

DEAR MINDFUL CHANGEMAKER,



HOSTED BY
MEICO MARQUETTE WHITLOCK



Dear Mindful Changemaker Podcast

Episode Eleven - Courtney Hinton Transcript

Podcast Intro

Meico: As a changemaker, you're dedicated to making a positive difference in the world. You love what you do, and you're good at it. But here's the thing. With all the things on your plate, you may struggle with finding the right balance between work and having a fulfilling personal life. And as the world becomes more complex, it may seem change, disruption, and uncertainty have become new norms in your life and work.

Meico: But it doesn't have to be this way. I'm Meico Marquette Whitlock, and I'm on a mission to help changemakers like you improve your well being while increasing your well doing and changing the world without burning out. In every episode, my intention is simple, to share practical wisdom about the inner and the outer work required to take care of yourself while building a better world, especially when it feels like work doesn't love you back.

Meico: So, let's get started.

Part One

Meico: Welcome to another exciting episode of the Mindful Changemaker Podcast. I am here with a friend and with a colleague, an all around great soul. Her name is Courtney Hinton a self proclaimed Jill of all trades. She is based in the Washington, D. C. area and has a background in public health and currently owns a graphic design and video editing company, called Designs by Courtney H. And in addition to this work, she is a creative that provides operations consulting for small businesses. And in that capacity, she also serves as the director of operations for Mindful Techie. So there are lots of things that happen behind the scenes to keep us running, including this

podcast and Courtney plays an integral part in making sure that those things happen. I'm excited to be a part of this conversation with you so people can actually get to talk with somebody who's actually working day in and day out behind, behind the scenes. In addition to all of her skills and her talents, Courtney is an amazing singer, songwriter, and voiceover artist.

Meico: And she is currently working on her debut EP, The Courtney Hinton Experience. And in her leisure time, she enjoys the theater scene, is a soprano in her choir, and is skilled at neatly folding a fitted sheet. I know there are lots of folks that are listening. You probably came to this podcast episode because you want to specifically know something about folding a fitted sheet.

Meico: If that is you, then you are in the right place at the right time. Courtney Hinton, welcome to the podcast.

Courtney: Thank you, Meico.

Meico: So I'm excited to have this conversation with you. And I shared a little bit about you in your bio, a little bit of a sketch, but I really want to just kick things off asking one of my favorite questions as we kick off this conversation series, which is, briefly in your own words, tell us who is Courtney and what do you want people to know about you when they think about Courtney?

Courtney: Great. You said it in my bio, I like to say that I am a Jill of all skills. I'm a creative, organized, passionate person. I've been really blessed to, at this point in my life, be living where a lot of my creative expressions are they have place and space to live and thrive, but I've also been really organized.

Courtney: I think sometimes there's a stereotype that creative people are just totally free spirits and are away from organization. And I straddle the fence of having, strong muscles in both worlds where I can be very creative, but I'm also very organized. I like to say I'm also reformed type A person, and I love life.

Courtney: So I love my life, so I'm also very passionate about everything I do.

Meico: Excellent. So I love that you're passionate and you love your life and, you love your life and everything about it. So I love that. And I love that you shared that, I guess if we're looking at this as a left brain, right brain, you're able to straddle, or you able to exercise both of those.

Meico: I think that is awesome. And I'm excited to hear how that bears out in the work that you're doing and how you're showing up in the world. And so with that, why don't we start with where you started on this journey? If you can remember your first real job that you ever had, however you define real, can you share with us what that was?

Courtney: Yes, so I have two definitions of real. In high school, I like to say it was it started off as a volunteer position, but I ended up did I ended up getting paid, but I worked or volunteered in the office at the church that I was going to. And so I was just,

assisting the administrator of the church, answering phones, getting things ready for Sunday service, which is really interesting because I do that in my capacity now like serving one of my clients is my church.

Courtney: And then, my first other real job is out of college. I got a job working in the operations department of a medical informatic company. And that's also really funny too, because I end up, even though at that time, it didn't seem like I was doing operation stuff. It was more like, the office or, on, Insecure, that type of office job.

Courtney: And there was no passion. There was no, I didn't feel fulfilled at all, but now I'm doing operations work. So it's a full circle thing. I was always on the right path, even though it didn't feel like it.

Meico: Awesome. So you, you started doing operations and admin work and you're still doing that to this day. So let's talk about that. So how would you describe how you're currently making an impact in the world right now, in a professional sense?

Courtney: In a professional sense, I would say the bulk of my work is coming from my graphic design and video editing company. So I am working, one of my biggest clients is doing social media marketing for my spiritual community, for the church. And, and then, secondary is the operation support for Mindful Techie and other small businesses.

Courtney: That's where I feel like I'm making the most impact professionally. So offering my creative skills, but within the social media marketing, there's still like a lot of organization and planning and strategy that comes along with that. And, I actually think that why I'm drawn to that or how I became good at that is from my innate, I don't know if there's like an inner anxiety that I've always had growing up and so having order and structure was important to me.

