

# How to Develop Genuine Connections When Networking

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, feel, person, talking, professional, pandemic, connection, thinking, life, work, important, fun, learn, conversation, environment, co worker, email, year, super, happy

## SPEAKERS

Jessica Guzik, Halie Morris

- H** Halie Morris 00:01  
Welcome back for season two of everyday business solutions. My name is Hayley Morris. I'm your podcast coordinator and hosts. Our podcast aims to bring the expertise of business professionals straight to your ears. And for this season, we're going to be talking about important connections and how you can utilize them to elevate your career to the next level. If that's something that you're interested in, just keep listening. Hi, everyone. Welcome back. My name is Hayley. And today I have with me Jessica zyk. So, Jessica, you've been on our show before? actually. Yeah, back in. When did we record it was probably like August or September. It's been a while.
- J** Jessica Guzik 00:48  
It has been a while, I think was it before after the pandemic? started?
- H** Halie Morris 00:54  
It was definitely after cuz I know, I started my research and summer. And I think you were one of the first people I recorded with and we met through Facebook. Oh, wow. Yeah, it and we launched in September, we launched I want to say you're one of our first episodes, too.

J Jessica Guzik 01:11  
Oh, that's exciting. Oh, it was in the summer. I think it was in August. Yeah,

H Halie Morris 01:15  
that sounds right. I think that's when I did a bulk of my earlier recording. And so you're probably right in there. Which was exciting. And I, I loved our earlier episode. And it was fun. Because I remember walking away from the conversation and being like, I wanted to keep talking, which is a great feeling. As soon as we recorded it with you, I was talking with my boss, and we're like, we wish we'd gotten into this or that or whatever. And we're like, okay, she has to come back on. So that's when you know, you have a good guest and the fact that we started that way. It was like, Oh,

J Jessica Guzik 01:47  
I'm blushing. Not really. But

H Halie Morris 01:51  
I'm always flushing. It's like my default. So I'm just pink person. But um, no, it's great to come full circle and actually get to see that conversation realized and get to have you back on the show. And actually doing a deeper dive into networking, which is what we wanted to talk about. With networking itself. It's such a big, giant, scary thing. And actually, I've been listening to your podcast recently the artist speaking up. And it's something like that. I feel like you're great about touching on and it's that human connection that drives networking, what is what we're really striving for, versus just a business catalog of people, you know? So? Yeah. So today, I mean, breaking it down. What are your views on networking? How do you see it versus like, maybe the typical business card shake hands type approach, which is totally not okay, right now, either, right? Well, I

J Jessica Guzik 02:53  
used to think of it as this horrible, awful dreadful thing that I had to like force myself to do. And I always really associated it with networking events, like you go to this awkward room, and like you are super uncomfortable, you force yourself to talk to people, you don't want to be there and like you get the heck out of there as fast as you can. And I think one of my biggest things that I learned is, it's so much more organic than that. And it's not about like going to an event. I mean, you can if you want to, but it's it's about how you

show up and how you interact with people every day. And it's about the relationships that get cultivated over time, kind of like a garden, like you plant seeds, and they grow. So it's not like a one time thing where like, you go to an event, and all of a sudden your network has expanded. It's like the people that are getting to know you every day are going to become the people that advocate for you and the people that really help you and guide you. And so it's less of like, it's this high pressure thing. And it's more thing, you know, like being mindful day to day of showing up as yourself making connections, making the effort to say, Hi, I'm making the effort to check in on how people are doing and maintain your relationships. It's like those little things that add up over time, just like the same way. Our friendships get built over time, right? It's like one interaction, and another and another, I think of networking in a very similar way.

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Halie Morris 04:15

I think and that's exactly what I was thinking of is like the way you build friendships and the way you connect people throughout like elementary school, middle school, high school, college, all the way throughout your life. It's the same thing. And when I was a little kid, I used to think, Oh, your friends just pop up into your life. And as a kid, I think that's kind of how it happened. But then in high school, I think what I really struggled with was how do you actually foster connections because people were connecting all around me deeply like some of those people I still know today. But some of those people are still like great friends today today as well. And it's never about just saying Hi, how are you? And having the same interest. It's about like that follow through and what you do to maintain that relationship and it's Not the networking, it could be, I guess you could make friends or connect and network with somebody at these conferences and events. But it really isn't about those. It's about the conversations and then what you do after. And it takes a little bit of work.

J

Jessica Guzik 05:18

Absolutely. And I also think one thing that people sometimes don't think about is like, I think it's easy to think of networking as this thing that's different from your job, like, there's your day to day job. And then there's networking. But I actually think it's helpful to think about like, the way that you show up the work you do, the way you collaborate, the way you offered help, all of those things are going to contribute to how people relate to you and what they think about you. So it's not just like this separate thing that like you're going for drinks with your co workers or whatever it might be that you're doing. It's really like who you're being when you're in your professional life. And then that's how people get to know you and feel connected to you. Of course, like there is that inner personal element, but it's like, it's all the time. It's happening all the time, but in a good way.

