

Christi Johnson ([00:05](#)):

Welcome back to the crush, your goals with Christie podcast, your place to kick overwhelm to the curb and crush your goals with confidence. I'm Christie, a wedding photographer, online educator and business coach dedicated to helping you crush your goals and flourish beyond what you thought possible. Joining me today on the podcast is Ashley. Paul. Ashley is the owner of CNA event planning. She's a self-proclaimed wedding guru based in Greenville, South Carolina, but she travels anywhere in the United States for weddings. She grew up in the wedding and event industry, and as an only child, she went to work with her mom and got to experience the incredible rush of weddings. So it's her passion and it's in her veins as a wedding planner and floral designer. She has an eye for design and attention to detail. It's just what she does. She's a wife, a mom to three incredible boys, and she is a firm believer in loving big making memories and savoring moments. Ashley is amazing. She is one of the coolest people and I'm really excited about this conversation with her. So I hope you enjoy it. Thanks for listening, Ashley. Thank you so much for coming back. Welcome back to the podcast.

Ashley Paul ([01:23](#)):

Thank you for having me. I'm excited.

Christi Johnson ([01:26](#)):

I am very excited too, especially to have you here on the crusher goals with Christy podcast. The last time we connected was for the rising tide Greenville podcast, but I rerelease those on my feed. So my audience is getting to hear from you a second time, which is so exciting because I love everything that you're doing. You are so inspiring. You've recently moved to Greenville and I just see you posting and going after your goals. And it's really inspiring to me. So I'm excited for people to hear from you.

Ashley Paul ([01:59](#)):

Thank you. I've been working hard.

Christi Johnson ([02:02](#)):

<Laugh> I know I can tell it's definitely evident from that. So for those in who, who did not hear the first episode, by the way, go make sure you go back and check out that episode will link it in the descriptions you can hear from Ashley. We talked about community and collaboration and a lot of styled shoots. But for those who didn't listen to that, just give them kind of the short version of your story and what you do.

Ashley Paul ([02:32](#)):

So I am Ashley, I am a wedding planner and a floral designer, and I concentrate a lot on content days and style shoots in order to grow my business. This is my official third market that I've been had that I've had to launch in. I originally started CNA event planning in Richmond, Virginia, and then I moved to upstate New York a couple years later and spent the bulk of my business up there. And I recently moved to Greenville. It's been just a year now. So I definitely, I try to build community wherever I am. Some markets are a little bit different for community but I've been really thankful for the community that I've been able to kind of established here in Greenville. Everybody is super warmhearted and it's just Southern hospitality at its finest.

Christi Johnson ([03:25](#)):

Awesome. I love that. You say that I am proud of Greenville. We have come a long way. We have an amazing thriving, small business community, which is awesome. So now that you've been here for a whole year what does your business look like now? I know that when we first chatted you were still in the process of launching some things and dipping your toes into the wedding industry here, but I would love an update from you. So what things are you doing now? What growth have you seen from that? So,

Ashley Paul ([03:55](#)):

So I, my business went through quite the growing pain, but also just kind of transition. When we moved here, it was, we didn't have a ton of time to plan the move. So I wasn't able to like start advertising before we got here. I was in the thick of wedding season. I had seven weddings in July alone last year, and all of them were in New York. So I had to kind of like figure out where to get my bearings. I had it, I mean, we were kind of going into the busy season for everyone down here. So meetings with people were really hard because they were busy. It's, it's the reality of wedding season. So I really didn't dive in more until early spring. I started advertising again and I also slashed my prices, which was really hard pill to swallow, but it was something that was necessary in order to get my foot in the door.