Courtney: And so if it wasn't given to me I created it. And so I'm walking into every situation of how do I make this safe for me. And that's knowing what's next or knowing where things are and so creating that type of order and organization in all of my work.

Meico: I love that. And I love that how you're translating that into the folks that you work with. And I wonder if you can say more about who you work with and who's an ideal client, because you mentioned Mindful Techie and small businesses, but is it just any small business? I know you have a background also in working with nonprofits, so can you say a bit more about who you enjoy working with and who your ideal client is?

Courtney: Sure. I don't necessarily have an ideal client in terms of like field or things like that. I do have a background in public health, as well. I've worked on a lot of different fields in my life. My ideal client is someone that though is really passionate about doing good work and really doing work that improves the lives of others.

Courtney: The nonprofit space is a space that I've worked with a lot of clients. I've also worked, with a consultant that did change management for nonprofits, and providing, administrative and, or, operational support for her. So really, it's just about people that are mission focused.

Courtney: I've had clients that also were related to my degree. I have a degree in African American studies. One of my clients was the, an association for, Carter G. Woodson's Association. So working with them. But pretty much what I really love is that clients that are clear about what they want to do.

Courtney: And I'm just stepping in to either help them create their, how it visually looks or how to do what they want to do more efficiently. But my ideal client is someone like you. Working with you has been a dream because you're very clear about what you want, and then you give me the permission to find the most efficient way to do it, or help you identify creative ways to get things done or document them so that there's systematic focus and things like that.

Courtney: So what's most important for me, if I'm looking at a client is who are they helping and are they clear about what they want to do? And that then just helps me help them be more efficient or do it in a stylish way.

Meico: Excellent. And so I'm hearing from this, what you shared is that you're looking for folks that are mission driven or purpose driven, right? You're looking at who they're serving, right? And how they are making an impact, how they are making a positive difference. And then you're looking for folks that are clear, right?

Meico: And so in terms of mindful changemaking, one of the things we talk about is clarity of purpose or intention or why. And then making sure that the things that you're engaged in are aligned with that why or with that mission. So it sounds like you're very clear about people got to be centered in that.

Meico: And then you can come in and help them if they're clear about that.

Courtney: Absolutely.

Meico: So is there anything more you want to say about that?

Courtney: No, I think that sums it up pretty well.

Meico: Okay, keeping on this topic, is there a specific experience or project that people really understand, the impact that you're making? Is there a specific project or experience that really stands out in terms of, how you got started on this journey, where you had like an aha moment, hey, I want to do this, or I want to, in your case, you mentioned you already started on the path, but you, and you continued on the path.

Meico: So was there something where that clicked for you at some point where you're like, Hey, I actually want to do this, but in a different way.

Courtney: Absolutely. After I left that first real job, the office job in the operations department, I took a hard pivot into public health and started working in the nonprofit space. Which was really rewarding, really fulfilling, but I was doing direct service, which also increased my burnout very quickly.

Courtney: And so I did that for probably about three years at one place, and then I transitioned to a different field, still doing direct service, but in all of those positions, and then once I reached the burnout, I came out of the nonprofit space and went into the operation space in the corporate world.

Courtney: And the one thing about all of those things is I was never really fulfilled. Because in larger organizations, there's still always some level of inefficiency or bureaucracy. And so there is a stifling feeling. I just wasn't able to be my full self. There were things that I learned about myself, at the first public health position, I was able to take my understanding of, I'm like, I'm self-taught as a graphic designer, but I was able to use those skills to market some of our events. So that became something that like, oh, I'm really good at this. I was told to continue to do that. When I experienced a job transition, and I needed to create some financial stability for myself, I asked people, hey, can I make you some flyers and you pay me.

Courtney: And so that became something that like, okay, I can do graphic design, and people will pay me for to do it so that's one thing. And the other thing was actually the pandemic. At the start of the before the pandemic, like that year, January 2020, I had started doing freelancing full time as an operations consultant.

Courtney: And it was pretty much though creating another job for myself so it wasn't really running my business but I was working in a job for myself. And I was still experiencing the same things that I was when I was having another job. And I wanted to pivot into more of my creative stuff, going back to the graphic design.

Courtney: And during the pandemic, my brother was turning 30. And I told my mom that we could not miss this milestone, even though we're in the pandemic. So we threw him a surprise Zoom birthday party, but I also did a 19 minute documentary of his life. And that experience one was so fulfilling. In so many ways, one, just doing the work of video editing and coming up with the whole concept and storyline and organizing all of the content was great.

Meico: But then it was also for someone that I love, Yes.

Courtney: And it was a really meaningful project. And after I finished that, that became like a marketing tool for me to show people, Hey, I can do this. And it started where someone was like, Oh, can you do this for my wedding? And I did it for their wedding.