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Halie Morris 06:05

It's not an on and off thing. And I know there's so much emphasis on creating a balance between work and life and a separation. And people. I know one thing I've noticed, I know some people who have hard stops at the end of their day. And I'm like, man, we could be great friends. But I get turned off with your workday to like because I'm a co worker. When your days over, like, I have no way to contact you or send you the funny things like I saw. What does it right now? Tick Tock. I saw a tic tac, I almost said vine. And I was like, Oh, no, wait. I was never even on Vine. But I saw tic Tock you would like and I couldn't send it to your I saw something on Instagram and I had no way to show it to you. So I have friends who aren't on Instagram, when I see things, I just record it for him. But I don't even have anywhere to send it. And it's sad. And I don't think like sometimes at work or sometimes in your professional things. You can develop connections, devolve into friendships and outside of work, you can still develop those connections to actually tie back in so

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Jessica Guzik 07:09

yeah, and it is those little moments of like, set like, you know, like you're saying, like, I want to send someone The funny thing or something like that. And it's also like a balance, because I feel like when people send you something, but it doesn't feel authentic, you know, like, they're just sending it to you. And you're like, Oh, you know what I mean? So I guess we're gonna talk about authenticity, but it's not. It's not about like the action that you took. It's more like what you were thinking and why you did it. So like, if you genuinely think it's funny and send it to someone, it's like, gonna land better than if you're like, Oh, I like I should send you know, funny things to whoever. I feel like we can feel it. You know, we can sense it.

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Halie Morris 07:50

I have. It's funny, because I have my best friend. We send stuff back, back and forth all the time. And on tik tok, she sends things to me all the time, like, I'll get on my 14 messages, and they're all just tick tock she sent to me. And I was like, I can't possibly watch all these. Like, I came on here to watch tic tocs. But this feels different. Because they're in my message. Yeah. And then you're like, I can't respond to all that's the thing. The same thing is like, now I noticed on iPhones, you can actually respond to a particular message. But I was like, I don't want to do that. For all of them. It seems like we're so when I send something I only will not send more than two. But usually, it's something like you said that relates like it reminded me of them, or it was something that I thought would resonate with them. That's what drives me nuts about this coworker, I was like, you would have genuinely thought this was funny, too. Yeah, it would have made you laugh. Or it was relates to a conversation we just had, and it was, you know, an inside joke during the day.

And I was like, dang it, I missed the golden opportunity.

J

Jessica Guzik 08:56

Yeah, it is those little moments, I think. And the authenticity piece is so huge, because I really think that as humans, we can feel when someone is showing their true selves, like it's not always a conscious thing. But when you're around someone or having a conversation with someone who is being themselves, you just sense it, it makes you more comfortable, you open up to them. So I do think it's so important for people to think about, like, how can I ease into being myself and just showing up as I am without like a mask on or having to pretend and I know a lot of people feel pressure to have to do that in their work environment. But it can be good to like look for little moments or little opportunities to really just be more of yourself because that is what people connect with more than anything else.

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Halie Morris 09:43

Mm hmm. Well, it is an interesting thing. So there's that that balancing act of what is professional what is yourself like, some people say oh, I was I was just being myself when maybe they're doing things that are a little outside of what's acceptable like they get themselves in trouble, or they do something that is maybe making other people uncomfortable, they say, just being myself. But there's also the balance of like not letting this professional like persona or this need to be professional like mask who you are, make you too timid to be authentic. So

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Jessica Guzik 10:20

Oh, absolutely. And I think that we're at a little bit of a turning point where I think like old school, professional culture is like being very rigid, and sort of like everyone is not being themselves. And it feels very formal. And I think we're in a phase where we're coming out of that into a new way of being where people can be themselves. Also, it's more, you know, companies are trying to make environments more inclusive and things like that. But I do think we still have both. So there is that sort of like mask or fakeness, or pressure to be a certain way. And I think we're also like learning, okay, how do we just be ourselves. And honestly, it's so draining, to not be yourself, like one of the things that makes a professional environment draining is like, all day long, your brain is just like making sure that you're saying the right thing, or speaking in the right way, or doing whatever it is you feel pressure to do, and that is exhausting. And when you know when you could truly just show up and be yourself, which I know easier said than done. But everything feels so much easier.

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Halie Morris 11:26

It makes you happy to like or when you're happy, you're able to better project yourself. And I had a conversation with somebody not too long ago about that about when you invest in yourself, and you make sure that you take time for yourself, you can bring more of yourself to like your everyday relationships. So it's like this twofold thing like making yourself happy makes you more of a genuine person in everyday situations. But being able to be genuine, is what helps feed into the rest. It helps you feel and maintain that positive positivity that you brought into it. But there's one thing like, I know this with so much social media, and with so much just connection to people across the globe, like sometimes you touch 1000s of people, they even if you don't mean to like you comment on a viral post, and there's literally 1000s of comments and people are reading through it like crazy. There's always this idea of if you're genuine, you're going to offend people and to not offend people, you have to like kind of close yourself out. And it I don't really like it because of course, you know, yes, if you just blurt out everything as it comes. It's going to be so it can be offensive because I think there's somebody for offended by everything, just like there's somebody for every type of sign that you've seen on the roadway. Those weird like, beware of falling goat signs, like, yes, somebody probably got hit by a falling goat. We know that right? Or like, don't touch the electric fence, it shocks you. Because people touch the electric fence. Right there. I think there's a person to be offended by everything, just like there's a sign. There's a person for every sign that exists. But also, like, you don't have to just blurt things out as they come. I think that being genuine isn't always just immediately saying what's on your head. It's sometimes just the extra thought is there so that you can consider how, yes, you want to come across. But also, what balance of yourself you're putting out. Does that make sense? Like? Because this is something I struggle with right now when it comes to being authentic? Of course, having a filter is like okay, well, am I filtering myself as a whole? Or? And I've tried to find that balance of just actually thinking through what I'm going to say being intentional, and making sure I'm not actually like, doling my personality just to keep from offending people.

