pressure and wanting to be in peace? It's so good. So when I see the two of you, you always seem like you're having fun. So I've listened to you, you've been on other podcasts. I'm on your social media feeds. I'm kind of like I'm a little bit jealous. I want to live vicariously through you, you always look like you have so much fun. Yet you work together, you live together, you share an office together. So what is your secret?

Whit: Our secret is that Jake thinks he's funny.

Jake: Like hardcore, when Whit even indicates that maybe what I've said isn't funny I know, I think you've got some thought work to do babe, because I'm funny. And so I know that's just something she's working through because my humor is beyond reproach.

Whit: It's the honest truth though Ellie.

Ellie: Oh my gosh, that's so great, 100% certainty in belief that Jake is funny.

Whit: Yes. And my certainty is that he's not as funny as he thinks. And so it creates this dynamic where I'm constantly being surprised, okay, maybe he is a little funny. No.

Ellie: That's too fantastic; I've got tears in my eyes. This is awesome because humor, that is actually how my husband and I work together. He makes me laugh. I'm all frowny face and grumpy Ellie. And he comes in and he does something and I'm laughing hysterically on the floor. So I

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mean there's something to be said for going through life with somebody who thinks he's funny or she's funny.

Whit: Thinks they're funny, yeah. And I can totally relate Ellie. I am definitely the scariest grumpy, now is not the time to laugh.

Ellie: And Jake's like, "No, no, no."

Jake: I don't know. It's so foreign.

Ellie: Oh my gosh. So what's your philosophy on this Jake? And I'm sure you're going to tell us other secrets and lessons learned. But what is your philosophy on humor? Do you see her grumpy face and you're like, "That frown needs to be turned upside down?"

Jake: No, I'm never trying to change her. If she wants to be grumpy that's on her. I think I was just raised in a way, the way my life has gone there has never been a time or very few times that humor was inappropriate. Humor was always received as a distancing mechanism, kind of to tie in your original question though.

The philosophy that I was raised in and that has just become a part of the fabric of me is that you don't have to, you get to. And it's something that my parents always said, "Do I have to take the trash out?" "No, you never have to take the trash out. You get to take the trash out." And it's just always been sort of a joke, said lightly and sarcastically but at the same time with this authority. And so it's like, hey, we're going to joke about this and this is the mindset you're going to have if you're going to live in this family.

And so yeah, both of them simultaneously, I think that what makes things funny is knowing that I don't have to, I get to. And so now it's a more playful place and now everything is laughable if you choose to make it that way.

Ellie: Oh my gosh, that is so fantastic. I had all these questions come into my head all at once, taking this conversation in a different direction. So we are just going to keep – I'm going to keep focused. I was just thinking about you guys coming together under values and you had, I think very different

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upbringings. But how did you come together under some, like getting on the same page even? Okay, I'm going to ask this question because I'm halfway through it.

So you guys did come from different backgrounds and so how did you come together? What were the values, the core values? You just mentioned, I don't know if it's a principle or a value, Jake, but you don't have to, you get to. And there's something so beautiful and full of gratitude when you talk about what we get to do in this life, even if you don't want to, you still get to do it. You have trash to take out. You have a house, and we have a roof over our heads that has, you know, we have trash and we can take it out someplace. So there's a lot of fantastic gratitude in there.

So the two of you, do you connect on certain values? I did not prep you at all for this but hopefully.

Whit: Yeah, it's a great question.

Jake: We probably did have a little bit of different values when we first met. But at the root, the main ones I think Whit had some values that I find attractive, that I wanted to grow more in terms of her resilience, her relationship with discomfort. And of course had experience with, I mean no one's going to go through life without some relationship with stuff like that. But I had never seen someone seek out the benefits of discomfort so intentionally as I saw in Whit.

And I was like, "Man, that is admirable. It's making me fall in love. And I want to be around it and do it more." And I'll just speak for Whit. I feel like I've brought a playfulness. It's a very fast growth empowering way to climb mountains and achieve things but it's also very serious. And so I believe that some of my values brought a balance, she brought to me and I brought to her. My way has a negative side-effect of complacency. And Whit's where it has a negative side-effect of just suffering. And so when we came together it seems to be at least on its way to this sort of magical balance.

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Ellie: That's so beautiful. And I don't know if that's something you realized ahead of time or that's something that you've just kind of discovered as your relationship has grown. But Whit, I know your story well enough. You're one of the toughest people I've ever met. You're like, "I'm going for that, it's going to be uncomfortable, I'm totally okay with that", where most people would run for the hills. So when you're thinking about climbing a mountain I can totally see.