Ashley Paul ([04:55](#)):

I have since kind of reworked my packages and adjusted the pricing a little bit. So it has increased a little bit, but it's definitely not where it originally was. But I have recently even overhauled them a little bit more. I took off day of coordination and I am only specializing in partial as well as full service planning. I really love to get involved with the design and help them with their flowers as well. And I just, I like to see their whole vision all the way through. And when you do day of you, can't always do that. You can't live it all with them. And I just, I didn't love that disconnect for me. It works for a lot of people, but it's just not a package that I love offering. So I decided it was time to take it off and like really just fly into the 20, 23, a little bit differently. So I've also launched back into style shoots. I have a lot this year. I took several years off from style shoots and I've like jumped back in full force this year, which is really exciting. I might kind of scale back next year, but <laugh> it, it's also a way to get your foot in the door and meet a lot of people at once, but also like give back to them at the same time. So you're building that relationship a little bit stronger, which is really important.

Christi Johnson ([06:22](#)):

Yeah. It's interesting to hear you say that you cut your prices. We did a similar thing as well because I am also wedding photographer, but just got back into the business after some time away. So for three years I was not in the wedding industry. And then coming back in with a business partner and a brand new business name, I felt like I was literally starting from square one. And we did that as well. You know, most of the time, the advice that that we hear from people is razor prices raise your prices, charge your worth, but, but for us as well, we cut our prices. And then we did start to see some, some growth there, some bookings and, you know, as business owners, we are constantly having to pivot obviously the goal is gonna be to, and I'm sure it's also for your, is to get that brand recognition to serve some clients really, really well and gain some referrals, some reviews and some, you know, images from Greenville, the Greenville community, and then, and then increase the prices. Is that what you're hoping to do as well?

Ashley Paul ([07:30](#)):

Yes. So what I typically do whenever I have to adjust my pricing, cuz I've had to in the past once I have started having like a steady stream of inquiries or a couple different bookings at that price point or even

because our planning packages, we customize. So sometimes like while we have that base package, we build off of that. So if I booked some that are kind of in between, I'm comfortable with raising it like a couple hundred dollars. It's not like a massive jump, but it's a kind of a slow and steady build.

Christi Johnson ([08:05](#)):

Yeah. And we constantly, like I mentioned, we constantly are having to pivot. We have to see what's working in the business and make changes and maybe certain things that worked for you in Virginia and in New York won't work here and maybe some things will. So what are some things that have been working for you really, really well, as you've transitioned into this new market, I've seen you posting reels, which is amazing. I remember when you posted your first one and now it seems like I see them popping up all the time. Like you mentioned, you've been doing content days and style shoots and it's so much so, so what are some of those things that have worked for you or if it's gonna be the reels and kind days, let's dive in a little bit further, further there. What are some of your thoughts there?

Ashley Paul ([08:52](#)):

So I think ultimately the content days and networking have truly helped. I've aligned myself with certain people that have also offered me recommendations of other places to visit and other people to reach out to. So ultimately it comes back to connecting the dots that I mentioned in the past pre mm-hmm <affirmative> podcast. I think just building relationships, I, I keep going back to it, but I, I think that's, what's gonna help like launch anyone. It's building that trust and just showing consistency. I will say, I do try to do reels. I don't feel like I'm the best at them by any means. I don't see the traffic that a lot of people see I've done like 10 day challenges where I've posted two a day. I've done, I've tried to do the post one every for 30 days type thing. I'm just trying to do more of posts that include really good content, even if it's just small little things. And I'm trying to use like trending audio, like everybody else. But I will say that I've turned some blog posts into reels, even if it's just like small little tidbits or reversed it and made like my reels into a blog post. And I also recycle content.

Christi Johnson ([10:16](#)):

Oh yeah.

Ashley Paul ([10:17](#)):

So like anything that I've shared like over six months ago, I'm gonna share that because there's another way to like refresh it and share something because a lot of like, my audience now is totally different than what it was like a year ago. They're not gonna scoot that far back in my feed <laugh> mm-hmm <affirmative> to see stuff. So I just, I tweak it. I mean, I don't post it like word for word or like picture for picture. I just kind of like make it evolve to like my style now.

Christi Johnson ([10:48](#)):

Yeah. And, and focusing on the value that, that you bring to your clients is so important. I had Renee DLO on the podcast. She was an amazing guest. And she talked about that that's the episode called visibility in your business. If you guys wanna check that out, but she mentioned, you know, a, a way to make reels less overwhelming is just genuinely focused on bringing value to your clients. Like you don't have to do what is, what is not com what is uncomfortable for you? Do what, you know, focus on what your clients want, give them that value. And they'll keep, they'll keep coming back back for more.