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Jessica Guzik 14:03

Hmm. Yeah, I mean, I do think being mindful of like, what we're saying and like thinking about, okay, like, what sort of privilege do I have? And how might I need to be really aware so that I don't say something that's harmful? I totally agree with that. I think though, like, a lot of times what I think about is, when we're not being genuine at work, so I think sometimes we're leaving some of our best, you know, most compassionate qualities like, you know, leaving those qualities behind because so many of us are like, so fun and so caring and so loving towards our personal circles, and there's like something that we leave behind in a professional environment. And I think it's, that's part of our authenticity that is actually so valuable for people to make people feel seen and to help people feel

comfortable, you know, especially if someone like leads a team or has A lot of people under them or like runs a company or something like that, when they bring that part of themselves, then it creates this whole culture of like, Oh, we all care about each other. So I think I totally see what you're saying. And then there's the other side of the coin, which is just like all of our really great qualities that we think for some reason, are qualities that should like stay in our personal lives.

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Halie Morris 15:23

Yeah, there, there's almost like a, a caricature person you create sometimes for your office. And it said, because, yeah, you you are genuinely leaving connections. On the table, you just say, you know, that's one thing we said in our negotiations class, if you don't ask the question, if you don't put it out there, you don't mention something that you're just leaving opportunity on the table, in this case, the chance to connect to somebody, whether it's going to be more of a professional connection, when you're using more of your professional life, or whether it is going to be a great friend that you take, and it maybe you guys go kayaking on the weekends, or grab wine on a Saturday night, you know, something like that. And if we're coming to work with a mask on it, it seems like you are just kind of, well, one work is what like 80% of our waking life these days. So not being yourself, so much of your waking life. And then you might be just leaving, you know, a lot of chance for your own happiness and your own chance to connect to people on the table. And I genuinely think that human connection is one of the driving forces of happiness that people feed off of that. So

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Jessica Guzik 16:39

yeah, I totally agree. It's interesting, because like work is very performance oriented. And like, we're there to get something done versus like, sometimes when we're in our personal lives, we're around people just for the joy of being around people. And it's like, it's almost like there's this belief that if we're there to get something done, we have to be a bit more guarded or a bit more serious or a bit more harsh. And I love to test that belief of like, well, what if we don't like what if that's not true? What if we can get a lot done and be the best at what we do? And like, have a lot of fun and be really kind to each other. And I think that will help get more done. So I just think like, with each person being themselves a little more like having a little more joy like that can have a big ripple effect and give other people permission to just, you know, be themselves more enjoy things more. And it not have to be like this heavy thing that I think sometimes professional environments, they can feel really heavy.

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Halie Morris 17:40

Yeah, I agree. And I think about like, sometimes you hear people, especially people in leadership positions, and just because their voices tend to carry a little further, you hear them talk about like, well, if I just let them do whatever, if I just let them goof off and talk, then they'll be distracting won't get work done. And there's a strong idea that but I think it comes back from kind of how you said, Every, like, we still keep our PR, like our personality and our work separate. And so I think right now, when people are just being themselves, they don't know how to be productive because they've been taught to keep it separate. So automatically, when they when they go to be themselves, they shut off work, because they learned they have to be separate. It's a different mindset. Like we have to retrain ourselves and like the incoming generations that people are already in the workplace that it is okay to come as you to work. Like they can be the same thing.

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Jessica Guzik 18:36

Yeah, well, it's so funny, because what you said made me think about like work in play. And we've totally separated them out. And like, wouldn't it be interesting if it felt a little bit different, and I've seen work environments where some are more playful, and some are more serious and like both get things done is a very different experience.

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Halie Morris 18:57

That's like, okay, where's your employee satisfaction? Where do people want to work? I mean, one of the big companies like the I think it's Quicken Loans in Detroit has like this super fun playful office. And that's actually kind of what their Detroit office is, like known for is all this crazy stuff they have there. And I'm like, you know, I don't think I want to sell insurance but what I want to see what working there is like, yes, that you know, they have people that do more than sell insurance and they're it's a huge company, but I was like laughing because I was like, it's not particularly the industry I want to be I want to want to I want to work with a company like that, you know, and it is like that. You know, you do wonder like we have the the distinction between work and play because we don't want to overwork ourselves. We don't want the work to bleed, but it has the adverse effect and while the fun doesn't bleed either, but the fun is this part of your day and the work is this part of your day. And you know, it's kind of sad when you think about Like, what if we just enjoyed more of what we do every single day?

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Jessica Guzik 20:04

I totally agree. And it has to be embedded in the culture. Because when everyone behaves



in a way of like, we all have each other's back, I got you, I'm here for you, we're gonna get this done together, it's gonna be fun. It's almost like a prisoner's dilemma where like, you don't want to be generous in a prisoner's dilemma, because then someone else takes all the money. And so it's like the same thing where it's like, if everyone's defenses are up, then everyone puts their defenses up. Whereas if everyone's like, no, we're going to be nice and forgiving and productive. And we're gonna just make sure that everyone has what they need. And we also get everything done, then like everyone feels permission to do that. It's it's just so interesting how cultures like they replicate themselves over and over.

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Halie Morris 20:50

Oh, my gosh, I've done the prisoner's dilemma thing. We did it for a negotiation class. So by not, isn't it? Isn't it true? Like you never. And I remember, I had to be like part because we did it in two different groups. Like it wasn't individuals. So you're working with your group and somebody always that like devil's advocate, well, what if they, of course, it was our groups who screwed up first and fed? Well, we're gonna like, take from them this time, like, Ah, no, and they do it up. And I was like, Oh, my gosh, and I was like, next time, they're gonna bite bite us. I was like, and you're gonna let them do it, because then we're going to come back and negotiate with them again. And we won't put you on the, on the silver platter over here and let them know what happened. They're like, Oh, and I was like, yeah, and they're like, but they get more money. And I was like, because of the way it was weighted are putting their next particular turn if they took it, and we kind of like, stood back, then they got more money. I was like, Well, you know what we don't go. So now we got to. But it was very interesting to watch, we still were one of because we did it with three different groups, three different larger groups of the two, two groups working on it. And so ours was one of the two groups that came away stronger, as a whole. It was just very interesting to watch how people did because there's always the people in groups. And sometimes it's not just one person. Sometimes it's like the whole group, or there's like three people or whatever, that say, What if we just like we keep giving or we just, you know, why? What is the whole, I can't even remember how the whole thing went. But it was so true. It was funny to watch. And it was one of those very human things that we do in every day life. So I was

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Jessica Guzik 22:37

gonna say, we can't escape our humaneness. It is present all of the time.

