

EPISODE 041 - MY PLAN TO WORK ONE DAY A WEEK

WITH NANCY RAY

Intro

Doesn't it sound kind of awesome to work just one day a week? I think it does. That's kind of what I'm setting out to do this year. Obviously I have three little kids at home, so it's not that I'm not working on the other six days is just that my work has changed and I've changed my career a little bit so that I can just work "one day a week" and be home with the kiddos working at home the other six days. I'm really excited about it.

Now, huge disclaimer at the start of this episode, I've never done this before. I've never worked this little before. Even as a record this, this is my first day back to work, meaning I have no real experience in this area of only working one day a week, but I thought it'd be fun, kind of like an experiment, just to invite you along for the ride. I'm going to tell you what I hope for my work to look like this year and then check back in with you in June six months later and tell you how it's actually going and what I've learned so far. So, that's what I'm going to do.

You're listening to Work & Play with Nancy Ray, Episode 41.

Much of our daily lives can be divided into two categories: work & play. Simply put, that's where our life and our legacy take place. This is a podcast all about learning to Work & Play well, which leads to a healthy soul and a fulfilling life.

Listen in.

Content

For the last 12 years I've worked my tail off. I've built a business, Nancy Ray Photography, and I closed the doors at that business last year. I went from working six or seven days a week, no joke in the early years, especially with weddings and double wedding weekends, it's just crazy, to working four days a week after my first baby was born and I say four days a week, but it was Monday through Thursday plus weddings and sessions, so maybe five days a week. Then transitioning to working three days a week after babies two and three plus weddings and sessions again and now my hope is to keep it at one day a week and since I've closed my

business, no weddings, no sessions.

I know this is really cheesy, but I'm going to go ahead and tell you I'm calling these work days in 2020 my freedom days. My hope is to do really good, effective work on those days but also to live in freedom and to do things that care for my mind and my body as well. Now practically speaking with childcare, because this is a question I get asked all the time, we've been so blessed to have a nanny for our kids. We started off with a nanny named Rachel. We love her dearly, we still count her as part of our family. She watched Milly after Milly was born and then she transitioned out and we brought in Michelle who was a very dear friend of ours. She has been watching her kids since Lyndon has been born.

So when I say I'd go to work three days a week after babies two and three were born, Michelle had both Milly and Lyndon and then she took over and had Milly and Lyndon and Beaufort. Now I would pop over and nurse him, it would be back and forth quite a bit, especially this last year. But that's kind of what it looked like for us. She would come to our home, so I was able to be close by to the kids, which is really nice. And man last year, just shout out to her because she was a trooper, three little kids. I mean it was just insane on some days, so I was so thankful for her.

But she is the one who's keeping all three kids while I work and it's actually worked out really well because she's taking them to her house now on the days that I work. So I've got a quiet house, I've got the ability to work wherever I want: home, coffee shop, gym, whatever, hence my name, the freedom days that I'm going to be having. So anyway, I just wanted to share that. It's definitely a huge shift in my thinking with work and I'm excited about it. So anyway, I just kind of wanted to go through a few ways that I'm hoping to set up my work life this year, especially in regards to working one day a week. There's some things I have to be strategic about, there's some things I have to let go of. And so I'm just going to kind of walk you through my mindset and then we'll check back in June and see how I'm actually doing.

So first I'm having a really heavy focus on being productive and not busy. This is my first day of work, like I said, and I'm already learning there are ways that I could be more productive. And one of the ways is I need to prepare in advance. I need to prepare ahead of time really well so that when I send the kiddos off to Michelle's and preschool for the day, I'm ready to go. So that's one thing I've already learned is just to maximize my productivity by preparing ahead of time, having all of their bags packed, all of their lunches packed everything done the night before. Even having my day planned out by the hour the day before, or if I wake up super early in the morning of it's really going to enhance my productivity.

So I don't know if you've ever read the book, the 4-Hour Workweek by Tim Ferriss, but it's so good, and he kind of goes through this acronym that's called DEAL, D-E-A-L and I'm really kind of embracing these things kind of as I think about this new work rhythm and this new work life for me and just focusing on being productive and doing the right things and not staying busy.

So the D stands for definition and that is all about what it means to be rich or redefining or defining what it means to be “rich”. And I’m not after being rich, but I do talk a lot about and think a lot about my definition of success right now in my life and what that looks like and how success doesn’t mean “being rich” or having a lot of money. But success to me looks like being home with my three little kids more so I don’t feel like I missed out on these little years and working out almost every day, which is something I’ve really never done consistently. Reading, speaking life right here on this podcast, these are the things that look and feel successful and right and God’s assignment for my life right now. So with three little kids that feels like a full, full life and I feel like it’s where I should be. So, D-definition: defining success and to me that’s one day a week.

