



Heidi Hauck: Hello and welcome! This is Heidi Hauck - I help Badass Bleeding Hearts release old stories, reclaim their power, and build thriving businesses that make the world a better place.

As part of my mission to empower my fellow Badass Bleeding Hearts, I'm interviewing entrepreneurs from a wide variety of fields and specialties, sharing pieces of their journeys as they've built their own thriving businesses that make the world a better place. I hope their stories and insights will help you to see the possibilities for your own dreams, purpose, passion, and journey.

Today, I'm thrilled to have joining me Pamela Slim, business coach, speaker, and author of *Escape from Cubicle Nation* and *Body of Work: Finding the Thread That Ties Your Story Together*. She's also the founder of K'e - home of the Main Street Learning Lab in downtown Mesa, Arizona.

So, thank you so much for joining me today.

Pamela Slim: I'm so happy to be here!

Heidi Hauck: I am really excited to talk to you. You're always one of my favorite people to talk to, and especially for my audience, Badass Bleeding Hearts. I know that one of the threads that ties your work together is really caring about community, and you're very tied into your own sense of values, and what I call the Big Why.

So I'd love to start out by asking you an easy question. What is the Big Why that drives your work?

Pamela Slim: Yeah, it's a great question. It's interesting, sometimes when looking backwards, it's much easier to see the threads. I know actually when I was writing *Body of Work*, one of the exercises in one of the chapters was really telling my own career story.

I hadn't really thought about it so directly than when I was putting together that chapter and looking at the different things that I had done, and then beginning to look backwards, like all the way back to my college degree was actually in community economic development, with looking at non-formal education as a force for social change. My focus in college was in Latin America, I lived in Mexico and in Columbia.

In doing that work, what I realized is being an ex-patriot aid worker essentially, even though I was college intern when I was in college, there was something about that that just didn't feel quite right to me.

You know, being this fresh-faced 19 year old, or whatever I was coming into somewhere like Columbia where there were amazing people that were in that community that clearly knew so much more what it was that was needed. It was often not lack of information from a 19 year old college student, but it was really ... you know, sometimes access to information and resources, and lack of oppression and all these things that were really causing economic injustices and problems.



Pamela Slim: So looking way back, and then looking at the things I've done in my life, I realize that both economic sovereignty and also financial stability is really, really important to me, it's the kind of thing... the hope, thought, prayer that I have for everyone is that people can feel that strong sense of knowing where it is that their income is coming from, that they don't feel that real stress of economic instability.

That can be from people who may not be working, people who are fearing being laid off, people who are underemployed, which we know is a huge swath of people that we have in this country and around the world.

So to me, the why, I think it's why of all the things that I could be doing, I always come back to business and in particular entrepreneurship and small business, because it feels like something that's like my favorite canvas, in which you can learn things that actually can really turn your financial life around, right, because there are so many options for ways that we can work.

That's the Why that drives me, is just thinking about what are ways in which I can help more people feel that financial success and stability, and really looking at it from a totally inclusive perspective, especially for those that might be the most vulnerable.

Heidi Hauck: Yeah, that is beautiful.

You know, it immediately brings to mind, I recently attended a workshop led by Rachel Rogers, and one of the statistics that she shared with us was that ... I'm not gonna remember the exact statistic but the point of the statistic was that for African American women in particular, there is a much greater room for increasing income through self-employment than there is through being employed, through having a job.

Pamela Slim: Yes.

Heidi Hauck: And I know that one of the reasons that I am such a firm advocate of small business and being self-employed, I recognize it's not for everybody, but in a lot of instances, especially in communities where there aren't a whole lot of employment opportunities, starting your own business can give you access to an entirely new realm of financial stability.

Which is kind of counter to the story that we've heard for years about ... what is it, something like 30% of small businesses fail within the first year and 60% within the first five years, or something like that. And you know, not to downplay how difficult it can be, because it's not easy, we've all had our challenges.

But just recognizing that when you feel like your options are limited, a lot of times self-employment can open those options up.

Pamela Slim: It's true. It is like a deep and layered thing because there are certain elements to working for yourself. Anybody who's shopped for health insurance, you know, knowing you don't have any of the regular retirement or health insurance and a lot of things often that can



Pamela Slim:

create those stabilizing factors, it means a different level of analysis sometimes in terms of figuring out how to make those things happen. It could be a topic we can dive into.