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Halie Morris 22:43

Well, and I was talking to my brother about this, because he was struggling with some

stuff. And he's like, Well, what do I do, and I was like, well, you have to choose to be happy, you have to reprogram yourself to be happy, and focus on things that make you happier. So right now you're focused on negative, so you're missing all the stuff that could make you smile in a day. I was like, and it's really weird. And like, for me, sometimes I know, if I'm real funk, I have to go do something that just brings me really, really, really, really basic joy, like it just like going on a walk, just the act of breathing and being present in nature is really grounding for me. So I like to do that. Or if I like to sit down and do some embroidery, because it really sucks in my attention. It makes me feel relax, it calms my very hyperactive mind. I was like, you just have to find those things. I was like, I'm teaching a six year old right now that we do deep breaths. We do 3d bras, we do them for five, count and five count out. And like, she's gotten to the point now where if we're being very emotional, she'll be like, Can we do deep breath? I was like, of course, we'll stop everything. Anytime you ask for it, we'll do it. Sometimes I have to prompt her. And when I have to prompt her, she's a little more resistant this time. She likes to come to it on our own. But like, it can be chaotic. Life is chaotic and things but sometimes just reprogramming how we look at things like our brain, it gets conditioned through our experiences to do things. So like our brain get, we conditioned ourselves to associate work with a certain type of attitude and a certain type of mass that we have to wear and vice versa. But we can like untrained ourselves, it takes time. And it takes consciously altering our mindset. But like you can get there you can enjoy coming to work, you can like talking to your co workers and still get stuff done. Oh my

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Jessica Guzik 24:37

gosh. And that's like where things need to go. That's where people are going to start feeling so much more happy and so much less drained by it. Like, it's so possible and so I just I want it for everyone so badly because there's no downside to it.

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Halie Morris 24:53

There's not it's like the crazy thing like I always feel rewarded when, like my coworkers younger she's just starting college. And she'll be so uncomfortable with something, she'll be like, Well, how do you do this, I was like, you just do it, you just got to go for it. It's like with work, you just got to, you know, you and I were talking about pushing ourselves outside our comfort zones earlier. And that you and I like to challenge ourselves. And it's a really about doing that, like, challenge yourself in the workplace, to be more personal or be more yourself. It brings a whole different attitude. I know there are days, I've come in, and I've been more guarded a little more down. And I'll put on a professional ask where I'm perfectly courteous, but I just kind of don't want to be mentally present that day, I just want to get the work done and get out. And my one coworker without fail will always ask

what's going on, because he's really bubbly. And there's a certain kind of energy that I can bring that my professional persona doesn't know exist.

**J** Jessica Guzik 25:55

Yeah. And it's like, it's not that we have to be like, so happy and in a good mood all of the time. It's just more like, making that effort when you notice that you can be more present or be more yourself, like even sometimes the way that people write emails, you would never say those words like that, like some of the emails that that I get. I'm just like, this is the weirdest sentence. And I have started just writing emails, like how I speak and it feels so much better. And it's more well received by the other person, because it's not it doesn't feel so hard coral.

**H** Halie Morris 26:33

I was just talking to somebody about this, too. I feel like I've had so many good conversations recently. But like, Oh, it was an it actually. Instagram thread underneath the comments somebody was talking about. The I call it the doubt language of like, when you speak and when you write, and I think women in particular are particularly prone to this is that I know those. So those are, you know, or I think are those doubt language that isn't necessary in a sentence, and you got to see, you see, a lot of guys don't even include it. They're just taught that certain kind of competence just to say it, and be done with it. And not in a rude way. Like, it's just how you would want to say it. And so I always felt proud that in email, I could draft up the super professional looking email. And I've drafted so many of those and never got a response outside of just like, simple to the point, here's me, here's what we're doing right now. What are you interested in, like these kinds of things, having these conversations, and they get so many more responses, then, when I am trying to write up this perfect, you know, leaving the door open for doubt, or doing things that is kind of trying to intentionally put the ball in their court, because I'm uncomfortable trying to leave that conversation or something. And I just instead treat it as a conversation. And I've got something of value. And here I am and being more upfront and genuine, because I'm confident in what I'm doing. I know what value there is, and when I'm doing so if I'm showing that, then it's much more better received.