Ashley Paul ([11:26](#)):

Yes. And have fun with it. I mean, reels can be kind of T daunting, but like have fun with it. If you want to do something and you don't even have to show your face in some of them, like, I will show wedding albums to trending audio, and then I drop little tidbits into it. Like I don't even have to show up for those ones.

Christi Johnson ([11:48](#)):

<Laugh> yeah. Have fun with it and experiment. Like, I think the name of the game with, with TikTok and reels is truly just experimentation and, and finding that thing that works for you and, and feeling the finding being able to pivot when it's necessary and tweak it. And if something's not working to, to change it up <laugh> yeah. So along those lines, what are some things that maybe have not been working for you in this new market?

Ashley Paul ([12:23](#)):

I know that like, I've done some emailing to like vendors venues, and sometimes it's hard to connect with them that way. I mean, everybody's really busy still because of the pandemic and rescheduling of weddings and things like that. And just how the wedding industry has changed. I don't know. I, I want to encourage other people to keep trying, because even though like, they didn't answer my first email, I will try to reach them again or just be consistent with like following them on Instagram and kind of like cheering them on or commenting on their different posts and stuff. That's another way to connect. So maybe your email didn't make their inbox. Maybe it made the spam and they didn't ever even see it. Or they're just so busy that they can't get back to you, like try to be patient with other people if you truly want to connect with certain places or people try another, another route.

Christi Johnson ([13:22](#)):

Yeah. And also being personal and having that personal connection for me. If I get an intro in my inbox, a lot of times emails, we read them fast sometimes. And if it immediately looks like spam, I'm not gonna respond to it. You know, if someone says hi, I came across your website and wanted to share this thing with you. To me that tells me they don't know who I am and it's going right in the trash. But, but like you said, following them on Instagram is a great way to get that personal connection. If someone says, Hey, Christy, I've been listening to your podcast. I love X, Y, Z. Then I know, oh, this is an actual person <laugh> that really wants to talk to me. And so I think people crave those, those personal connections as well. And, and truly, like you mentioned, growing your business has been about connecting the dots and community and collaborated and building those relationships. So if you can bring in those personal elements and, and focus on the relationship, I think it's gonna gonna be more helpful.

Ashley Paul ([14:27](#)):

Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, entrepreneurship is very lonely. So if you can build community or relationships anywhere just to have somebody in your pocket that you can be like shooting ideas off of type thing. It's helpful.

Christi Johnson ([14:41](#)):

Yeah. So I wanna talk about maybe some challenges that you have faced along your business journey. I know that we were just talking last night, we had a rising tide meeting and you said you've had a lot that you've had to overcome along your business journey. So talk to me about some of those challenges that you have faced.

Ashley Paul ([15:03](#)):

I have definitely faced a lot of adversity. From the very beginning I had some naysayers that would ask me when I was gonna kind of give up my hobby and get a real job. I do have a degree. I did go to college but it's in psychology, which helps me with a lot of bridal parties and situations that I get put in. But it's not the avenue that I wanted to pursue when I got out of college. So I jumped in full force into creating CNA right out of the gate. I also didn't know a ton about weddings when I first started and I had to try to align myself with people that did know a lot that I could learn from. And just, I tried to just meet with as many people as I possibly could. There were a lot of people that didn't take me seriously.

Ashley Paul ([15:58](#)):

I find that sometimes even still 12 years later, if there's some people out there that probably aren't gonna always take you seriously, but you have to prove them wrong. I also went on and had babies through like the growth of my business. My oldest, I had a lot of complications and I was even on bedrest. So like my business had to kind of ebb and flow with that. Like my mom had to take a little bit more, I had to do more of the back end. And that's kind of what we did through my other two pregnancies as well. So it's like, no matter what type of mountain you have in front of it in front of you, you can figure out how to either go over it or go around it. There's some way to pivot and have growth from it.