Whit's like, you're going to be like, "We're going to climb this mountain and we're going to get to the top, I don't care how hard it is", and Jake's like, "Yeah, and we're going to have fun doing it."

Jake: Yeah, and we get to.

Ellie: Yeah, we get to, yeah, we get to climb this mountain and we get to have fun doing it.

Whit: Yeah. And I would say, I appreciate that Ellie, and I would say that it has taken several years in our marriage of me watching him go through our struggles of building a business and the blended family dynamic. He's laughing along the way. I'm keeping a serious tone of, "No, let's really continue our focus and our drive." And he had more peace and I had more pressure.

And so as I'm watching him and thinking you're doing it wrong, Jake. You're not taking this serious enough. I started to see okay, I can do both. I can have the drive and I can be more playful, allow more fun and it actually helps. But I had to be sold on that because I have done it my way for so long. And so it did create a lot of conflict, a lot of arguments, a lot of not understanding each other, feeling offended.

Ellie: And then how were you able to – because I can see how that would be very foreign maybe, you've been very successful, you've overcome a lot. And so how did you – did you look at Jake's playfulness as that's not serious enough, he's not taking this seriously, we're trying to create a

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business here? And you guys coached together so I can imagine there can be some conflict there.

Whit: Yeah. Well, it used to be after a coaching call we would kind of hash it out like, “Hey, you are doing this.” And it was really me judging him. He would get the brunt of it most of the time, being so patient with me. And so after the calls behind the scenes is where a lot of that conflict happened. But through his patience I started to realize, wait a minute, let me use the skills and the tools that we teach our clients for myself and just really make sure that I am doing it from a clean space, from integrity.

That’s where I saw, okay, there’s some growth that I need to do. It’s not his fault. It’s not that he needs to change and be more serious, where do I need to clean up my thinking?

Ellie: So what I heard you say is just kind of taking responsibility for your own, yeah, for your own stuff. And then Jake, so you and Whit, you’re hashing it out, Whit said you’re very patient but how did you get into that mindset of patience? Somebody’s like, “No, you’re doing it wrong”, and you’re like, “No, no, no.” Tell me what happens when you’re dealing with conflict, tell me what?

Jake: Because of the journey that I’ve been through in my life I have a thought that runs at the top of all of my other thoughts that I have lived a life without Whit. And I have lived a life with Whit. And it’s always better with. There is a framework that I never get to where it’s going wrong, or it’s gone wrong, or we’re going wrong. Because I’ve lived both ways, I know it’s better this way. And so now that opens up to okay, so where are the solutions in this? I know it’s right. Where are the solutions in this?

And I think what that gives me access to because simultaneously, we’re getting into a lot of weird things about me. But I like catching animals and part of that I like the idea of befriending a whatever, snake.

Ellie: A snake, a squirrel, okay.

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Jake: But what you learn from that is that nice people, calm people, they lash out when they're scared. And so if you know you're scared but you're safe, I know I'm not going to hurt you. It gives you a patience. It gives you a peace in the moment. And so I really do understand Whit's story and that being playful feels unsafe. And so when she's lashing out at me like, "You're a terrible coach and business partner", which she never actually says. But I know the woman I love doesn't feel safe. And that's easy, for whatever reason.

It's not like some elevated mindset work that I'm doing. It's easy for me to grab. And so that it brings me some patience and to say, "Okay, well, let me check. Was I being a little too playful? Was I distracting from this client's growth because I was making jokes?" I can kind of hear it and see what does she need?

Ellie: What I really like what you said there Jake, it starts with this, again, this belief that life is better with Whit. I feel like you could almost have it made, t-shirts with Whit, something like that. And it reminds me of something Michael Hyatt said and I know Whit, you and I have talked about Michael Hyatt before. But he is a Christian, online mentor and author and so many other things. But he's an amazing mentor to me. And he said that he chooses his wife every single day. They've been married for 30, 40 odd years.

And when I heard that I was like, "Oh my gosh, that is the most beautiful thing ever." It just reminded me as you were – to start it off with, I choose you. And just from that place of love, and choice, and know that you guys are going to be okay with the peace that it probably creates within both of you. So, Whit, you might feel comfortable, safe to kind of say, "Hey, I was uncomfortable there", or, "I didn't appreciate that", or "I don't think you did that right." And Jake you're okay with hearing that. You're okay with just responding.