Now elimination is the E and he talks about just eliminating whatever you don’t need. Again, focusing on what’s most important, being the most productive. He talks about the Pareto principle and you know that’s the 80/20 rule where 20% of your actions are responsible for 80% of your outcomes. So I want to focus, what 20% of the things that I did in my work last year, those are the things that I want to do in my one day of work this year. Obviously it doesn’t translate exactly because I’m not doing the exact same kind of work, but that’s the idea. Again, Pareto principle is that 20% of your customers are responsible for 80% of your profits, 20% of your inefficiencies are responsible for 80% of your losses. So it really is me coming in here with wide eyes and knowing these are the things I need to focus on and these are the things I need to eliminate.

The A in the acronym DEAL stands for automation, which is basically getting really good at something and then delegating it to someone else or figuring out the process of something and then offloading it, delegating. And this is something I’ve learned really well with having a team for so long. I’m not saying I’m great at delegating, I think every leader constantly needs to learn to delegate over and over again, but I do still have a team member, Sammy Jo who works with me. I outsource the editing of this podcast. I am all about outsourcing. Sammy Jo does a lot of the admin scheduling stuff. I mean, she makes the podcasts look good, she does the graphics, I don’t do all of that all of that is taken care of where I can show up on my work day and all I focus on is content and recording and that’s it and that’s what I’m going to do. Also the emails that only I can write or, yeah, just the things that only I can do is basically what my focus is.

The L in DEAL stands for liberation and I mean, that’s the freedom that you’re looking for in his book *The Four Hour Work Week*, is that you’re free to do the things that you want to do... Anyway, I’m not meaning to get so deep into this book, but basically the idea is you want to be free to do what you really want to do and you want to get enough income from this activity so you can pursue your dreams now instead of in the future. And I am basically starting another business in a way, this podcast and this kind of new content business is just a different focus than photography. My education stuff, I’ve actually been doing this business for several years, but it’s just my only focus now.

Anyway, bottom line is what do I really want to do? I have one day a week to give to this busi-

ness and this work, so I need to find out how to make the most of it so that I can be free, ask that I can be free to do the things that I feel like God wants me to do right now. So first I'm just going to focus on being productive and not busy. Second, I'm only going to do the essential things. I just talked a little bit about this, but if you've ever read the book *Essentialism*, you know it is such a good focuser, that book focuses you. What are the things that only you can do? And I know right now in my life I'm the only one who can be Mama to these three little kids, that is essential. That's a big reason why I quit my business and am now working a lot more limited and that is essential work to me right now.

What else is essential? My voice on this podcast, the content I'm making, me writing on my Instagram, my blog, the email newsletters that go out, answering emails that only I can answer, only doing the things that I can do. Greg McKeown says in his book, *Essentialism*, "Essentialism is not about how to get more things done. It's about how to get the right things done. It doesn't mean just doing less for the sake of less either. It is about making the wisest possible investment of your time and energy in order to operate at our highest point of contribution by doing only what is essential."

I think over the last 12 years of business, I started out and thought, "You know what? I can do all the things." And when you start out you kind of have to, I can do all the things but if there's any lesson I've learned as I've grown my business, it's the power of outsourcing and when you can free yourself by hiring other people to do the work, it allows you to work more on the business instead of in it and you can get profitable faster. So yeah, just focusing on what's essential for me and letting the rest go to other people or be delegated.

Okay, number three, I'm letting go of making a lot of money. This obviously plays a huge part into this decision. I have to speak to the finances of it, it just is a huge part of this. Now, to give you some backstory throughout our marriage, Will and I have both worked the whole time. We've both been pulling in an income. We've both stopped working at different times to pursue something new and it's been really sweet to be able to support each other in that way throughout the years as we've had different job changes. Now as I've closed Nancy Ray Photography, I have intentionally let go of my income and I'm so thankful for Will's current job and God's provision and we've lived on one income before, we know how to do this, we bootstrapped our way to paying off our house, we know how to do this. But God has provided and we're going to be fine it's just going to be different, because I'm not bringing in my income anymore.