It's fascinating to me in the small business world that many people, and even folks who leave corporate who have had a lot of those kinds of benefits before, tend to put it to the side, right?

Like the most important thing is kind of being profitable, and I find over time that some people may not pay attention to things like making sure that retirement's funded or life insurance. You know, when you're trying to make it happen and just pay your mortgage or your rent that that can be something that's challenging.

So it does have challenges.

It also, as you said, has a lot of upsides and potential for people that could be employed. A lot of people have a side hustle, which is something I've been talking about for years where it's a nice way to be bringing in additional revenue. It can be a way, as you said, where you can be in a physical location where there's not a lot of job opportunity.

I don't know about you, but I'm always tuned into the news or listening to stories within the lens of somebody who's been in small business, because I remember reading a couple years ago, there was a story and it was kind of told as a very sad story of somebody who had a masters degree in communication and had been laid off in her local community from, I forget if it was a university or something like that, you know, and was completely desperate and felt like there were no options at all where she was.

I was thinking, oh my gosh, do you have any idea how many people hire communications professionals, people who are really good at writing for example, in the new world of content marketing. So many people now, all over the world are hiring people, they're desperate looking for people who are great writers.

So very often it can create this whole other economy where you can be based somewhere that might not have a super thriving economy, but you could actually have clients that are all over the world.

So it has this interesting kind of array of different experiences, and again part of what I see as my mission is to try to demystify things, right? Maybe share information in a way that can help strengthen, like mitigate the risks that you have that come with self-employment, and maximize the opportunities and ways that we look at what kind of work we could be doing.

Heidi Hauck:

Right, right! That's awesome.

Yeah, you know an interesting thing that I'd love to get your take on, because I know that connecting with people, I mean it's one of your superpowers right? You mentioned this ability to work from one location and connect with people all over the world.



Heidi Hauck:

I know that one of the challenges of being self-employed, especially for those of us who have these sort of online businesses, is feeling isolated, you know, having that sense of ... We don't have an office full of people to sit and chat with, we can't go stand by the water cooler and have a conversation.

It's very common to not necessarily have anyone in our immediate lives who understands what it is we do.

So I'd love to hear your advice or thoughts on how entrepreneurs who are in this online world and trying to make a difference, trying to connect but feeling very isolated in the process.

Pamela Slim:

You and I have often talked about the scale of introversion and extroversion, think about it like the wing span of what somebody really wants their community to be.

So for some people... I tend to be on the raging extrovert side of the scale, I know that you're a little bit more on the introvert side.

So for some people it's more having a smaller circle of very deep relationships of people you can trust and you can talk with, and they can be virtual people that you have kind of a brain trust with. For other people it's about having a whole variety of different people that would be connected both in person and virtual.

So having virtual connections can be really helpful. I know you're part of some really wonderful Facebook groups that are wonderful places, there are a lot of free Facebook groups that you can join around a number of different topics.

If people tend to be freelancers, I know there's the Freelancer's Union, which is a virtual group but it also has in person meetings. We actually host the Phoenix

Freelancer's Union meeting here once a month and that's a time where people can be connecting with virtual resources that affect freelancers all over the US. Then often they have local meetups in local cities, then people can come meet in person as well.

That's that neat example of a combination of an in-person setting in addition to having a virtual place.

If you don't have that, I know when I was first coming online in like, 2004, one of the ways that I know I connected with people was actually in taking classes. I was just showing somebody the other day, the first product that I ever created was a little audio program in a class I did with Michael Port, who wrote *Book Yourself Solid* and now *Heroic Public Speaking*.

It was like, a revelation for me when I started in 2004, where he went through in the class and helped break down how it is that you actually create a digital product.



Pamela Slim:

Then Andrea Lee was another person who I connected with way back when, and in doing classes like that is where I met fellow students that I'm still friends with today.

I know that, right, that's a way you've made a lot of connections is often by doing some kind of an online learning experience where then you can be connecting with other community members. So that can be a way that you can find people locally.

It also is nice to have the in-person meetup, and if you don't find anything for your local area, you could start one.