Whit: Yeah. I think that the foundation of trust really we had to learn that no matter what we're going to choose each other each day and just trust that.

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And then from that foundation then it allowed us to have a tough conversation staying connected even when we weren't seeing eye-to-eye or felt offended. But it was building that foundation that was key.

Ellie: Yeah. Is there anything else in that foundation? I mean you said the trust, you said the belief, there's certainty that you guys, that was better together. Is there anything else? I can think of people who work together who love each other but they're under a lot of pressure. They are maybe fighting more. There's the blurring of the boundaries. And if we just kind of go to the basics, the foundation of how you work so well together, what components do you think are there?

Whit: For me it's a personal relationship with Jesus, that my personal relationship with Him allows me to have my peace, my hope, my faith and love coming from Him. And now when I go to Jake to give love, receive love, communicate, grow, I'm getting it from a main source. And now everything else is just icing on the cake.

Ellie: It's beautiful.

Jake: For me I would say that I really camp out on trust but it's two layers of trust because I think there's an initial layer that hey, I'm not going anywhere, which is great. And that's a really important one. But there's also this other evaluation of I'm not going to let it be terrible also. And so maybe as a business owning team we take a course of action that leads to our business success. And it does keep us married but it wasn't that fun. It was kind of a struggle, okay, that's out.

We can trust that we're not going to take the miserable road. And so not only are we in, yes, I trust that I'm in. I also trust that what we are working toward is going to be beautiful and amazing.

Ellie: Right. So you have a vision for your work together and your belief is it's amazing. I don't think that's a small thing. I think that's actually a really big thing. I don't know if a lot of people do that work, Jake. I'm so glad that you brought that up. I don't think that people actually take time to actually

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think about the work that you and I, like if you work with your spouse, if you work with your sibling or whatever. The work that we're doing together is going to be amazing.

Whit: Yeah, because we've also, I think it was two years ago we really started coaching, we were feeling a lot of pressure and fear at them two years that we had gone without making a dollar or making any money. We might have hit one dollar. And so a lot of pressure, a lot of fear, a lot of tension in our marriage, dealing with other parts of our personal life. And we made an intentional decision that we won't pursue something at the cost of our marriage. And then we reevaluated, do we want to still continue the entrepreneur business owner journey?

And from that place of our marriage comes first, that's non-negotiable. Then we said, "Yes, let's continue down the entrepreneur journey." And it was at that point that our research to coaching and our business started growing.

Ellie: That's amazing. So what I heard you say is you prioritized each other and your marriage, that comes first.

Whit: Yeah, which felt very unsafe for me, that did not feel comfortable because my default was I want this marriage to work but I have had a lot of – my past, my past says that relationships aren't worth going all in. And so one foot in, one foot out is the safe thing to do. And so when we had that conversation I knew what I was intentionally choosing but it felt very unsafe, very uncomfortable, very risky.

Ellie: Yes, thank you so much for sharing that Whit. I want to go back to something that you said earlier about your relationship with Christ. And you're not asking Jake to provide all the love that you feel inside. And so the reason I want to go back to that is because so often we look to our significant others to make us feel better, to make us feel love. We have this, what you and I call in the coaching world, this manual, this instruction manual that we have, our significant other at the top of that list is I must feel your love.

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And what I heard you say is through your faith you actually are filled there and that the love that you experience with Jake is just now it's the fun, now it's the, as you mentioned, the icing on the cake. Do you have any words of wisdom for somebody who is, like affirmation, constant affirmation, constant love so they can feel it? I don't know if I said that right.

Whit: Yeah. I am so grateful you asked that question, it's such a great question and I don't know that I'm going to have a great answer. But I know that Jake is probably one in a billion of guys in terms of his journey of how he wants to show up now in a marriage. And I feel like I won the lottery. And knowing that before I made this decision that I was going to first go to Christ I would rely on him to make me feel safe or loved. And it didn't feel safe.

And so knowing that I won the lottery with the kind of love Jake brings daily, and I still wasn't feeling safe, it registered, okay, it's because I'm trying to get my safety from the wrong source. Let me go to Christ and feel safe with Him. And now when I show up in my marriage both receiving and giving, it's an overflow of me getting it from somewhere else. And it really has been a game changer. I feel like I just show up more authentically and allow him to be more authentic.