Ashley Paul ([16:44](#)):

I mean, if people hadn't been naysayers and told me that, like I wasn't gonna be successful, would I have had the same drive to like push forward and want to prove them wrong? I don't know. I do get imposter syndrome just like anyone. Yeah. But the best thing that I can do is I have to unfollow a lot of like the people that I kind of look up to, I have to unfollow them because it's the way that it correlates into my brain. It creates more of an imposter negativity on me and I have to not compare because my chapter one in their chapter 20 are not the same and vice versa. Everybody has their own journey and everyone has their own challenges. I mean, I either

Christi Johnson ([17:34](#)):

Chapter 20 is not gonna be the same as their chapter 20 cause you're different person. Right?

Ashley Paul ([17:39](#)):

Yeah. I even went through a pretty ugly divorce in the midst of my company. And there was a little bit of a time that I wasn't quite sure if I could, could keep going with weddings cuz I didn't know if I believed in true love and I'm so thankful that I had my business and like my clients stay consistent because it made me believe in it so much more. And it pushed me through, it was kind of like my therapy was continuing to grow my business through that time because it was, I mean there was even lonelier during that time as an entrepreneur and being a single mom and just trying to figure out like what was next. So I, if you have a dream that you want to chase, I feel like you should do it. Mm. I mean, as long as it's somewhat realistic, like <laugh> have a plan. Yeah. Have a plan and have like a plan B and C as well, so that you kind of have different ways to pivot. I, I definitely don't go into anything. Just kind of winging it or I try not to at least that's the type a in me

Christi Johnson ([18:55](#)):

<Laugh> oh yeah. Yes. Well also, you know, going back to what you said about proving them wrong and people still not believing in you even today. I think that what is so difficult about being in business is that

we are kind of putting ourselves out there. As business owners, we're so connected to the business because we run it, you know, we spend so much time thinking about it. We're literally investing our entire lives into this business. It feels like sometimes. And so when people criticize or they don't get it or they don't have the same opinions, it can be very hurtful to us personally. And I think that we have to, to realize that not everyone is gonna be on your team or, or in your corner and that's 100% okay. Because you know, we're, we're people and, and you're not for everyone. Like there are gonna be some people who, who are like, nah, nah, that's not my thing.

Christi Johnson ([20:03](#)):

And that's totally fine, but we, but what we need to do instead of getting so overwhelmed by that, or, or upset by that is to let it fuel you, to find your people that are going to be in your corner that are going to support you and give you that inspiration, that, you know, life, you know, the wind beneath your wings to keep going, because there are people out there who do get it and who do you know, believe in you and that kind of thing. And truly it's a lot of experimentation and, and reaching out and finding those connections that are, you know, that are for you.

Ashley Paul ([20:44](#)):

Yes. It definitely is an experiment for sure. <Laugh>

Christi Johnson ([20:48](#)):

And I also just wanna acknowledge as well, that, that you sharing about, you know, going through a divorce and then still continuing to pursue your business. Like, I just wanna acknowledge that if someone else is going through a, an experience like that and they choose not to continue their business, that's also 100%. Okay. Yes. I think that if it's your vision and if it's something that is meant to be in your life, then you're gonna continue to pursue it even through major adversity and in, you know, whatever it is that you have to overcome, like that's gonna become clear to you. For me personally, I took a three year break from, from photography because it just wasn't inspiring me anymore. And I, I sometimes can carry a lot of guilt about that, but I don't think that I need to because truly the vision changed for a while and now it's back and it's a completely new vision. And I think allowing yourself to have that freedom and that flexibility is the whole is, is the whole reason that we get into business so that we can pursue our passions, even if they change.