Courtney: And then I was able to, with your help and coaching, be more intentional about developing my portfolio so that I'm in this space now of offering my creative talents in a more fulfilling way and more intentionally to clients.

Meico: Excellent. And I love, so there are a couple of nuggets there that I really love how you express, which is that you, you found yourself in the right space, but you found yourself, it sounds like, navigating and trying to figure out how could you do what you wanted to do. And I'm more in your words, in a more fulfilling,

Meico: and in a more intentional way. So sometimes we can be showing up. Sometimes we can be busy. Sometimes we might even be doing what externally

might seem like great work, but we're not really in it. And that leads to burnout and demotivation. And so it sounds like you were part of this journey for you was,

Meico: okay, you found the spot. But like, how do you make that feel good? And I love how you moved on that journey. And I love how you talk about with your brothers, your brother's video. I've seen this video. I think I've seen that video, or clips of it. And, I love how that love then translates into an expression that other people can then tap into and say, Hey, can you create this kind of experience for me?

Meico: So you mentioned that, that documentary, right? And I think you, can you share, what the impact of that moment was for your family and for your brother, with the audience?

Courtney: Absolutely. It was really awesome because, family and I was able to reach out to some of his friends, they were all able to be on the zoom and watch it collectively. And it was a surprise to him. He didn't know it. I will say for me personally, I'm an older sister and I was the first born.

Courtney: So I was an only child for six years before he came along, doing that documentary made me feel like I was his parent, actually. So I have more love for my brother after the experience. And it was also something that was, I think my parents were blown away by what I was able to do. I had to work with my mother to get the content together and everything.

Courtney: So she actually had to go down memory lane as well. But what was really amazing is that one of his friends, said that after watching the video, she said, what I know now is that my sibling doesn't love me as much as they need to. You know, it was just a really, it's not even, I'm not even trying to brag about it but it was just a really awesome opportunity to show like how blessed I am to have such a wonderful family, and that we're all like really actively engaged in displaying and showing and preserving our love for each other, and he'll have that for the rest of his life.

Meico: I love that. And I love that. and we're gonna talk about this a bit later on in terms of self care practices and rituals. But it sounds like one of those is the strong family network that you have. And, when we talk about burnout and when we talk about doing the work that we're doing in terms of really making an impact in the world in a sustainable way.

Meico: And one of the things that we know that's really important is having those networks. And so I'm excited that you have that and that it's part of your work, part of the genesis for this current phase of your work. So we talked about your brother's documentary. Is there another project or initiative that you're particularly proud of when you think about your body of work so far?

Courtney: I'm sure there are others that one was top of mind because it really, it's a marker for the transition into this type of work, into the like more video editing and the creative. I would also say like currently the work that I'm doing for my spiritual center in the church. like churches are really experiencing a downturn in terms of attendance,

Courtney: and they're, working really hard to stay relevant. And so bringing them to social media, and being creative, it's really interesting. And then also what's really great about what I'm able to do is that I'm creating like an intergenerational type of content because there's this huge age range of people who are attending already and people who I'm reaching out to.

Courtney: So it's a space where I'm learning every day, and being creative all the time. I'm changing and, making mistakes and, and, continuing to grow. So it's something I'm really proud of because I wasn't sure if I could do it. And so far it's been going really well.

Meico: Yes. And I think what you point out is really important there. So I want to just, I want to acknowledge that. That one of the things that we encounter and that I see a lot of clients I work with is this idea of imposter syndrome, right? That, not me, like I, I, call someone else, like I, I'm not the one that you want to do this, or I don't believe that I can do this.

Meico: I'm not the person for this leadership role or whatever the situation is. And, based on what you shared, it sounds like you have been able to work through that, and you're still working through that. It's an active thing that you're engaged in, and you talk about embracing the failures, right?

Meico: There are the failures, embracing the failures, and it sounds like it's part of a, what I would describe as like a growth mindset, where you're, you remain open, you remain curious, and you're constantly on this path of learning. Accepting that part of the learning is what we might call the failure, right?

Meico: And how we grow. You want to say more about that?

Courtney: Absolutely. I feel like that's a muscle that I've really strengthened as I've taken on freelancing and pivoting into graphic design because I'm self taught in all of it. So it was facing imposter syndrome and then taking on this social media client. It was all about imposter syndrome and what I've learned so far,

Courtney: is like what you said, it's an active daily practice. Like my comfort zone is so much bigger than it's ever been because every day I was challenging myself to do something different. And the other thing that I've learned or what I'm accepting and believing is that no one knows what they're doing. Like even, and I was thinking about even as a surgeon, yeah, there are certain things, there are certain rules that have to be followed, but everyone learned those through practice.

Courtney: That's why they call it a medical practice. And just because it's been done one way doesn't mean that it can't be done another way. And that's where innovation comes through. And so it's about, as I'm doing my work, I do some research on what have people done that are best, but then I'm trying other things that work for my client that maybe other people haven't done.