Ellie: Yeah, because now you're not dependent on him for how you feel?

Whit: Totally, yeah.

Jake: Yeah, it's awesome to be the icing. I absolutely did know this. It has been and is putting a tension in our relationship. And you start to memorize what minefields you might step on that triggers the response you don't want as you're navigating life with somebody. And one way to do it I suppose is to always try and be perfect about not stepping on the mines, kind of an anxiety producing philosophy, it doesn't seem to work out too well. And so finding as she changed, that I had stepped on a few old mines and she didn't have the same response was super relaxing.

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All of a sudden like whoa, this is amazing. And you start to learn how the, you know, the field just gets more open. And you're a little more, it calms me down a bit to be more creative to be like, I'm not carrying the weight of her safety. And now I can just walk with her. And all of a sudden now what we're focused on is I'm not focused always on does she feel safe, does she feel love? I get to love her and have fun with her. And what do we want to do now? And so it's a more relaxing experience from my side for sure.

Ellie: That's beautiful. I'm glad we stayed with that for a little bit longer. I don't know, yeah, I think that is really important for people who work together. So I now want to talk about some of the practical ways on how you work together. And again, you work together in the same office. You coach together. You're side-by-side with your clients. You vacation together. You have fun together. So can you give us some practical ways how you do this and make it work?

Jake: Again, we do that; I tend to as you ask these questions I'm realizing I have some foundational beliefs that allow the practical to stand on. And one that we've learned together is that if you throw salt at someone they don't really care. If you throw salt at someone and they have a wound it hurts. And you're like, "Hey, why are you throwing that salt?" And what I've learned is that oftentimes when I feel hurt, if I didn't have an old wound it wouldn't be hurting.

And so the peace that gives me is that Whit is not hurting me. It's something way before I ever met Whit that has been a part of my experience. And that helps me stay into this more solution based mindset where it's not like, "Oh no, I have teamed up in my life and my business with somebody who's hurting me." And so I can say, "Okay, it's not her, so then where are the solutions?" So just to get back to the practical, that's like the philosophical I guess part of it.

Is that literally when I notice my own triggers, mine is being untrustworthy, Whit's, sometimes I will feel that Whit thinks I am untrustworthy. And when I feel that I get hurt. That's what elevates my physiology. And I can

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remember that, no, I am trustworthy. And so that's what Whit's talking about, letting Christ come into your life is I've got this whole built up Christian foundation of belief, where I've got 30 different ways that I am told I am trustworthy, I am good, I am worthy. And so that comes in.

I'm like, "Okay, let me turn my head a little bit and let me hear, no, I am trustworthy. And these are the 10 reasons I know that's the case." Now let me turn back toward Whit, not seeking her to validate the wound that, you know, my trigger point. And now let's have a conversation, which is still hashing out disagreements, getting on the same page, all the same practical things, but not from a place of being hurt. Now it's a place of being more teammates. That's a little bit too rosy.

We're not quite teammates at that moment, maybe teammates that are disagreeing. But getting to that place, I know that I can get there because I can have the conversation without being wounded during our conversation.

Ellie: I think that's so wise. What I heard you says is you take a pause, you kind of do some of your own work, and then you come back to it. Instead of lashing out, you kind of take a pause, take a breath, figure out what's going on and then come back to the conversation, is that about it?

Jake: Yeah. And it's very quick easy work because it's the same work every time. I know what it is, it's about trustworthiness, it's always, it never changes. And so I don't need to go reinvestigate. It's not like I need an hour. I need 30 seconds because I know. She's not throwing knives, she's throwing salt. And so I'm okay.

Ellie: I love that you understand your triggers. I just think that if more of us understood really our raw spots, our wounds, our triggers and we were able to come up with solutions, I think there would be way fewer arguments. As you just mentioned, it wasn't about Whit at all. She was throwing some salt, it was all about you and some of the work that you needed to, yeah, do.

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Whit: Let me give a shout out to coaches, Mike and Kim who are our blended family coaches because our blended family dynamic was probably the most tension.

Jake: The most salt.

Ellie: In wounds.

Jake: Yeah, exactly.

Whit: Yeah, big time. So they gave us some tools that we took and use them in our business as well.

Ellie: What other practical tools do you use to work together? Do you have ways to communicate that allow you to communicate on a regular basis so you're always on the same page? Or what are some other practical ways?

Jake: If Whit touches my knee it means stop talking.

Ellie: Perfect, that's so perfect, yes, just like that.