Ashley Paul ([22:06](#)):

Yes, it's definitely, it's definitely important to give yourself grace when you're in this and you're in the thick of everything. The road is not always straight. So if you have to take like an abrupt left turn in a different direction, that's okay. If you want to do that. I mean, if one road is not serving you the way that it needs to you go to another mm-hmm

Christi Johnson ([22:33](#)):

<Affirmative> so talk to me about when you, you know, what was it like when you had your children and you had to be on bedrest for a while? I imagine that it could've been for me. I imagine that I would've felt sad that I couldn't continue to do the business, but then at the same time, like recognizing that you are growing a human inside of you and your body has to do what it needs to do to continue to, to grow them. How did you balance that at that time? Was it hard for you? And what are some of the things that you did to kind of help out along the way?

Ashley Paul ([23:14](#)):

So for my oldest, he was the main one that I was on bedrest with. That was hard, but we were also very, very new still in the wedding industry. We were still building a lot of our relationships. We had a handful of weddings that my mom took on, but I was still the main source of contact for the brides, which was allowed me to still be involved. But I was in a hospital bed <laugh> for most of it, but it, it was nice to still be able to work even on the back end with things. With my other two, I was able to work pretty much all of the pregnancy. And it just, it was a little bit different. Like if we had a planning with flowers, my mom would stay for the planning. I would come and execute all the flowers.

Ashley Paul ([24:01](#)):

So then I could go home and rest <laugh> because I was tired. So it just, I had to really listen to my body and what I could do, because I knew that if I did not listen to it, then I couldn't really serve my clients the way that I wanted to. And my mom has always been my right hand person. So I knew that like they were in great hands, everything was gonna be just fine. I just made sure that she had all the information she needed to be able to execute it the way that I would've, if I were there in person it's Def it definitely was harder. I do, I really like to work, but I also don't like to miss things with the kids. So it's like in every evolving, trying to figure out like what works for us. If I have a work heavy week, I try to take like one day off during the week to spend just with them. It's, it's a mixture every week looks a little bit different, but I know that as long as I'm filling my cup as a mom and a business owner, I'm going to be able to serve everyone around me the way that they deserve to be served.

Christi Johnson ([25:10](#)):

Mm. Yeah. That's so important. I love that. I know that you've also this year faced some medical challenges. Would you be comfortable talking about that for a little bit?

Ashley Paul ([25:21](#)):

Sure. So back in April, I woke up on a Friday, not able to see out of my right eye as a true mother, I just kind of wrote it off as a eye migraine and figured everything would be fine in a couple hours. Well, fast forward to the next day. I couldn't see even more out of that eye. I think I was borderline legally blind in one eye. B once I got more information from all of the doctors, we ended up finding out that I had a small blood clot in my eye. It's also referred to as like a mini stroke. And through all of that with slews of blood work and testing and everything, they found out that I have a very rare blood clotting disorder that is called anti phosphorous lipid syndrome, which is APS for short.

Ashley Paul ([26:18](#)):

It attacks like one in every 200,000 people. It is fairly rare. Most of the doctors I've spoken to through all of my testing have only seen like one other case. And it's usually older people. It has definitely been a curve ball because I have to, like, I can't necessarily have work hours when I have to be at the doctor's office or getting labs done. I it's kind of like having a newborn though. So I would just work later in the evening or get up a little bit earlier in the morning so that I could knock work out, knowing that I'd have to be gone for a couple hours at doctor's appointments. I also, I enjoy getting up on like a Saturday morning when I don't have to work mm-hmm <affirmative> and drinking my coffee and I get some work done then because my children tend to sleep a little bit later on Saturdays usually.

Ashley Paul ([27:13](#)):



So it's just my quiet time and it gets me, I can deep dive into stuff. So it I'm, I'm living with a chronic disease. Like there is no cure. And for the unforeseeable future, I have to go for blood work every week to two weeks typically. Once it's managed pretty well, I can go once a month. But the, unfortunately there's only one medicine that works for this and they have to monitor it very closely. So it's just while I could throw a pity party about it, I'm choosing not to, because it's just, unfortunately this is gonna be the way of life, but you know what? I get to wake up every day, I could have died from something like that. The blood clot could have been anywhere else and it could have been even more life threatening. So the fact that it came in my eye, my eye has been for the majority restored. I have 2030 in that eye now the doctors feel like I should be able to get even more vision back in the eye as well as time goes on. I'm just thankful to be in an area that has a lot of specialists and they're really good. I have a really good team and I'm thankful that they found it and they're able to treat it. And I just have to work around it pretty much or work with it.