**J** Jessica Guzik 28:16

Yeah, it's funny, there's like a whole world out there of like, email mine drama, like, right. This is not something that I really knew about until I worked with people on this and talked with people who listen to my podcast have like, drafting emails, but then like, not like being too scared to hit send, or like, you know, scheduling it, or writing it and sending it at

a different time. Like people really do have, like fears around this, like it can feel scary depending on who you're writing to, and what you're writing about. And so I also want to acknowledge that too, that that's normal. There's nothing wrong with that it does not get talked about that much

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Halie Morris 28:52

at all I am Yeah, I do it and text messages to I will like somebody will say something and at first we'll just pick what do I say? Like, I'm trying to think of like, their response before I even think of my response. And it's so weird because there's so much around it. And I remember back in college, where I was in an academic charity, we'd go out and we'd have a social so we'd all be at the house and having drinks and having fun and everything. And I would remember all 50 things I did not do so I would steal somebody's computer get my homework done. And I very carefully knew Haley you've had a couple of drinks of wine or whatever tonight I would draft up my emails and wait for server me to go back and look at and so for me was always man like, Oh, those are good. How'd you do that? I was uninhibited. I was just myself. I didn't think about I was just thinking about getting it done. I need to reach out to this person. What did I need to tell them what needs to be in the email not trying to be flowery or structured as you know, particularly so it came across? You know, I stopped overthinking it and I just crafted an email and you know, me I've read a lot of things so I feel like my email my writing can come And be formal anyways on its own, because that's just the tone I carry and like the written world. But it was so much more. I don't even know, it was just me in an email, and it was, it was cool to see, I did that so much, I learned that I was actually rather good at that. So sometimes, like if I was tired, or I knew I was just kind of like, I knew I had my guard down, I would draft up stuff like emails I need to send that I would catch up on all my messages. Because I knew that at that point, I wasn't doing whatever funky stuff I was doing during the day. So as usually, like when I am when I'm tired, and I'm watching ghost hunters, or whatever I watch.

J

Jessica Guzik 30:42

Yeah, that made me think of also how there's just sort of like an overthinking, I think that happens of like, did I use the right words? Or it can also happen with like, should this be a meeting or an email? Should I reach out to this person? Are they too senior? And like with all of this things? Like, I think it's so important to practice, just make a decision, do it make a decision? Do it because for so much of this, like there isn't a right way. Right? Like there are multiple right ways. Yeah. And I think just learning to trust yourself and decide and learning not to dwell on smaller decisions that aren't gonna matter as much. It's a really empowering thing. And I think it's like such a good small step to start building confidence of like, Where can I just be a little more decisive? And like, just do it? And also, like, be

okay, if it turns out I did a quote unquote, wrong, like, it'll be fine, right? Like, I don't have to do every single thing. 100%. Perfect.

H

Halie Morris 31:39

Exactly. And I think this is the one thing that I hated about going to school for business is that you are taught a way to do things, and then everybody's kind of coming out. And you start to see these people start to pull ahead and you're like, Oh, my gosh, why don't I be able to do that. And then it's taken me a little bit. But the realization that like, the reason I wasn't doing what I wanted to do is because I wasn't putting me into it, I was just pulling off that cookie cutter image of what I could be, and just putting that forward. And like I remember even like, so much as what I dressed for an event, I would just pull out almost like this handbook idea of what it could be or should be, and did that. And then I was like, No, I don't have to do that. Like for me, as we were just talking. I am a diva. At heart. I like to be seen, I like giant shoulders. Even though I hate the 80s. Like, volume, sometimes. I actually really do like giant shoulder like, like the sleeves, the really pretty princess ball gown. So use that you see if I could wear that on all my clothes, it would. I like I like drama. I like crazy stuff. I like outlandish stuff, I could wear a ball gown every single day of my life. And I had that kind of money, I would do it in a heartbeat. I like to be seen, and so realizing Okay, how can I take this idea of professional wear when you're showing up to a professional event? And make it me? or How can I if I'm going to a formal event? How can I make a formal event me because I dress like that on a daily basis, right? Not today. I'm dressed like it's Friday with the company shirt on. But um, and then it took me even longer after realizing that it's not just about your style, or like the stuff that you carry with you. It's also about actually how you carry yourself. And then that same thing, like, again, we had this idea of what this professional successful person look like. And I was like, I'm like the opposite. I'm I'm basically an artist who's good at science, math and can learn just about anything I set my mind to that's, that's who I think I am right? I thought I am adaptable if I want to learn something, and I'll learn it. And the house just figured out along the way. But I am like this creative person who a part of my soul is paint stained denim, you know, like, I am not completely put together tailored outfits and stuff like that. And neither is my personality. So

J

Jessica Guzik 34:10

yeah, what you're talking about is so important. And I've been thinking about it a lot, because I'm working on an episode about it, of like what it means to have executive presence. And that what you were talking about, about like the cookie cutter, and I'm like trying to be this thing that I think I need to be. That's like where we lose our power. Because we're going away from who we are. And it's everything that you're saying like

when you are more connected to yourself and it is that authenticity and there is some vulnerability, and you build on top of that. That's when your presence become so powerful. And I think this is what a lot of people miss when they give advice on executive presence and they say like, talk this way and do this. It's not about all of the outer things. It's about learning how to be yourself and Learning how to feel the feelings of like power and certainty and confidence. And once you learn how to feel that, then you know how to convey that from a place that's like real, versus you like trying to sound a certain way. And it just comes off so different to people.

H

Halie Morris 35:18

Well, I noticed kind of coming from the HR side, HR is meant to be the standard that upholds, you know, both the corporate view and the employees views. And I felt so much stress in that position that I just sometimes didn't notice to be a certain way, and to be a certain standard and be perfectly well behaved. And I know my speak to my way of talking is not well behaved. And I know sometimes I like to say quirky, weird things, and that's who I am. And I always felt like I could feel that filter over me, it was like a little suffocating at times. And I remember when this position was created, and when I started transitioning into this role, I was like, Oh, my gosh, I'll get to be myself. But it took so long to start figuring out who that was. And I was like, you know, why couldn't I just be myself before? Yes, like, you can't say certain things in HR, you do have to be careful of like your language for legalities and stuff like that. But you don't have to, like, kill your personality in the process. And I think I was and it was, yeah, it's like I said, suffocating. Like, I was smothering me to try to fill a role. And I was basically making that role open to anyone, like anybody could be that spot, because I wasn't a person sitting in it.