You could have the experiment of going to a place like meetup.com and putting together a gathering. It could be really simple, you could meet in some kind of quiet, public café, or you could just have an open call maybe once a month for people who might be working virtually. You may be surprised that there are other people who you don't know.

A couple things that I've found important, one is in really thinking of what is that kind of support or community that you're looking for, is it just other people who do understand a way of working the way that you do so you don't feel crazy if your family members don't understand.

And the other thing can be where you might be looking for people who have very complimentary skills. So you might be really strong technically, but you're not strong in marketing or vice versa. So that's where you might wanna start to look for people that have a very specific skillset in order to help balance what you need to know.

Heidi Hauck:

I love that idea. Yeah, definitely. You know, one of my business role models, she's a woman that I worked for for years, she had a saying, she always said, "We're complementary, we're not competition."

Pamela Slim:

Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Heidi Hauck:

And that really struck me because the traditional business view is like, "everybody else is the competition," you know? And "you have to stomp the competition." It's such an aggressive, sort of destructive attitude and I feel like it increases that sense of isolation and you know, not being able to connect with other individuals in really a genuine way.

I love this idea of building a network of peers and friends and associates, and viewing them ... you know, you talk a lot about ecosystems. I love this view of, who are the people that I can have in my ecosystem who, you know, we can complement one another?

Pamela Slim:

Yeah. I believe it so strongly, and it is a point of view.

To me, it's one of those good design parameters as I think about, right? Kind of how it is we look at who it is we want to be connecting with in an ecosystem, and that's really who might be attracted to us as potential clients and also who would be viewed as peers.



Pamela Slim:

For me it is, from a values perspective I really do think there is more than enough space and room for everybody.

If I find that there is somebody who's really fantastic who's also a business coach, right? You and I are, theoretically we could be arch competitors. Right? I would never want to help you and you would never want to help me because we might say, oh my gosh, what if somebody wants to hire a business coach and they could essentially hire either one of us.

The way that I tend to view it is I want the people who are meant to work with you, to work with you. If somebody talks to both of us and they find that they're much more drawn to your background and your perspective and your expertise, I want them to be very well served, so I would love for them to get helped working for you. I want you to be very well compensated for the work that you do, right?

Because I know that it will go the other way, there could be somebody who you talk to, who talks to me who you find that same thing.

So that's I think, a very important part of it is like ... It doesn't mean we don't feel sometimes, you don't feel that little stab in your heart where you see somebody else who's a friend, who's just doing a great job and getting a whole bunch of clients.

We can hold both those things. We can hold wanting each one of us to be very well employed and also wanting to be very rigorous and really go after the kind of business that we want, and to be the very best that we can be within our area.

But I think it forces us to really focus on the things we know we can be really great at, and then where we're not as strong, to gladly refer people elsewhere.

Heidi Hauck:

Right. Absolutely. Absolutely, I love that.

You know, it's funny because what strikes me about that attitude of, sort of almost like a jealous grabbiness of like, "Well I want that coach. I can't share Pam with anybody because somebody might hire her instead of me!" You know? It's like, there's more than one client out there, right?

Pamela Slim:

Yes.

Heidi Hauck:

There's way more clients than even just the two of us could ever possibly solve. By connecting ... you know, when I connect with you I'm actually growing my network, right?

Because I can refer people your way, you can refer people my way. It doesn't matter that we, on the surface level do the same thing, when you dig down into how we do it and the perspectives that we bring to it... I know that we have very similar values, but we probably don't have exactly the same values, you know.

So all of these things make us unique so there's no reason for us to compete with one another. You know?



Pamela Slim:

Yeah. And, or, like we can compete with each other. I mean, we are in the market right? We are alternatives for people who it is we want to serve.

But it's more a choice about how it is that we really connect with that emotionally, right? To where it's like, oh my gosh ... As a core kind of reference point in the way that I think about ecosystems is that there can be the view that we, either myself or you, Heidi, are at the center of our communities, and that's often the way, when we talk about building community, it's really about, essentially attracting people to us that would be maybe better said as like fans, or prospects, or potential customers, where we're really trying to draw everybody to us.

That is a traditional way that we can look at it, is there's the Empire of Heidi, traditionally right? Where you build yourself up as you want everybody to be attracted to you and therefore anybody who's not attracted to you, it can feel really yucky.