Courtney: And if it's working for my client, I'm going to continue to do it. And as I consult with other clients, then I'm teaching them how to do that. And then that's the

norm. Is that being an imposter? I don't know. It's working. So it's like recognizing that everyone's pretty much winging it until they're doing it.

Courtney: And I have the evidence of doing it over and over again every day. So I can't those voices that say, I don't know what I'm doing, they're not true anymore.

Meico: Yes, and I think you are the process. So there's a process here that you described and I want the folks that are listening to understand this. In the work that we've done together, we talked about the ACE framework, right? So acknowledging, confronting, executing, based on what those limiting beliefs,

Meico: or doubts, or fears are, right. And so there are three things that as you're all listening to Courtney, I want you all to hear. So the first is an acknowledgment, right? This is acknowledging like this is how I'm feeling. These are the feelings that I'm having. These are the thoughts that are coming up. And it's important for us to acknowledge that's an important healing point. I think when we suppress those things and we dig ourselves deeper into this imposter syndrome or whatever the negative emotion or feeling or thoughts that we're experiencing. But then you confronted those. You talked about telling the truth about those and looking at the body of evidence and you also talked about even before you had concrete evidence, making a decision that you want to learn something,

Meico: however small it was, bit by bit, day by day, to overcome that. And that part is the execution, right? So you're acknowledging, you're telling the truth about it, and then you have a plan to keep moving and making progress. Is there more you want to say, about that?

Courtney: No, I think that's it. I would just emphasize like what you said. It's small. It's day by day, and I think yeah. If I could give like a specific example in terms of the social media marketing, like when it came to, figuring out how am I going to keep track of all of this content?

Courtney: There are lots of different social media marketing tools out there. I could have stayed in analysis paralysis of I don't know which one to use. This one, I did some research on it. But then I just went with the most economical one for me that had the platforms that I was looking for.

Courtney: And I'm like, I'm going to try it. And so far it's been great. And then they've made upgrades that make it even easier to use. So I'm like, it's, there's no wrong way to do it. I'm not doing it wrong because I'm not using this one platform that so many other social media marketers use. I'm using the one that works for me.

Meico: And if it, if there becomes a time where I need to change, I can do it, but I was willing to take that risk and make the mistake. And it's just it's those small decisions over and over again every day, and being willing to be like, I'm just going to try it, Yes. And I think that, that is so important. And I appreciate you sharing that and really giving people a practical understanding of how that has borne out and evolved for you.

Meico: So can you, do you want to say more about that?

Courtney: Yeah, I feel like. I just had an experience yesterday where I had a new consulting client that wanted to bring some social media marketing to their business. So now people, just six months ago, I was like, I don't know if I'm a social media marketer. And I got on this call with this client and I'm dumping all of this information.

Courtney: I'm like, Oh, wow, I really do know what I'm talking about. And he didn't know anything. So it was a wealth of knowledge. So for anyone who has been doing a thing and still feels like they don't know enough, find someone who doesn't know anything about it and tell them about it and just show yourself how much you actually do know.

Courtney: And as long as you're continuing to do it and not plateauing, if you're I think that's that might be another key. One of the reasons why I feel like I'm continuing to grow in this role is part of the service that I'm offering to the client is a monthly analytic report. So I'm taking a look at what's working, what's not working.

Courtney: And so I'm constantly evolving and like looking for more resources, so that I'm not plateauing. I'm not just, oh, I got this far and it worked, so let me just keep doing it. No, I'm looking, did this work? Did this not work? What if I change this? Will this work better? And so that's how you continue to grow, but if you're still feeling I don't know what I'm doing, go find someone who doesn't know anything about it and just tell them what you and you'll see how much you do know.

Courtney: I love that idea of telling someone who doesn't know, what you do know and testing out that this idea that you are an imposter, that you don't know. And I also love the other point that you just made as well, in terms of the continual growth, right? So I tell people that this is not a one time flip of the switch.

Meico: It's also not a one size fits all. So you have to find what works for you. But also adapt this idea that it is an ongoing process.

Sponsor Break

Meico: All right, it's time for a break. We'll be right back after a brief message from our sponsors.

Meico: Changemakers like you are driven to do more and more, often with fewer and fewer resources. But there comes a breaking point where your passion dwindles under the weight of pressure, the mission suffers, and you feel like you love the work more than it loves you back. That's why I wrote the book *How to Thrive When Work Doesn't Love You Back*.

Meico: A practical guide for taking care of yourself while changing the world with a forward by Beth Kanter, author of the "Happy Healthy Nonprofit." This book is a succinct, practical, and action-based guide for changemakers seeking to make an impact without burnout. Learn more and order your copy at

mindfulchangemaker.org/books. That's mindfulchangemaker.org/books. The reality is, if you really want to make a difference, you must start by taking time for yourself right now because you can't change the world if you're not around long enough to make that happen. This isn't about working harder and smarter, it's about making a commitment to work differently so you can take care of yourself while making an impact for the long haul.