J

Jessica Guzik 36:33

And it's also really hard to perform at your best when you're not being who you are. And it can be subtle, like, it's not necessarily super obvious. But when you relax into yourself, and you feel good, that's when your mind is like the most clear and the most open, and you can really engage in a much deeper way. So I think it's really important, and it really surprises me. I think that companies should be like making that their number one focus. And sometimes I'm just like, how is this not a thing?

H

Halie Morris 37:06

All right, we can lose it, we have lose it in the shuffle of things, because I know we do it at an individual level. But you imagine like a leader who is running the entire company and has all this stuff? And they're like, well, what if they get distracted? Or what if we put all

this effort into helping people be themselves at work? And then it doesn't, you know, there's so many worries. And it's such a shame, because I know like the personalities in our office are extraordinary. And we have so many people supportive of those. And it's cool to see how we evolve. And I'm like, Okay, I'm determined to be at the forefront of pushing pushing people out. And so they're uncomfortable, like uncomfortability zones. So if they start to just kind of break whatever mold they've shifted around themselves, I don't like it, I want to see you Who are you. So

J

Jessica Guzik 37:51

and that's such an important role, because you're giving people permission like that could change someone's entire career, they might not encounter someone like you, right, and then now having worked with you or been around you, they have a completely different perspective.

H

Halie Morris 38:05

I have a co worker, he's our he's been an accounting CFO space for a while, like he's seasoned person. And I'm this, like, little fresh straight off the college champion black newbie. And I love the anti social ones, the people who don't typically, like go out and do a bunch of stuff, I really love to connect to those people, because those people are tend to not be surrounded by large groups, and I get very anxious in large groups. So, um, he's told me, he's like, man, I can't stand you made me. So like you. You always pushed me into my bi space and make me so active and stuff. And I was like, This is who you are as a person. It truly is. You enjoy yourself now. Right? Yeah. So we finally got lunch for the first time in a while we're just hanging out. And I was like, Yes.

J

Jessica Guzik 38:59

Yeah. And sometimes, like people need that, like, we need each other to give one another permission. Like, we don't have to do this growth alone. That's like, why the whole culture thing is so big, right? Because like when we have people around us, supporting us and encouraging us and like helping us come out of our shell, it's just so much easier.

H

Halie Morris 39:19

It is. And it's like you said before, like workplaces are starting to embrace this more, it is starting to be a trend to be ourselves more. And then, of course, we were hit by a pandemic, and a lot of people remote. I know our office, we got high productivity, but we did see people struggle with the fact that they weren't connecting the same way they

were in a physical environment. And it's, I know, it was for a you know, try to be a diva at homes. And I was doing a lot of research back then. So it was really boring. And I was like, nobody can see me when I've been extra. You know?

**J** Jessica Guzik 39:52  
That's really funny.

**H** Halie Morris 39:54  
I know. It's it's really very I love to be in the office just to see and interact with people and sometimes like when I particularly happy I just like to sit and watch people be people like, yesterday, my family was having such a good time. And I was literally my room and they're probably all thought I was being anti social, but my door was open. And I just enjoyed listening to them. Like the birds chirping in this net, and I was so happy. That's all it takes, you know, but it's it is hard to especially now with having shifted to a remote environment to continue that trend. But it's so so important.

**J** Jessica Guzik 40:33  
Yeah, I agree. I think human connection and like, physically being around humans. I mean, the pandemic has taught me that that is critical for like my own sanity and my own mental health. And it'll be interesting to see, like if companies stay super remote, or if they do try to maintain that, because I do think there is something really important about being in the same space together.

**H** Halie Morris 40:56  
Yeah, I think kind of what I envisioned happening is that when it is truly safe, and the world does truly feel at a safe, because I think some people just are ignoring the pandemic, we do see that, and then other people are still extremely cautious. And there's this weird in between where we're seeing some people just going out and doing stuff and other people who are still locked up in their their own personal quarantine. And it's an interesting balance. But once things truly open up if people truly feel safe, and we truly feel that we have surmounted this, that there will be a rush back to in person stuff that like all these virtual events are going to really die down even more so than pandemic, because we're so thirsty for this connection and this in person connection again. And then I think over time, we'll see them trickle back in and start to balance out and become more than what we started with just because now we know the capabilities, we just we need to kind of like when you have it had a cold drink of water, you're going to throw back the



glass. As soon as you get your hands, I feel like it's going to be the same thing. We're really just going to take that cold drink of water and just gulp it all down at first. And then we'll start to figure out okay, when does it make sense to be in person starting to connect to more people virtually, it's really fun to see that a friend I made in like 2019 spring break, we've talked more over the pandemic because everybody's virtual and less busy with in person stuff. And it's cool to see I'm on her close friends list on Instagram. And so like we've connected more, even though she lives in Puerto Rico, you know, so that's really cool to see. And I don't think people want to lose that ability to connect with people far away. But I also think I will be outside or at places a lot when I made.

**J** Jessica Guzik 42:44  
So oh my gosh, I'm so excited for

**H** Halie Morris 42:49  
it. We're not that far. We are Yeah, well, now they got the Johnson Johnson vaccine is starting to be put out and the other ones are supposed to be an increase in supply and things like that. So my coworker was talking about who he didn't think it was going to get. And he was he and I were going to be able to get the vaccine soon. I was like, No, I think we'll be able to get it sooner than you think. I think it's coming around, like the fact that teachers and stuff are really being pushed to get it right now. And we're starting to see that the last of the frontline. And those critical workers are able to finally get it that we're going to be able to open up the age for the normal people who are still working from home or are in this hybrid environment, like, like me. So I think that's exciting. I still am super excited because I made a friend again, virtually. And we were planning on kayaking, and going to wineries and doing stuff like that. And it's fun too, because you can kind of do that safely. But also, hopefully we'll have our vaccines. So yes,

**J** Jessica Guzik 43:47  
it's so fun to imagine like life going back to normal.

**H** Halie Morris 43:51  
I crave it and like the crazy thing is last time things were truly like a madhouse because of a pandemic to this degree. It was the Spanish influence 100 years ago. And I know logically, it lasted two or three years, but like it was a hard year. And then they got past it. And that was really like the breaking point. So I feel like we're there. We're on that CUSP. It's been a year. Yeah.