As opposed to the way that I view ecosystems, which is where we could look at, in the center of an ecosystem would be somebody who both of us really wants to succeed and be successful.

Somebody who's driven by a strong sense of purpose and values, somebody who sees success as not only individual success and their own family's well being, but also the well being of the community. People who might have more of a creative orientation to solving bigger problems in the world through their business. These are examples probably of people that we share, that we would love to help.

They are really the people who are in the center of the ecosystem. So based on what it is that they need or they want, that's where by definition there are all kinds of resources that they need to have around them.

At one point they may need me, another point they may need you. The way that we want to be measuring it, which to me feels much more emotionally freeing, is what we want, is we want massive success for that person.

Heidi Hauck:

Yes.

Pamela Slim:

So if they're happy, if they feel totally well taken care of, if they solve their problems, if they end up growing their business and being wildly successful, that's something we can both share joy about. So to me it's another ... I realize it's a bit of a metaphorical way of viewing things, but to me it does have an emotional component that really ends up making it so that you really are designing your business with that customer in the center.

That's what it is that we're designing for, not so much just, "Hey I wanted that person and now you got that person."

Heidi Hauck:

Right, yeah. I can't remember exactly where I heard it, but somebody recently, I heard them refer to, we use the hero's journey as sort of a metaphor for a lot of things in life.



Heidi Hauck: And we tend to think, especially when we're building a business, we tend to think of ourselves as the hero. And the way that they put it is that no, actually your customer is the hero, you are the guide that shows up to call them to the journey.

Pamela Slim: Yes.

Heidi Hauck: You know? Yeah, it's that same concept of sort of taking yourself out of the limelight and centering the client, the customer.

Which personally, as an introvert, I love that idea. I'm like, "Yay! I don't have to be in the limelight."

Pamela Slim: And even as an extrovert I love that idea because it's very freeing, right?

It's not so much where you have to feel like everything is about you and a cult of personality. You know, some people love that, we're all wired very differently. So it is a point of view, it's a perspective.

But for me it brings the joy and the problem solving always to think about who it is that I'm serving. That's always gonna be, for me, a better point of view that drives more innovation, rather than thinking, "How can I be more attractive for people to be wanting to hang out with me?" It gets very tiring that way.

Heidi Hauck: You know it's interesting. Let's see, I think it was this last summer-ish, or maybe it was fall, I can't keep track of time anymore, I participated in Desiree Adaway's master mind, and you were actually a guest expert on one of the calls.

It was something that you said that struck me so profoundly, and it was like ... it was this huge weight off my shoulders. And that was, you were talking about how you don't have to be the expert in everything right?

That to me, that's the magic of the ecosystem view, is instead of having to be the know-all, end-all, be-all expert on a pedestal that everybody looks to me for all of the answers, I can be an expert in my area of expertise but I can also say, "I'm not an expert in that, here's this other person who can help you with that."

It was just this huge relief to me to kind of in a way get permission to not know everything.

Pamela Slim: Yes! Because it's a fallacy, how in the world can we know everything? Especially in business. I've been self-employed for 22 years, the majority now, much longer than I ever was employed as an employee, and the last 13 years or so, within startup and entrepreneurship, and I tell you, every day, week, year that goes by, there is more new stuff.

Certainly certain things I can feel I've been around, I've had experience and it feels good, and being able to share a perspective and because the world's changing, markets change,





Pamela Slim: tools change, business changes, approaches change, that there always is something new to learn.

I also am very influenced by a strengths based approach to work. In all ways, I love the positive psychology, like the via character strengths where you really think about what are these elements that more make up your values, so that you're doing work that allows you to bring those kinds of values.

I know one of my top five values, I'm looking at it on the wall because I have them listed, two, one is humanity and one is love. One's actually justice.

Heidi Hauck: Nice.

Pamela Slim: So these are elements of things that are so important to me. This can be a component of how I choose to do the work, and then there can be other components to the work that I do.

I know that I love focusing on roots and purpose, I love doing marketing and things involving story, I love teaching people how to build communities.