Whit: Yeah. I think continuously learning about each other and communicating. And so what I mean by that is that as our business grows, as life happens, we are constantly changing and growing as well. And so my belief is that I'm never going to expect Jake to always be the same. I'm going to take on the perspective that each new level requires new communication. And that's in every single area of our life. And so just kind of having this curious mindset, how is he doing? How is he changing? How am I changing?

Is there anything that we need to bring into our business in terms of tools that will help us at this new level? And it just helps me trust and be patient at the same time because I think that like you Ellie, we want to grow and be the best version of ourselves, which means dreaming bigger. And choosing that life I can't expect Jake to stay the same and I can't expect myself to stay the same. And so as we're continuing to go on this journey together, just the daily perspective that what he needed yesterday may not be what he needs today.

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And so how can we communicate better? How can we support each other better? What does that look like today?

Ellie: That's another great piece of wisdom, thanks Whit for sharing. Is there anything else?

Jake: I have a script that I like that I say in my head that's like, "Oh." And I'll always start it with, "Oh, the woman I love", blank. And it's for when I have an expectation that Whit doesn't meet. So it could be something business wise like we had a conversation 10 days ago about how this event is going to go on this day. And then we get to the day of the event and Whit's like, "Hey how's this going to go?" And I'm like, "Oh, we did this." "And I don't like the way that sounds. Let's change these." And I'm like, "We had this."

That's the place where I can be, you know, the default response, "We already decided, what are you talking about, why is this?" But instead I like to say, "The woman I love likes to make the plans the day before." But when I say that, "Oh, the woman I love likes to or does whatever." That's my personal self-talk regarding manuals and accepting reality. And so I really like that, the literal script that I think if someone is in our position I think it could be helpful. "Oh, the woman I love likes to ask a question when the camera's rolling that we've never discussed."

It can just be, "Oh. I'm learning something new about the woman I love today."

Ellie: That is so fantastic especially as Whit talks about how much the two of you are changing and just respecting. If you're going after some big dreams you're going to have to change in order to get them. You can't just be the same person. And so I can see Jake, how you might say that all the time, "Oh, this version of the woman I love does something completely different than the last version."

Jake: Yeah. And it's just a lot more helpful thought that you can't do that. No, don't be that way, be not you, which it sounds funny to say it out loud but it's most of our default is like, "Be different."

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Whit: You're doing it wrong.

Jake: And I find it brings a lot more peace to just be like, "Oh, that's how you love her."

Whit: Yeah. And I just tell him, "You're doing it wrong."

Jake: Oh, the woman I love thinks I'm not funny. She's crazy.

Ellie: That's so good. And so okay, we've been having so much fun. I have to ask this question. How do you guys keep it so fun besides just Jake thinking that he's incredibly funny? But you guys go on trips together, you have fun trips, you just keep it fun, how do you do it?

Whit: I will just say that we also have – I can't let you think that we have so much fun.

Jake: Whit's answer is going to be that it's not fun, that's her answer to that question. It's actually not fun.

Whit: No. I can imagine an older version of myself inspiring to be me and have our marriage and be like, "Oh, that just seems like all roses and butterflies." But the truth is, is that we have a lot of time where we're just silent next to each other. We have a lot of time where we're having some conversation where we're like, "Hey, let's table this." And, "Wait a minute, we've been kind of serious and in our head talking about business a lot, let's take a date night."

And so I say that just to paint a very real picture that it's intentional because we find ourselves in real life moments where we're not having fun and we're okay with that. And we're like, "Okay, let's decide that we're going to intentionally seek out fun because it's been a bit serious for the last two days", or whatever.

Jake: The woman I love, she takes a different route, but she gets there. I totally agree. I think fun is a value. And if you really want fun, fun has to be a value. And it means that sometimes maybe you see an efficient way to go make progress towards your goal, at least the perception, it looks that way.

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That if we just sprinted right here I think we could get to this space. And there's a, no, that's the second priority. The first priority is fun. Not that fun's the first priority, but it's above. And so no, but what's the fun way to get there? We've been sprinting a little bit too much, where is the fun?

I'm willing to slow down. I would rather have the business not do as well and have more fun because this is our life. And as far as I know we only get one. And so I'm not willing to sprint after milestones. And so then when you take on that foundation like Whit's saying, you start making decisions through a filter that intentionally goes after the fun and you start asking the question, "How can we bring fun into this more often?"