Meico: In "How to Thrive and Work Doesn't Love You Back", I share practical strategies grounded in the well being while well doing change framework. And I wrote this book after experiencing more than my fair share of burnout and overwhelm in the name of saving the world during my previous career in government and non profit work.

Meico: I share what I've learned to be the most impactful strategies for my personal practice and my experience helping changemakers around the world just like you create lasting balance in their lives. These are the same strategies I teach teams and organizations through my live trainings, self-paced courses, coaching programs, and tools like the Intention Planner.

Meico: Each chapter has a summary of key ideas and a checklist of practices you can start implementing right away. I know you need practical strategies and resources to help you create sustained balance in your life and work so you can lower your stress level. And focus on getting the important things done right now.

Meico: So, this book isn't about theoretical concepts. It's about what to do and how to do it. Learn more and order your copy at mindfulchangemaker.org/books. That's mindfulchangemaker.org/books.

Meico: All right, let's get back to our conversation.

Part Two

Meico: I want to ask you about how you stay inspired and motivated. Because we're talking about the shiny milestones,

Courtney: You mentioned social media marketing. Generally speaking, I would say that it's fair that businesses and brands and people, they put forth their best on this.

Meico: It's like a snapshot in time, and people are putting forth, generally speaking, like their best snapshots, which is what you would expect. But we know that it's not always like that, right? So there, there are snapshots and things that are on, the proverbial cutting room floor that don't get to social media.

Courtney: And so we have those natural ups and downs as part of the growth process, right? So can you talk about. How you stay inspired, how you stay motivated through those inevitable ups and downs on the journey.

Courtney: Absolutely. There are a couple of things. What I'm currently doing right now, which is keeping me showing up every day is doing something that I learned from coaching with you, which is using a habit tracker. And I've customized it for myself. There are right now at this iteration of it, there's four metrics that I'm tracking.

Courtney: They have different things, like one, I'm only trying to do it four times a week, or when I'm trying to do for 35 minutes a week. And then I have all these other things that are like extra credit. But that helped me keep me afloat. And some of those are like meditate five minutes a day or write in my journal or write out my affirmation.

Courtney: So things that are anchored in my spiritual practice or things that are anchored into my health goals, am I drinking enough water, but keeping track of them daily and the way that I, I augmented my tracker to do like a percentage. So it's almost like a report card. So I have it broken down each week where it's calculating the percentage.

Courtney: So I can see if, I, and I have it, it's just a basic Google sheet. and I have it separated.

Meico: a copy of that.

Courtney: Okay. I have

Meico: made it fancier than I used, so I need a copy of that.

Courtney: And so I have it separated, by month. And so I can look at a month and say, okay, what looks like on the third. week of each month, I may be dipping in productivity, but I also see the percentages and the averages for the month as I'm generally doing at least 50%

Courtney: each month. So I get to applaud myself, recognize there's ups and downs. I'm also doing another thing that I've learned from you, with the Intention Planner, and this is a practice you used to do on social media is every week I'm looking at what worked and what didn't work. So what I'm doing for my clients every month, looking at what worked and didn't work with the content I'm putting out, I'm also like assessing and I'm writing it down on the tracker. So I have another tracker, within the track or another page where I'm typing up my weekly review and what worked, what didn't work, what were my wins? How am I going to pivot? What came up that got in the way? And I also enrolled an accountability buddy to help me keep track.

Courtney: So on every Sunday at five, she's looking to see, did I make my weekly plan? Did I do my weekly report card? Did I set my priorities for the week? And I recognize that I needed that extra accountability because I wasn't doing it on my own. So I asked for help. But those things, that tracker alone helps me do those things that keep me filled.

Courtney: So My spiritual practice is really important to help keep me filled. And then with that what I've learend through, I really started to implement this in January. I was

trying to do versions of it last year and it fell off. And so I fixed it. I tweaked it for me. But another thing that really keeps me filled.

Courtney: I recognize that I have to take the time to do the things that I love. So I love theater, and, I volunteer at a theater. So I see the shows at that theater, but I came across a discount for another theater. So I treated myself to a three show package at that theater. So I'm seeing even more theater.

Courtney: There's a park nearby me that I love and I hadn't gone at all this year. And so there was a nice warm day and I'm enjoying the climate change. I was like, I felt guilty and then kept putting it off and never making it before the park closed. So I said, one Friday morning, I'm taking my laptop and I'm going to go do work at the park.

Courtney: Because I know it, it fills me up. And so I was able to let go of the guilt because I was being productive, but in a place that I loved. I love doing my nails. And so taking, I had been putting off my manicure and pedicure because I'm like, I gotta get my work done. But it makes me feel better to look at a manicured nail when I'm typing on my keyboard than when I'm not.