I'm probably not the person to do the detailed Facebook ad structure. You know, based on changing algorithms for knowing exactly how it is that somebody could do that. I would rather have somebody who focuses on that area.

Heidi Hauck: Definitely.

Pamela Slim: For each of us, it becomes again more how can we be relentlessly helpful, which is our friend Tim Grahl's definition of what marketing is.

How can we be relentlessly helpful with getting answers for the people who we most want to serve.

I think that does make us somebody who is a trusted adviser, where we say this is my jam and I can totally help you on this, then let's go to this person in order to solve this problem. I feel like that's something that can keep you connected with your clients and they appreciate, because then it's not just flinging them out there in the world where they're trying to figure out who can be somebody who can help.

Because part of our jobs as community builders is to really be aware of who are other people who have very specific expertise, who share values, who could be helping the people who we want to serve.

Heidi Hauck: That's beautiful. I love that. I'd love to hear more about, because you mentioned three of your top five values. I know that you do weave them into everything that you do, I'd love to hear, how have you woven them into your work so that they are kind of a daily part of what you're doing?



Pamela Slim: I feel like it is a practice, making sure that ... first of all I look at creating more decision criteria for the type of work that I want to be doing that involves things that really are top values and priorities for me. What I've learned, sometimes the hard way, sometimes over long period of time.

Heidi Hauck: **As one does!**

Pamela Slim: And then choosing to do anyway, as one does, that when I really respect that. For example, I look at a couple other ones, so there's wisdom, transcendence, humor, appreciation of beauty ... again, these are from the VIA Character Strengths, which is a free assessment online for anybody who wants to check it out.

So where I look at that, as an example I can know that when I'm doing work that has no connection whatsoever with humanity, with justice, where we're just making money for money's sake, not putting any value on the human side of the experience, not including everybody within a community in the lens of how it is we look at solving problems.

I know that if I choose to do that work, even if it's really well paying, in the end it's gonna start to feel really unsatisfying. In a very deep way, is what I've learned.

Sometimes, it's like, why is this so difficult? Why am I struggling so much? But it's often because it's the absence of those core values.

On the positive side, when I am able to say, which I do frequently, you know, to clients and friends I've known a long time, we can finish a call and I can say, "Love you, Heidi," and I can mean it.

And it's not weird, I actually do love you and it's okay to say that. In the world of small business and entrepreneurship you can have respectful relationships that include deep gratitude and affection for each other, where you can communicate in a way of not trying to hide the emotional side of the journey.

That's something I've found that's really important to me.

It's really a matter of reminding myself what is important, and then building that into decision criteria as I have different opportunities, of saying what's really important to me, right?

As I think of work that I've done, because I wrote Escape from Cubicle Nation sometimes people assume that I'm totally anti-corporate and I'm actually not. I really enjoyed my time that I was in corporate, I really did. I met so many neat people and there were some people for which that particular work mode is something that really works for them. They enjoy it, and it works for their family.

I say rock on. It's not about vilifying a particular work mode.

Heidi Hauck: **Right.**



Pamela Slim: But I have learned that when I am doing work with companies, it is important to be linking and making sure that some of the partners that I work with have a small business focus, for example, right? They're companies that actually serve the small business market so that we share that perspective of having small business customers.

Heidi Hauck: **Awesome.**

Pamela Slim: Then it's also the individual people I might choose to work with on a project, are those where we are able to have that human connection, right?

Where it's not just transactional, where I don't just kind of receive the project and then give it back, but that we're able to really have great dialogue, or we're able to have great conversations and use humor and all these other things that are important.

So it's recognizing that we can do a lot of different kinds of work. That's been really interesting to me, especially in the last 18 months or so that I've been here in person, in downtown Mesa, of having a brick and mortar space, is actually recognizing how many different kinds of partners I wouldn't necessarily have thought of because I was just thinking specifically, I love freedom, flexibility, you know, small business owners.

Now I'm starting to do work sometimes with the local city, and I facilitated the strategic planning meeting for the Mayor and the City Council. I didn't really see that happening, but it was super fun. It was really cool and it was a great use of my skills.

So these are ways that we can ... You look for the values being present as opposed to necessarily being super rigorous about like, "I will never do this kind of work." Right?