Christi Johnson ([28:39](#)):

Mm. Yeah, I think that thank you for sharing. I know that that must have been scary and still is I'm I'm sure. And I think that it's important to, to talk about these things. And what I love about about you is that you have been sharing about it on your Instagram stories. When some people may choose to keep it private, which is, which is fine, you know, everyone can do whatever they feel led to do. But I think showing that that business is not all highs and life is not all highs. I think we need more of that on social media because, you know, we tend to compare ourselves to other people and think that other people have perfect lives and ours are not, you know, perfect, but sh but rec, you know, allowing yourself to be human and say, Hey, this happened I think is, is so important so that we, you know, again, have that real human connection with each other and can, can support each other in honest, authentic ways.

Ashley Paul ([29:52](#)):

Yes. It's been helpful to have like, just people checking in seeing how things are going, or like just, I felt the need to share because it's something very rare. And I don't want, like, if somebody else has it, or even has something like a chronic disease or something, I want them to not feel alone. Mm. I mean, a lot of people deal with like chronic fatigue and different things like that. Like I just, I want them to not feel alone. And I mean, it's part of who I am. So it's part of my journey now. And I deal with it one day at a time I take my medicine the way I'm supposed to. And I go to all my doctor's appointments like I'm supposed to, is it ideal? No, but I I'm gonna be around for my kids. Mm-Hmm <affirmative> so that's all that matters to me.

Christi Johnson ([30:42](#)):

Yeah. That's so important. The, the people in your life that, that you love. So I wanna wrap up we are coming up close to our time here. I would love to wrap up with one final question. We've been talking about overcoming adversity and challenges in your business. So I would love to hear from you, what are some things that you do to keep yourself on a growth path? You know, that's one of the things that I, I love about you is you're, you're just going after it. You are, you're in a new place, you're doing the style shoots, you're trying the new things, but also you've stayed so positive about everything. So what is it that kind of like helps you to maintain that mindset?

Ashley Paul ([31:29](#)):

I don't know. <Laugh>, I, I like, I'm a yes person. So I like to take on a lot of projects. And that's part of why, like, I feel like I've taken on a lot of content days, but I thrive in creating beautiful things in



connecting people. So I just, I figured that's kind of the way that I needed to do it. And I'm seeing growth from it within my business, whether it be referrals or just aligning myself with a lot of really good vendors. So I, I don't, I just, I try to reevaluate my growth every so many months. And kind of, I do try to keep in mind, like weekends that I might want to kind of like mark off and not work. I mean, I have three young children and one of 'em is in sports. So I don't want him to always be like, well, mom had a wedding, she wasn't at my soccer game or anything like that. So I just, I don't, I don't know.

Christi Johnson ([32:36](#)):

<Laugh> no, you, you you're sharing it. You Reva, you reevaluate your values and your your what's important to you. And I, I just feel like you're someone who sets goals and just gets them done. I think that having the ability to take a step back and say, okay, what do I need to do? How am I gonna get it, get this done? And who do I need to surround myself with to see, to see this growth happen? Amy Porterfield talks a lot about showing up as if your goals have already been accomplished, because if you believe that they're gonna come to come to fruition, then you're gonna show up differently. And if you believe you're gonna have a wildly successful wedding planning business in Greenville, you're gonna show up differently. You know?

Ashley Paul ([33:26](#)):

Yeah. A lot of times I, I just realized it while you were talking about it while I'll set goals, they're not so much goals for me. They're more of like deadlines or like to dos. So it's like, what do I have to do to make that happen? Mm-Hmm <affirmative> not, it's not just me putting it out in the universe and hoping that it's gonna come to fruition. It's me, like, what do I have to do work wise in order to get to that next spot? Or in order to succeed in this certain way? Mm-Hmm <affirmative> I would definitely say that mine are like hard to dos. They're not just goals anymore.