J

Jessica Guzik 44:13

Oh my gosh, well, I feel like this news about the vaccine was so exciting. Because just like a few weeks ago, it was like, Oh, this could be another year and I was just like, Oh no, like can't oh my gosh, like this has been a year and that felt so long. I can't do it again.

H

Halie Morris 44:30

I know. It's like, you know, this part of me. I know people in different areas and I've been wanting to travel and do different things. And even though I know like some things will be safe and if you do it the right way you can. You can be extremely safe, but it's still like you're like what if like for me, I live with my Nana and my dad who's had pneumonia like once or twice and you know, bringing that back it's you could put them in a critical place. Now. My Nana has the vaccine. So she's doing good, but like it's still like scary like, okay, knowing me and my luck like I interact with that wrong person who just happens to have it and is not been tested or done anything so I can't wait. Also for movie theaters

J

Jessica Guzik 45:22

Oh my gosh.

H

Halie Morris 45:24

I want to see no way home this but new Spider Man movie, I want to see that in person. Because I marvel has like, it feels like they've gone silent except for like the Disney stuff, the Disney plus stuff. And I did not miss a premiere for so many years in a row like I was at the early premieres. And I was doing all that stuff, I saw Black Panther three times, it was super exciting to watch you too. They're like, you know, I want to do that stuff I want and I feel a lot more. Like I said, I have started to learn a lot more about my personal growth this past year. And I think part of it being graduated from college, being able to brace who I am a little bit more in a more freeform environment. I've started to figure out more of what I want to do and things like that, sir, to learn more about myself, and I'm just so excited to take this me the smart confident me into the world and just like cause utter chaos.

J

Jessica Guzik 46:24

I love that. So that warmed my heart, that whole thing. I love that so much.

H

Halie Morris 46:28

Thank you. I know I talk a lot. But I'm glad I can say stuff meaningfully sometimes

J

Jessica Guzik 46:34

I was just so beautiful, like self discovery. Now you're like going out into the world is your new self. I bet a lot of people feel some sort of version of that of like, we've changed so much in this year and in different ways for different people that like, it feels like this new chapter is gonna start.

H

Halie Morris 46:54

Well, I think for me, like the realization that I feel more like me is that as a kid, I was so confident and I just knew who I was. And then like somewhere in high school, I lost it. And I felt so lost. And now it's like, I feel a lot more control of me. Whereas I am more aware of like, there are things I can't control about my environment, and I no longer give the same care that I did before. Not that I don't want to influence what I can. And not that I don't want to fix things when I see like that something's going wrong, where I see an opportunity for growth, but just that I doesn't disrupt my entire world, when things are like, you know, out of control, I can manage that better, because I know who I am in it. So, in fact, like restart, we were talking about I want to push myself into uncomfortable situations that I get giddy at the prospect of doing theater or doing something that I'm like, I'm gonna be terrible, who's gonna be a mess, I'm gonna be so uncomfortable. But let's do it. So

J

Jessica Guzik 47:54

I think that that's awesome. And I think it's so good that you've gotten to a point where you don't let things like frazzle you or feel as hard. I think that that's so powerful. And I think we're all kind of like, always doing that. Because it's like, once you figure that out for one area of your life, at least for me, that unlocks my like, next level of ambition. And I'm like, Okay, cool. Like, I figured out how to manage myself to like, get that done. Now I want this like harder thing. And you just keep going through these cycles.

H

Halie Morris 48:23

And it's, it feels like organic growth, it doesn't feel like you're just forcing yourself into this next level. Next level, it doesn't feel like levels, it feels like you're just pushing boundaries. And you're just, I sometimes wild like, Oh my gosh, I learned that oh my gosh, look how far I've grown. And maybe other people can't see it. And then again, there's that part of me

that like, Who cares if other people can see it? I'm happy. Right? Like you what you actually want people to feel your happiness, that's what you care about is they can I share this feeling? so

J

Jessica Guzik 48:56

people don't have to see it. And also what what growth looks like for you, you know, growth could be doing less of something growth for someone could be being less ambitious, right? Like, it just all depends where we're at and what it is we're trying to move into. So it's like, there's no point even thinking about like how it looks to the outside world because no one can ever understand like your experience and like what's been hard for you and what it is you're trying to do.

H

Halie Morris 49:21

I found myself so unhappy at periods in college, even though I was surrounded by such cool people. And I was growing tremendously. I wasn't I was looking at them and being like, Well, I'm not doing that. Or I'm not doing that I was setting myself up to their standards of growth and doing the things they were doing. And I even found myself doing this over break because I've thought about I want to hike and explore and well, as soon as I was starting to think about wanting to do that more. One of the girls I knew started going to like all the national parks and hiking at one point they had the Jeep rentals and I was like but that's like my dream car. I'm like I was so like, Oh my gosh, she's doing what I want to be doing. Why did She'll get there, and I'm not there. And I had to be like, no way. Like, I have no idea what she's going in the background, this girl works her butt off. And I've always respected her for that. She probably had those ambitions to do this a lot earlier than I did. And who she is, is completely different. And like, root for her, like, Don't tear her down, because she's doing something you want to do be like, learn from her grow from that knowledge, but also just realize it comes in your own pace, and maybe not in the way you think. So maybe exploring for me doesn't look like national parks. I just think that looks cool. So

J

Jessica Guzik 50:33

yeah, when we look around at other people, it's like the fastest way to feel inadequate. And it's like, so hard not to, because one of the ways our brains work is literally to compare things like that's how we make sense of the world is just by like comparing one thing to another thing. So it's such a natural mechanism for us then to want to, like compare ourselves to get an evaluation of like, how am I doing? And you really have to go against your brain, and just be like, am I okay with this? Like, can I be okay with this?