Heidi Hauck: **Right.**

Pamela Slim: Now sometimes our assessments are not really accurate about what environments allow us to do work that we really want to do.

Heidi Hauck: **Definitely! Definitely, I love that.**

You know, it's interesting that you bring up that point because for years I've talked about how "my accidental bookkeeping business was just a horrible fit for me, and I hated doing bookkeeping. The only possible response once I finally acknowledged that I hated doing bookkeeping was to just burn it to the ground and start from scratch."

In recent years I've come to recognize that I don't actually hate bookkeeping. It's not horrible enough to really hate.

Now that I've gotten to know myself better, and my values and how I work best, you know I looked at it and I've been like, I could totally build a rocking bookkeeping business that was aligned with my values, that allowed me to work the way that I work best.



Heidi Hauck: You know, the problem was not the bookkeeping business, the problem was that I was trying to do it in a way that didn't work for me.

Pamela Slim: Yeah.

Heidi Hauck: I think that, I love that you're doing this work that in ... sort of like, from the surface perspective is so outside your zone, you know, working with the City Council and doing this stuff that you never would have thought you would do, but it just happens to be beautifully aligned with your skills and your values, so you're bringing this massive benefit ... I mean, I don't know the details, but I know you, so I know you're bringing benefit into this realm that if you just set these very narrow definitions for yourself you would never have experienced that and they would not have experienced you.

Pamela Slim: One of the takeaways as I think about the application of it, is to look more... in Body of Work I called it your ingredients, you know, the specific set of skills and experience you have that include also what's important to you, your values, and realize that there are many different ways that you can be putting those recipes together.

That's the part as we were saying in the top of the call, which is, which can give us more opportunity than maybe we realize is there, because we're used to looking at it ... The other day I was coaching a client and I came up with a metaphor or like, the verb doesn't have to become a noun.

Heidi Hauck: Right.

Pamela Slim: So just because you might do bookkeeping doesn't mean that all of a sudden, now you are a bookkeeper.

Heidi Hauck: Right.

Pamela Slim: That's just one of the skills, and the ingredients that you have that can be used in a really creative way as a business coach.

The fact that you understand financials so well, that you understand the emotional journey that people go through stressing about their financials, especially for those folks in creative businesses is something to me that's a huge asset that you bring to that work that you do. Right?

That's a way you can see it as really being an opportunity as a building block.

Heidi Hauck: Oh definitely. You know, one of the lessons that I have especially taken from the last five years since I started having children, that just kinda like, everything went topsy turvy, is learning how to take all of my experiences, not just my career experiences but all of my experiences and really tie them into what I do. Not allowing the noun to define my life. Not just becoming a verb, but like, defining everything about my life.

Pamela Slim: Yeah.



- Heidi Hauck: I think that that's such a powerful perspective to recognize.
- Especially, one of the things I've been talking a lot with people lately is imposter syndrome. You know, which we all feel like we're the only one feeling it, and everybody is feeling it.
- Pamela Slim: Yes.
- Heidi Hauck: This feeling of like, "who am I? I'm not qualified enough, I don't have the degrees." You know, whatever. And recognizing that your entire life experience counts, you know? It's not just that one thing, it's everything, it's who you are. If you allow yourself to bring it all to the table then it all counts.
- Pamela Slim: Yes, I heartily agree. I heartily agree.
- Heidi Hauck: Beautiful. So there's one more thing that I kind of want to bring up. You mentioned finances and I know that this is an issue for a lot of my audience is this feeling of having to choose between "do I make a living or do I make a difference?"
- We kind of have this story in our society that good work, world changing work, you volunteer to do that kind of work, or you join a non-profit and live on Ramen.
- I know that you are someone who, you've had ups and downs, you've had challenges, but you also have been successfully self-employed for 22 years doing work that has a definite positive impact on the world.
- I'd love to hear your take on the [making a] living versus difference.
- Pamela Slim: It's a very significant part of the journey that I'm on.
- I agree with you that I think for a lot of years, coming from the background that I did, of really looking at grassroots economic development. I was a volunteer executive director for ten years in San Francisco for an Afro-Brazilian martial art group in Capoeira.
- So I kind of understood that volunteer perspective and community perspective and yet, looking at ... there's kind of three main buckets of it.
- One of them is, is when we specifically start to talk about marketing your business and choosing specific marketing tactics, we have a range from totally connected, open, honest, to abhorrent, manipulative, yucky things that feel so gross to experience on the consumer side, and also to think about implementing on the business side.
- So from a marketing tactics perspective, as we look at that good we want to drive through our work, whatever is that vision of what we want, where I'm really wanting to focus energy on building the capacity of small business owners so that they feel better, stronger, more capable. Also providing insight for people who serve small business owners, to make sure that we're providing resources that are actually useful, that are inclusive of people from all different backgrounds and experiences, et cetera.