Christi Johnson ([34:08](#)):

Yeah. Well, that's important doing and figuring out what works for you is important as well. Another thing that we talked about before we press record is you're, you're starting, you're joining a mastermind, and I know that you said, you're not sure how it's gonna go today is literally your first day, but you were saying that there's people in there who kind of like, you're kind of scared. Yes. Talk to me about that a little bit. Like why you have those feelings, because I think it's so important as business owners to put ourselves in situations where we're a little bit intimidated.

Ashley Paul ([34:42](#)):

So this mastermind is business owners. It's not even geared towards the wedding community or anything like that. And we had just kind of a discovery call as a group. And I listened to everybody's goals and like their projected income of what they want in the next six months or something. And I ki I left it feeling terrified and like, I'm a fish out of water. And I also kind of feel like my goals or my dreams might not be as big as theirs. Maybe I need to dream bigger or something. It's, it's very nerve wracking. It was a large investment, but it's not anything that I've ever done in the 12 years that I've been in business. And I know that some of my dreams that I want to come to fruition in, like the next chapter, I know that I need to do something really scary, like in order to put me in the right stream to get to those things.

Ashley Paul ([35:41](#)):

Like, I need to align myself with other people that have like written a book because I want to write a book, or most of them are public speakers. I want to take that step, but I don't wanna just be Ashley, the

wedding planner. I want to be known for more than that. And I, I feel like that's me sometimes when I say that to myself, I feel like I'm being selfish, that I, that I want more, but that's where my drive comes in too. Like, I, I don't wanna just stop, like I've been successful in weddings and I love it, but I also want to pivot and do the other things that I've always dreamt to do in college. If you had asked me if I wanted to be a public speaker mm-hmm I hated that class <laugh>. But I, I feel like I have a message. I don't know exactly what that message is, but I have something in me that really the world needs to hear. So that's kind of why I was, I feel like I, I felt it in my heart that I needed to be part of like this mastermind, and I know that it's gonna pull the right things out of me. So I just have to do the work.

Christi Johnson ([36:54](#)):

Yeah. And feeling like a fish out of water, I think is actually a good thing for us to feel. I remember when I was, when I was studying piano in high school for, from eight, let's see, I started when I was eight and then was with the same teacher until I was 16. And once I got to 16, I was like the best student that she had. But then at 16, I switched teachers and I, I was the worst student that this second teacher had and I felt so uncomfortable. I almost quit. Like I almost quit piano altogether because I was like, I'm so bad. These people are so great. I don't know anything about technique. I don't know what I'm doing, but I, I kept going and I found a, I found a teacher in college who pushed me to help me achieve the potential that, that I, that I knew that I had inside of me that well, that I didn't know at the time she helped me to, to find it so that I could see what was possible.

Christi Johnson ([37:54](#)):

Because with the other teacher, she's an amazing teacher. I didn't know what was possible because I was the best student there. But when you go to this other level and I was truly, truly the worst <laugh> it showed me what was possible. And then having a teacher who inspired me to believe in myself and believed that I could do that too, was so important. So I think feeling like you're fish outta water, you don't have the same crazy audacious goals that these other people have. I think that's actually a good thing. And I know that you're gonna have amazing success with it and, and surrounding yourself with those people that are doing the things that you potentially wanna do. I think that's so, so important to get out of our comfort zones and experience that growth. That's a growth mindset right there, believing that yes, you can improve and that you can get better and better and better and better. And I just love that about you.

Ashley Paul ([38:53](#)):

Thank you. I'm really excited to see where the next six months take me. I know that there's gonna be a lot of work involved and I'm ready for it. And I'm excited.

Christi Johnson ([39:02](#)):

Well, when you write your book and you go on your speaker tour, I'll have you back on the podcast again, and we can talk some more. <Laugh> sounds

Ashley Paul ([39:11](#)):

Good.

Christi Johnson ([39:12](#)):

Awesome. Thank you, Ashley so much for being here. It was a pleasure.

Ashley Paul ([39:15](#)):

Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it.