Courtney: So like I make, I'm forcing myself to make time. For example, one Sunday. I had a social event after the choir sang, and I also needed to get work done. But what usually would happen is I would take my laptop with me. I'd find some place to work and I'd be like, Oh, I don't have time to do my nails.

Courtney: And because I need to get to the social event. No, I said, if you don't do your nails first, then you're not going to do it. So I did my nails and while they dried, I did my work. It just, I just forced myself and that taught me that I had enough time. But if I put it off until later, I wasn't going to do it.

Courtney: So it's, figuring out how to give myself the courage to put myself on the list and keep myself on the list.

Meico: So I love that. And so what I'm hearing in terms of what you're doing to stay inspired and motivated is adding yourself at the top of your to do list, right? And holding yourself accountable for staying there. And then you also, it sounds like you have a plan for your days and for your week and you're using this tracker to do a report card on your progress, and then you actually have accountability.

Meico: So none of us walks this journey alone. So you actually have someone walking this journey along with you. Someone who is supporting you. And for folks that are just wondering about impact specifically when it comes to having your daily, weekly plan, whatever form that looks like, and having the tracker, can you describe for folks that may not understand?

Meico: Like, how does that keep you inspired and motivated?

Courtney: Absolutely. So, the accountability came in after we, the friend who has access to my tracker, we started last year. We took your course at the beginning of the year. And we took it together and we decided to become accountability buddies.

Courtney: And so we were meeting monthly to check in on our goals. I recognized at the end of last year that monthly wasn't enough for me. And that's when I set up the tracker and gave her access for to, to keep me on track weekly. And we just had our meeting, our monthly meeting before this call. And I was telling her that.

Courtney: Well, February wasn't like January. And she said, I want to ask you if you didn't have this tracker, what would February have look like? And I was like, it would have looked like a mess. I'm not as productive, in terms of the output this month because there are things that came up, but if I didn't have this tracker, like if I didn't have this anchoring to go back to, I wouldn't have anything to hold me accountable.

Courtney: And then like the weeks that I'm not. I'm not able to do all of the things. I'm still able to look back and say, I did at least 50%. So that, and that inspires me to get to it. And it's also like a video game. I want to beat the high score. So it's motivating me to continue to show up for myself, even if I'm not beating the high score.

Courtney: It's okay, if I might be able to, if I keep going, I haven't set this up this way, but I could even put an annual average, which would help me even more long term. So it's I may have a whole month where it looks bad, but if I look at the total of 2023, that gives me motivation for 2024.

Courtney: Let me see if I can beat that score.

Meico: I think that's so beautiful. And I think there are a few things in there that are really powerful. One, it sounds like you're gamifying the process, right? Folks that are really competitive, or maybe you find joy and fun in a gamified process. I love how you share that this is, you made this in a way that it feels like that for you, right?

Meico: With this tracking, right? So it's not just like a real thing you're doing, but it's actually like a fun thing that you're engaged in. It also sounds like you are shifting your perspective on the scores, right? That you're tracking, right? So in other words, it sounds like you are looking at it objectively, like this is a metric, right?

Meico: But this is not a judgment

Courtney: Oh yeah.

Meico: against me, right? So can you share about that? Because I think sometimes when People get discouraged with the tracking because they see it as like a report card that is judging them as a human being, right?

Courtney: Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely. I think that, I've done a lot of work in therapy and a lot of spiritual work, too. And I feel like I'm doing this all the time, though, of, recognizing that my worth is intrinsic, and there's nothing external that impacts that.

And for me, this is all about accountability, it's not about, I think one thing that helps me with that is also, something that I've gotten from you with coaching.

Courtney: Like we, we had a version of a report card, but it was just so that I could build my trust in myself that I can do things, but also to have something to celebrate. I'm celebrating every single win, regardless if it's nothing, there are some metrics on my planner or my tracker that I haven't done at all, because I'm baby stepping my way there.

Courtney: I'm mastering the small things but it's not about, I'm worthy, or I'm good, or I'm bad if I don't do anything. No, that's intrinsic. The fact that I'm showing up for myself at all, is what makes me worthy, is what makes gives me something to celebrate. So this is just a measure I to keep me organized, that whole anxiety thing.

Courtney: This helps keep me organized and clearly identifying what my priorities are. And, the things that I'm tracking are the things that I know help me get further, so it's not The thing, the things on my tracker aren't even related to work, really, like I'm not measuring the outcomes of my work.

Courtney: I may be measuring the structure of my work. So one of my metrics is I'm using the Pomodoro method when I work is. Can I get two sessions every day or five times a day, five times a week for one client, right? I'm not measuring how much output I'm getting in those sessions, but am I just showing up for the session?

Courtney: So I'm, and then like the other metrics, like I said, are about my spiritual work or about my health. I'm tracking the things that I know are going to help me be the best me to show up, but I'm not tracking Am I making this much money or am I creating this? I'm not that I feel would be a hang up for me and it would be easier for me to be like, oh, I'm a bad person or things like that, so I'm staying away from measuring those types of things.