Pamela Slim:

There's a side to really focusing on that, to make sure that the work we're doing is really meaningful, and then the way we're marketing to those folks is a way that is not exploiting vulnerabilities, is not preying on how people might feel like they're looking for a magic bullet and an answer.

You know, that is, as I know you know well, probably everybody that's listening or watching knows, that is challenging. It's challenging because often, our mutual friend Charlie Gilkey who I ran retreats with for a long time, who's at Productive Flourishing, we would often talk about what it is that people want and what it is that they need.

This is our assessments, right, as like business coaches, in that what do people want, especially where they don't have any money in their bank account, is they want money as quickly as possible. They might want those six figures in two months or something.

So when you might market that, like "follow my formula and you're going to be making that money immediately," that is addressing what it is that people want.

What we might know as business coaches that they actually need would be sometimes reevaluating what their business actually is, right? Building certain skills and capabilities, or taking teeny tiny, seemingly inconsequential custom steps into building a business as opposed to having a blueprint formula that they just follow.

The challenge there that goes to values and ethics is that we often see people that have a lot of financial success that are marketing towards the wants, right?

It's like, I say it understanding sometimes that it can be challenging. What if you know that you're going to be delivering what it is that people need but, right? You say a little bit about what they want, like, where is that line?

My friend Greg Hartle calls it a hypocrisy line, where's that line where you start to bump up against it and you're like, "you know what, this is just gross, I'm actually exploiting people's insecurities."

So there's the whole "how it is that you market in that arena," which can be challenging.

The other piece of it which is really business model, and that's something that I've been really jamming out, and investing in since I've been here the last couple of years, I have chosen specifically to not charge anybody, like I host a whole bunch of ongoing events that are here.

For the most part - you know, sometimes organizations have a little bit of a budget, which is appreciated - but for the most part for groups that are meeting here, especially for a lot of entrepreneurs of color who we really want to put a priority on here, there's no charge to them.

The way that I've been supporting it is just through my own business.



Heidi Hauck: Right.

Pamela Slim: That is, it's challenging, right? It's challenging to do that over time.

The way my husband and I are right now, within our partnership, is he's now a stay at home dad, which is amazing. He does a little bit of work, healing work and retreats and so forth, he's a Navajo healer.

But for the most part, I'm the main income earner, right? So there's kind of this investment in doing something to really sow the ground for what now is moving into a more sustainable business model, right?

That's part of where I look at how we can create something that does provide deep, social good, and at the same time has sustainability built into it.

It's taken a lot of experimentation to get to that place.

That's where I feel like I've kind of turned a corner in looking at how I might leverage relationships that I have with cloud software companies that serve the small business market, getting some sponsorships from them in order to be hiring great creative staff here, having now kind of a Patreon stream where we can have a very accessible stream of revenue coming in for individuals that are able to access resources at a really reasonable amount.

So coming up with that business model is one that can be really challenging. Otherwise you can want to be serving maybe folks who don't have the kind of income that could afford huge, multi thousands of dollars worth of offerings.

But if you don't have a business model that accounts for other ways that you'll be bringing that money in, that's where you're constantly gonna be in that, right? In that experience of kind of lacking.

Then I guess the last piece of it really does go a lot to ... I don't know what to call it. I think it's more kind of the mindset, or the discipline, kind of the approach you take.

I know for many years I was kind of the classic, "don't fence me in" creative person. One of the reasons I love doing what I'm doing is just so I can be creative, I'm a QuickStart, if anybody's ever taken the Kolbe so I can make things happen very quickly.

But part of what I've really started to settle into with help from my coach, who is Mark Otto, who was a client for a long time and now has kind of been coaching me into this next stage of growth-

Heidi Hauck: I love that.