Because it just it, it just makes you so unhappy? In my experience?

H

Halie Morris 51:07

Or just thinking really hard about this. I'm going to drive the other day about why we find things ugly as it because it's all like, it's, it's not relevant, you know, it's all what's that word where it's just, it's your perspective, it doesn't matter what anybody else's perspective is like, why do we find things ugly? And why is it that so many people find the same things ugly? And then I was like, well, it's, like you said, it's that comparison. And it's pattern recognition goes back to, like, we were talking, I've talked to somebody about facial recognition and things like that, and why we identify things like faces, and clouds. Oh, you're talking about Ghost Hunters? Exactly. I was like, Why will even spirits? And he's like, Well, I think we just see what we want to see. And I was like, Listen, don't ghost hear you talk about that. Right? I was like, I get where he's coming from. Because a lot of these like ghost pictures are the stuff. And sometimes even when I'm watching the shows, I'm like, you see it. Because you're trying to identify something familiar in an unfamiliar environment or an unexplained environment. So like, you see, this one thing is a face, even though it's just a distortion caused by a shadow or light, and you immediately identify it as a face. But you know, there's no one there. So you say it must be a ghosts, right. And we do the same thing with even the stuff we know in life. We see so much on social media, and we seem so much in magazines and TV, that it creates that standard of view, because it becomes familiar. And then when something is unfamiliar, it becomes ugly, because we fear this deformity of the usual like we feel anything that distorts what we're comfortable with. And it's so weird to think how negatively react to different things.

J

Jessica Guzik 52:50

Yeah, I agree. And it also like, what are things that we think are ugly, because we don't like them versus we've been told that they're bad, right? Like, and that's so important to have like reclaiming our own perspective and our own view versus all of like, the cultural and social messages that we get about like, what's good and what's bad.

H

Halie Morris 53:12

Why do we think of things silly things like the unibrow, for example, we all think that's like, Oh, my gosh, that's so ugly, we don't like that. But I was like, isn't like there have been cultures that have identified that as a desirable trait, because it's familiar because like, untrimmed beauty is familiar. But for us, like trimming and these trends that we see become familiar, so anything that deviates from that we consider ugly, so like, it's it's just funny, you watch, like, even you see generations do it, where like older generations, like

certain things, and then they reject what the other generations are doing, because they don't know it. In music, you see a lot like, especially when like, rock music was introduced, because it was so different. And everybody who was familiar with the old stuff, and like the old stuff was like, This is horrible. But we and you know, we sometimes do that, I think with ourselves and we're going back to this idea of being authentic and building authentic, Kohut like Connections is we get so used to seeing people behave certain ways and do certain things. And sometimes, you know, I'm very much like, if you want to do something, you have to surround yourself with that mentality, or those type of people that are doing it to get that motivation. But sometimes that can be negative, because, like we said, they are accomplishing things at a different rate. So you get this idea that you need to do it, how they're doing it, or at the rate, they're doing it because that's what you're familiar with. And you reject your own pace and your own person because it's not what you're seeing every day and that's so sad.

J

**Jessica Guzik 54:51**

I agree and also when we're trying to change like, if you think that you need to go at a faster pace because someone else is going at a faster pace. That's gonna end up slowing you down, like you need to honor whatever your natural cycle is. And we're all different. And I think sometimes in professional environments, there's like pressure to, like, be good at everything to grow really quickly. And I think it is really important to acknowledge that like, some people take time, right, like not everyone's on the same timeline. And I think really good leaders, good managers, like understand that with their people. And they give people the space that they need, because when you give someone the time, they actually will be able to grow a lot having the proper time and not feeling like they have to rush through it.

H

**Halie Morris 55:38**

Exactly. Alright, well, I'm kind of looking at time. And I think this is a good place to start closing out for us. I just kind of want to end with how this all ties back into this idea of networking and the genuine connection. And it's just because if you can't build a genuine self, or you can't build that confidence, you're ultimately like your networking, really, it's just going to be going to an event passing out business cards, bumping elbows or whatever we're doing right now. And maybe never speaking to that person again until you need something or vice versa. It will be not fun. It will be as daunting as it sounds. versus if you can, I feel like build yourself out and become yourself. When you look back at some times, you're going to realize like, Oh my gosh, your network just built itself. You didn't have to consciously do it. You just have to consciously maintain those relationships.

J Jessica Guzik 56:31  
Yeah. Oh, that's such a good summary.

H Halie Morris 56:34  
Thank you. I think I try. I've been good at listening. I know I like to talk a lot, but I've been working on my listening skills. So that was

J Jessica Guzik 56:41  
perfect. I don't have anything to add. Like That was great.

H Halie Morris 56:44  
Oh, my gosh, thank you. Well, I learned from you so it all came from you Really? And like I said, I've been listening to her podcast, so anything good. I've probably said recently. She's influenced for sure. So thank you. All right. Well, thank you, Jessica, for coming on. It means a lot to have you back on the show. And then thank you everyone for listening to this week's episode.