Courtney: It's more about measuring the process, not the product.

Meico: Yes, so making the decision between measuring the process versus the product and, if I'm backing out a little bit, it sounds like you're intentionally choosing metrics that have meaning to you,

Meico: right

Meico: And so someone else might say, Oh, you should be measuring

Meico: how many posts you created in one hour or how much money you made today, but something those, at least at this particular point in your journey, like those are meaningful measures for you in terms of what you're trying to accomplish. So I think that's important that you identify the metrics that make sense for you and that are meaningful for you.

Meico: So on this particular topic, sometimes work can be all consuming. And you've talked about the things that you do love, right? You love your life. You love living. And you love theater. You mentioned the things that you do in terms of the manicures and the pedicures, going to the park and a whole host of things, singing in the choir. Can you help folks understand, particularly in those busy seasons of life, how you maintain a balance that works for you?

Courtney: Yep. Again, therapy has been really good at that. And, I think for me, right now I'm in a busy season. I'm still working. I've taken on another side income gig, and I'm also caring for my aunt who had her knee replaced. And so I recognize that there are some things that aren't going to get done.

Courtney: I told my accountability partner, like I'm letting go some of these goals for right now, but the things that I'm keeping are the things that I know I have to get done, right? I know I have to fulfill these things. Those stay and then something for me, I, again, this is really help, what really helped me in therapy to get to this place to be able to do this is assertiveness training, which is being able to ask for what I need in a way that my needs are met, like being able to speak up and advocate for myself. And also being able to say no. One of the, it can be really uncomfortable to say no. So figuring out how to say no, sometimes for me, it's just no full stop. Sometimes it's I would love to help you, but I can do it later or I'm not able to help,

Courtney: but this is what I am able to do. And a lot of times I'm being assertive with myself, right? I'm putting this on the calendar, I think for me, busy times, it's important for me to do things that I paid for. So this week I paid for a ticket for a play. I'm going to go see it. If it was just go to the park, it'd be easy for me to put that off.

Courtney: But I invested money. So I'm going to go do that. And I just recognized, especially in other busy times when I've let work go in front of other things. One of the things I learned in February is that I had let my sleep schedule go in, in, in lieu of being more productive, but I don't feel as great.

Courtney: But I know that when I go see a good play, I'm so full. I feel really great. And that inspires me to keep going. And so it is important that I, even if it's, if I, if I don't have the time to do a play, I have time to do my nails, right? I can baby step my pleasure but that gets to stay on the calendar, but I have to be assertive, even with myself sometimes, but with others that I get to say no in busy times.

Courtney: And then what I learned about with January is that, I can't have four weeks of busy and expect to be still motivated to show up. So I have to have downtime. And so either I'm going to schedule it or my body or my mind is just not going to want to do it anyway. So I might as well schedule it.

Meico: Yes. So it sounds like there are a few things happening here. One, is you're prioritizing rest, right? And you're prioritizing you by setting boundaries, right? And I love what you shared in terms of you set boundaries with yourself, right? And we know that change starts with the self. And I imagine that being able to set those boundaries with yourself then allows you to more effectively set those healthy boundaries with other folks as well. And then the final thing that I think I heard you say, is you allow

yourself to let go of things based on the season, right? And it's not that, I imagine in some cases maybe those are things that you don't pick up again, but in some cases, in many cases I imagine it's, I'm just letting this go for this season.

Meico: And we'll come back to it, right? In the Intention Planner, we have a parking lot section, so those things go into the parking lot. It's just you park your car at the airport, you go on the trip, you go on your trip, you come back, and then your car is there, and then you can go about your business.

Meico: Is there more you want to say about that?

Courtney: One of the things, that I've had to tell myself and what I'm practicing is that I can start over as many times as I need to. Like there, when it comes to my fitness, I work out at home a lot. So I follow workout at home video programs and they come with a calendar and ideally again, I am a reformed type A person but I can be type A and want to do it from start to finish.

Courtney: And if things get interrupted I'll want to start over again. For me, I've accepted that's who I am. That's how I'm going to do it. I can start over as many times as I need to. I have started over as many times and it doesn't make me a failure. It doesn't make anything. And what I've learned in the past, as I've done this over and over again, I've learned about myself.

Courtney: I'm still getting gains, even if I start over. Like it doesn't erase my progress. So it's okay to like, Say I don't have the capacity for this right now. I will do it again later or I'll start over. I can put it down. I can pick it back up. And I feel like for me, especially when it comes to working out, that makes me even stronger, so if I've done the first workout 15 times, I'm really good at it.

Meico: I love that. I love how you beautifully describe this idea of starting over as many times as you need to, that we have that, that possibility, right? And we get to choose that. to choose again and again. We get to start over as many times as we would like to. And for me, as a mindfulness teacher and taking a mindfulness based approach to this work, in mindfulness, we're reminded that every moment, every minute, every hour, every day, we're just starting over. And so every day you get to start over again, every hour you get to start over again. And so I love how you beautifully shared that.