Pamela Slim: ... is for the vision that I have, it does require me to really look differently at what it is that I'm doing, and have a certain consistency when I choose, okay, this is the model that I'm



Pamela Slim: looking for, I know exactly why I'm doing it, I think it's gonna drive some of the most innovative, inclusive kind of approaches to small business capacity building that we've ever seen, I'm so excited about it.

And it means that every single day I have to show up, and I need to be doing seeding and reaching out, and building new relationships with people.

So on the personal behavior side, it can be challenging.

Sometimes it means going through a period of time where income is more tight. Sometimes you could look at somebody else and be like, "I want that! I want it all to just flow."

But that's the balance, where you're like, is it worth it in the long run? And really importantly in the center, am I actually building a business model that has that potential to be whole, to allow me to provide the services that I want but also really take care of myself and my family the way that I need to?

Heidi Hauck: That's awesome. I love that. And I love that you have such a firm vision. You have this vision of what it is that you're trying to build that it sounds like has really kind of kept you on the path, you know, where it'd be easy to just be like, "This is too much work, this is too hard, it's taking too long, I'm not making enough money. Look at everybody over there is doing so much more. I want to be over there, I don't want to be over here."

But you have this vision, and the vision is pulling you forward.

And you know, who knows, those people over there making more money, three years from now they could realize they're miserable and they hate it, they're not doing anything meaningful. You never know what the people over there, what their real situation is.

Pamela Slim: Yeah.

Heidi Hauck: So it is just about time to wrap it up, but before we go I would love to have you share, for people who are interested in connecting with this amazing thing that you're building with K'é, it's incredibly innovative, I know that you're going to be sharing a lot of very useful tools and information and support. So what would be the best way for people to sort of connect with that?

Pamela Slim: You can always find me [pamelaslim.com](http://pamelaslim.com) is my main site. I have specific information on the site, [pamelaslim.com/ke](http://pamelaslim.com/ke), which is K'é, that's a Navajo word that means system of kinship and connection.

On that site, [pamelaslim.com/ke](http://pamelaslim.com/ke), is background about the project, kind of what it is that we're building here in the small business learning lab. We did just launch Patreon, which if anybody doesn't know, it's such an exciting, cool example of a platform that really is initially designed for creative people, so artists and musicians and so forth who want to be kind of supported by individual patrons.





Pamela Slim:

But the way that we're looking at it here at the learning lab is where people can choose to participate at hopefully very accessible levels and this way we'll be able to be creating some ongoing group master classes and creating really useful information sets, and providing tools and templates and things that can help you to grow your business while also knowing that you're part of this broader community.

What it allows us to do, as I've been building this I realize that it's hard sometimes to stay ... part of what we're building is something that hasn't really been built before, so part of what it is that we're trying to create is to have the space to really be reaching out and building relationships with our community partners, making sure that we can literally help somebody who just walks in the door.

A young man just walked in the door the other day, and he's like, "I want to open a dance studio." You know, this super young kid. And I was like, "Okay!"

I want to be able to say yes to those kinds of things and not always worry about if you can pay the regular coaching fees.

So that's another way, if people want to get involved, I wanna see it as something that's a whole relationship, so that you get support and resources as a small business owner, but I really also want people to know, who support that, that you're also supporting us being able to learn about how it is that we can have this new model.

Hopefully with the idea to be sharing what it is that we're doing here on Main Street in Mesa with a lot of other communities that might want to look at a different way in which we can really be providing very inclusive types of small business resources.

Heidi Hauck:

That's awesome! That's awesome, yeah. I did look at the Patreon sign up earlier today, and I believe at the \$25 level people get access to a monthly group coaching call? Am I remembering?

Pamela Slim:

That's right!

Heidi Hauck:

I mean, that's an amazing deal. I will say, for anyone listening, I have worked with Pam, I consider her my business mom. She is one of my go to coaches and so \$25 a month to get coached by her is a mind blowingly good deal. And you're supporting a good cause. So, you know, win win.

Pamela Slim:

That's awesome.

Heidi Hauck:

Thank you so much Pam. I really enjoy having you here with me.

Pamela Slim:

Thanks for having me too!