

MAGIC HOUR PODCAST

CREATIVE PODCAST BY UNICORN MARKETING CO.

Sam Plavins | Ep 22 | Magic Hour Podcast

The Magic Hour Podcast – Season 3, Episode with Samantha Plavins

Hope Mikal:

Okay. Welcome to Season 3 of *The Magic Hour*! I'm so excited to be joined by Sam Plavins. Hi, welcome!

Samantha Plavins:

Thank you! I'm excited to be here, Hope.

Hope Mikal:

It's so great to have you. When I first met you, I thought, *Wow, what a badass, incredible woman*. You were telling me your story, and I was just in awe. I'm really glad to have you here today—it feels like a full-circle moment.

Samantha Plavins:

I know! It's crazy. I felt the same way. When I went to *Alt Summit*, I told myself, *If I get one thing out of this, let it be a good connection with someone who gets me and whom I get in return*. And that totally happened.

Hope Mikal:

Absolutely. I met so many amazing people at *Alt Summit*, and you're one of them.

Samantha Plavins:

Thank you!

Hope Mikal:

Let's dive in! I know a lot about you, but let's introduce you to our audience. Can you tell us what *She Walks the Walk* is all about?

Samantha Plavins:

Yes! *She Walks the Walk* is essentially my creation story. I went from silently struggling with my career—feeling like I was burning out—to finally speaking up about it to people I trusted. I kept asking, *Am I crazy for wanting to leave my job?*

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Because on paper, leaving looked like career suicide. But the more I voiced it, the more I realized it was the right thing to do.

Eventually, I made the leap. Now, *She Walks the Walk* is a hiking company for women, but it's really about so much more—it's about encouraging women to *do the thing*. Whatever that "thing" is for them, we help them push through barriers, gain confidence, and go for it. Time marches on, and tomorrow isn't promised. I believe that wholeheartedly.

Hope Mikal:

Boom.

Samantha Plavins:

Yeah—don't just talk about it, *do it*.

Hope Mikal:

Walk the walk. Do the thing.

Samantha Plavins:

Exactly.

Hope Mikal:

What was the tipping point that pushed you off the treadmill? You were in a job that wasn't fulfilling. What helped you make that leap?

Samantha Plavins:

So here's the backstory. I was working in a family business as part of my dad's succession plan. The problem? It was finance, and I'm an *artsy-fartsy* girl—I have a degree in music and used to work in the arts. But somehow, I ended up in my dad's business. Fast forward 16 years, and I was making great money and pleasing my dad, who was my mentor. But the pressure was *immense*.

In 2016, I hit my breaking point. Let's call it *The Audit*. Our industry is highly regulated, and my files were being scrutinized. I had made a small, well-intentioned mistake to help a client—no harm done—but it was discovered, and suddenly my entire workload came under intense review. I was already a perfectionist, trying so hard to do right by my clients, but this scrutiny was unbearable. I thought I was going to lose my career, my family's name—I just *couldn't do it anymore*.

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From that moment on, I knew I had to find a way out. But I didn't know how, especially since my dad's retirement depended on me taking over. I ended up staying in the business for *four more years* before finally leaving.

Hope Mikal:

Four more years? Oh my gosh.

Samantha Plavins:

Yeah. And during that time, my mental health suffered. I had mini nervous breakdowns daily. Outwardly, I looked like a successful career woman. But internally, I was crumbling. My body even manifested the stress—stomach issues, a twitching eye, single tears running down my face in client meetings. I knew I had to change something.

That's when I decided to walk the *Camino de Santiago* in Spain. It was my way of asking myself, *Am I crazy? Can I do this?* And the answer I found was, *I can't be crazy. And I need to do this.*

Hope Mikal:

I'm so glad you did. And now you lead these incredible hiking experiences for women. Where is *She Walks the Walk* headed this year?

Samantha Plavins:

This year, we're going to the highlands of Guatemala, we're exploring Tanzania—including climbing *Kilimanjaro* and a safari—and we're also doing something new: bringing the adventure closer to home in Moab, Utah.

Hope Mikal:

Amazing! Have you done *Kilimanjaro* before?

Samantha Plavins:

Yes! I always road-test everything before I offer it. I need to be able to say, *This will be tough* or *You've got this*. But Moab will be new for me—so I'll be discovering it alongside my clients, which is exciting!

Hope Mikal:

I love that. Okay, tell me about *Bhutan*! I know you recently went there. Take us back—what was that experience like?

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Samantha Plavins:

Bhutan is this tiny, magical country between China and India, deep in the Himalayas. I'd always been fascinated by the *Snowman Trek*, known as one of the hardest hikes in the world. You're at *high altitude* for nearly a month, dealing with unpredictable weather—it's intense.

But there was something serendipitous about this trip. Bhutan was celebrating 50 years of allowing tourism, Osprey (my favorite backpack brand) was celebrating 50 years, and I had just turned 50. It felt like a sign. I reached out to my friend Kendra, a filmmaker, and asked, *Do you want to do this trek and make a documentary?* She said yes, and Osprey helped sponsor us!

Bhutan is special because they don't measure success by GDP—they focus on *Gross National Happiness*. It made me question everything. Do we conflate success with happiness the way they do? Or do we have it all wrong?

Hope Mikal:

I love that. And now, you're making a film about this experience?

Samantha Plavins:

Yes! The film will premiere in Seattle, Toronto, and Thunder Bay later this year, and we hope to submit it to festivals. There's not much out there about Bhutan, so we hope to shine a light on their way of life.

Hope Mikal:

That's incredible. I can't wait to see it!

Samantha Plavins:

Thank you!

Hope Mikal:

Before we wrap up, you're also working on a *book* about your *Camino* experience, right?

Samantha Plavins:

Yes! It's in the final editing stages. It's kind of like *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed—a memoir about a woman at 45 figuring out her life while walking across Spain. It's for every

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woman who has ever silently questioned their life choices. I hope it inspires people to walk their own path.

Hope Mikal:

I cannot wait to read it! Thank you for sharing your journey, Sam. You are amazing.

Samantha Plavins:

Thank you, Hope! This was wonderful.