So it's funny though, more than just moving to his one income, the thing that's been hard for me has been my identity. I'm still working through this, but I've had a lot of pride when it comes to me bringing home money. All throughout the years I think that I've just had this, "I'm proud of the fact that I've run this business and I'm proud of the fact that I've been one of the contributors to our household financially." And I silently without knowing it I think I've linked my identity to what I can produce and I think this is one of the ways that God is loving me in a deep and healing way this year because he's called me to close down my business. To really

get it through my brain and my heart that I am not what I make financially. My value is just because I'm me because God made me in his image because he loves me, not because of what I can do.

Now the tricky part for me is I love being an entrepreneur. I love business. I love figuring out ways to bring in an income. I love this podcast. I love dreaming. I love creating online courses. I love doing these things. It's like a puzzle to solve and as energizing for me. I have a few close friends that are not like that at all. That is so draining and frustrating to them. But that's just how God has wired me, is to constantly be innovating and dreaming. And anyway, I feel like also God wants us to be givers, financially and that takes making money to do that. And I love the idea of making money so we can give it. And bottom line is I'm trusting money's going to come in time, but it's not right now. And in the meantime, I'm just really trying to be happy and joyful to rest and not making very much money at all, being okay with where he has me right now. And yeah, I'm just going to leave it at that. So letting go of making a ton of money and just letting God write the story.

Number four, I'm just going at a snail's pace. When you work one day a week, you realize it's going to take a long time. You can be productive and maximize your time but I tell you what, I'd get to where I'm going a lot faster if I'm working five or six days a week. But that's not the life I want. And that's not what success looks like for me right now. So I am embracing snail's pace. I'm good with it. I'm going to just trust God's going to provide and I'm just going to rest in that. So going a lot slower than I'm used to.

Number five, okay, this is kind of my strategy this year, I don't know how it's going to work out, I'll be interested to come back in June and let you know. But I have four working days a month and I'm kind of blocking my day, so I don't know if you do any time blocking or batch work, but this is my plan:

My first work day is going to be my content days. So I'm going to work on content for all the podcasts I'm going to work on any other content that I'm making, whether it's for an educational course, or teaching, or maybe I'm speaking somewhere, whatever it is that's all about content.

The second day is podcast recording days, where I basically just hole up in this little guest room closet that I record in and I record four to six episodes in one day.

The third day of work will be my interview days, so I'm hoping to kind of batch any interviews that I have with other guests on the podcast all on the same day.

And then the fourth day of work will just be my admin or planning day, or maybe I'll have a bigger project I'm trying to tackle, or a photo shoot I need to do, or I don't know, I don't know what it's going to look like, but that's going to be a day where I just do what I need to do.

So that's pretty much it. That's what I'm hoping and planning for my working one day a week life to look like. Living life within these really beautiful and kind of difficult boundaries is hard but I'm just choosing to love it. And I'm one day in, but so far so good, I am loving it. And in some ways this is kind of an experiment, I've never done it before. I'm learning how to truly build another business, like I said, at a snail's pace, so that I can live the life I want and fulfill the assignment God has given me for this season, being a mama and speaking life and that's it. I'm excited to try it and I can't wait to check back in with you in six months to tell you how it's really going.

All right, it's time for the Work & Play Cornerstore, this is where I have a little fun, I will draw mostly from my personal life and experiences to bring you a book I'm loving and a thing I'm loving. So the only rule I'm going to stick by is that it's something I personally use or recommend and I may get a tiny commission from anything bought, but that's going to help me continue to bring this podcast to you.

So today I'm going to be adding the book, *The 4-Hour Work Week* since I talked about it so much. It really is that good, well worth the read even if you don't agree with everything, very thought provoking, very good. And my new favorite pair of workout shoes, so I work out this morning on my first freedom day, that's a new rule I have for myself too, is on these work days I have to work out, I have to take care of my body, I have to move my body. And I work out in these shoes, I've recorded three podcasts episodes in these shoes—maybe two, I don't know—anyway, I do housework in these shoes. I just got them between Christmas and my birthday a few weeks ago. They're lightweight, they're light gray, they're Adidas, they're on Amazon. They've been awesome, super easy to slip on, just wanted to share them with you because I really like doing mom stuff and working out in them and I think they look really good.

Thanks for listening to Episode 41 of *Work & Play* with Nancy Ray. Everything I've mentioned today can be found in the show notes at nancyray.com/podcast/41 and you can find me at nancyray.com or follow me at Nancy Ray on Instagram or Facebook almost daily. In the famous words of Henry David Thoreau,

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams, live the life you've always imagined.”

Whatever that looks like for you in the season, whatever success looks like for you, I hope you can make the brave choice and do just that.

Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.