Ellie: A question that probably too few of us ask, so good. Alright, what is one piece of advice, and then we'll kind of wrap it up, what is one piece of advice you'd give to other spouses who work together?

Jake: Mine would be, get over yourself.

Ellie: Tell us more about that, I love it, get over yourself.

Jake: I struggle sometimes with pride, cockiness, can you believe that? I think it's good to be me. And so I sometimes overvalue my opinion and when I get over that it's so much more fun. Things go so much more smoothly. And so I guess to kind of put that in some practical terms, basically what happened, where it showed up big for us is that we were both trying to run the business in parallel. And so if you were our client and we were on a Zoom call together, we're like attacking you with coaching from both sides.

And we'd get off the call and evaluate, "Well, I had a really good idea I wanted to say." "Well, I had something." And I'm like, okay, Jake, get over yourself. You love this woman, you trust her. You trust her with your clients. You trust her with the business. Even when she's going to answer the question I go around, you know she's going to get there. And it's funny because as human beings we just don't see the same path to the same

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point to teach something in the same way or bring someone illumination about something.

But I'm like, "Hey, you're not the best, you're not the greatest. She's also great. And why don't I just go on the ride with her? Why don't I get impressed by the way she takes a client to where this is going?" And so that's kind of my reminder to myself is just get over yourself man, and let's be honest, we're doing it together because we want to do it together. How can I make our business we, how can I contribute to this team in the best way versus how can I show what cool analogies I have? It really helps.

Ellie: That, I did not think you were going there and it was so good. That was such a great – because we don't think about that, yes, we pride, we want to do things, we want to get recognized, we want affirmation. And then what I just heard is yeah, but you're doing things together. That is the affirmation. That's the reason, that's a vision for you. It's not necessarily being called out on your anecdotes, or metaphors, or analogies.

Jake: Yeah. And bottom line is I mean even if you were saying, when you look at us you look at the social media and you see the fun. Most of the fun I have is playfully shining a light onto Whit. Partly it's fun, because I know she doesn't like the light as much as I do. And so I shine it over there, now what are you going to do? But at the same time it is, it's a good practice for me to say, "Hey, this is my business partner, this is our business, look how awesome it is." Instead of, "Look at what I'm doing for our business."

Ellie: That was so great, thanks, Jake, for sharing. Whit, do you have any advice that you would give people who are working together, give spouses?

Whit: For me what has really helped is to commit to the relationship, not the endeavor or the accomplishment, the accolade. And again it went against everything inside of me that felt safe. It felt more safe to choose the business over our marriage. But when I made that shift I felt so many other things were available in our marriage, in our experience, how we do business, even in our business, the way it works.

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And so making that intentional decision that at any point in this journey when our marriage is not strong. We are calling a time out and we're doing whatever needs to happen in order for our, like whether that means giving up on the business and going to get jobs, nine to fives, then just being willing to do whatever our marriage needs first. And so if it's not a marriage, and it's a family dynamic, really just saying, "How can I make our relationship healthy, strong and thriving?" And then the business comes next.

Ellie: Thank you so much. Thank you so much for sharing your words of wisdom. That was awesome. We went in directions I didn't even expect. So I'm really excited to kind of share this with others. How can we find you?

Jake: steadfastlifecoaching.com is a great place to do it. But we're all over social media. So we've got Steadfast Life, but really the best place is to go look up Whit, the life coach on Instagram and see all the stuff that she's doing there. And I think our personal social medias are the most fun.

Ellie: Alright. So, fantastic, so if anybody in my audience is a high achieving driven individual, do you work with just businesspeople or do you work with anybody who kind of is a type A personality?

Jake: Business, weight loss, relationships are our main ones, wealthy, sexy and in love is what we want. And really there's an adventure theme that runs through it all. And so that if you just like to play around with mindset and adventure, just following us is probably going to be fun.

Ellie: Gosh and yes, who doesn't want to be wealthy, sexy and in love? I think it's so good, I love it. Alright my friends, thank you so much for being on The Family Business Leader Podcast, I really appreciate the time that you spent with me today and I can't wait for this to come out and introduce you to my audience.

Jake: Thanks Ellie.

Whit: Thank you Ellie for having us, this was so fun.

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Well, there you have it. Thank you so much for listening to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. If you've enjoyed today's episode, be sure to share it with someone who needs it. If you'd like more information about family business leadership development, please visit successfulgenerations.com. I can't wait to connect with you again next week, until then.