Courtney: I will say that practicing mindfulness and meditation has helped with that because it wasn't always easy. It wasn't. I was beating myself up. So I don't want to sound like I've got it all together. And I've always been doing this. Absolutely not. I'm practicing in my meditation every day starting over, so that's helping me take that outside of my meditation.

Meico: Yes. And as spirituality in a lot of communities, and even in mindfulness, we call it a practice. And partly for that reason, right? Because, we never really get to a place where it's perfected, but it's always in process, in progress. And I also love what you said about it being okay for you to make adjustments or to right size whatever, in your case, you're talking about the workout routine, to right size it in a way that works for you.

Meico: And this is a point that I want to underscore for folks, when you're looking at what other folks are doing, You have to understand that they're giving you what works for them, right? Or they're giving you what works for somebody else.

Meico: That doesn't mean it's going to work for you like that out of the box, you might have to do some customization to get it work to working the way that you need it to work. And so I think part of this suffering that we experience is where we're trying to put on someone else's wardrobe and it doesn't fit. It doesn't fit because you haven't tailored it to fit you. And so sometimes you can't just grab stuff off the shelf. You have to go to a tailor and get it tailored to your specific needs.

Courtney: Absolutely.

Meico: So let's dive a little bit deeper. You've talked about the work that we've done together and I'm wondering if you can talk about. let's divide this in two parts. I want to talk about our personal work together, but I want to start by talking about the work that we've done together with clients that we serve.

Meico: So I mentioned to folks that you are the director of operations. Part of that means providing program support and providing onsite support when we do. live events. Can you talk about your experience in working through Mindful Techie with the clients that we serve and any observations that you might have about what the impact has been for those clients?

Courtney: I think what's really great is that, I think everyone's had the experience of maybe going to an event and, the person or some, the speaker or whoever's delivering may have some good content, but it's not

Courtney: really applicable. And you have to do all of this mental gymnastics to like, how do I apply this to me? And I think with the systems that we've created in terms of, having checklists and having a process, you're able to really learn about what the client's needs are and tailor. we just said about customization, you're doing that tailoring for the clients.

Courtney: And for me, like, when we were in this post pandemic world, and we've got some clients that are fully in person. We've got some clients that are in a hybrid format. We've got some clients that are just fully digital. And we are making sure that all of those needs are met, so like me going on site to do the site visits ahead of time and finding out everything that's needed and we're and in that process like we've talked about learning from mistakes we're doing all of that, to make sure that everything that, I've said about earlier about what we're practicing is being offered to clients in a way that they know how to practice.

Courtney: But the other thing, the other part of the work that you do, and where I feel really connected to, probably because I'm also using it or using the format is the Intention Planner. Like people getting the Intention Planners, I feel great every time I'm supporting the system that we created to get the planners out to people, and making sure that they get what they need and keeping track of the inventory and all of that, making that seamless for us.

Courtney: And, so that works. that's something that I'm really proud of.

Meico: Can we back up a second? can you, first of all, describe in your own words what the Intention Planner is? How you use it and the impact that you, that it's made on you. And can you just, I don't think people really got this, but so you're the Director of Operations. Part of the things that you do, you oversee the orders and inventory for the Intention Planner, where you order through Mindful Techie, Courtney is responsible for making sure that it actually goes out and that it gets to you.

Meico: But you're not just sending it out. Like you actually, you use it. I

Courtney: Yeah, right. Yes, yes, yes. So what I, so the Intention Planner is a planner that supports the user in clearly identifying an intention, and then working towards that intention in a 90 day format, right? There's other things within that help. Things that like I've mentioned earlier that I've integrated into my habit tracker.

Courtney: Things like a weekly review and starting your day with gratitude. But here's the biggest thing. The biggest thing that changed everything for me was not only just having a to do list, but identifying when the thing will be done, right? Like making sure that things make it to my calendar is also intention planning, right?

Courtney: It's one thing to have a, A task and break it down into bite sized pieces. It's another thing to know when it's going to be done. That's never been my strong suit. My mom always say Courtney's really good at doing her daily homework. She can do that regard and with her eyes closed, but long term projects, not a strong suit.

Courtney: So the Intention Planner helps me like, break down things into 90 day chunks, manageable chunks helps me prioritize, but it also helps in knowing when it's going to be done.

Meico: Yes. Awesome.

Meico: So we've been working together for a number of years, and you actually are a coaching client, and so I'm wondering if you can describe for folks what that experience has been like, and maybe I'll offer a grounding for whatever works for you, but if you can maybe remember where you were before we started coaching.

Courtney: Maybe helping people to understand where you are now and how the coaching helps. Absolutely. So I remember, I think when we started coaching, I was still working in the operations department in the corporate world. I wasn't doing any graphic design work. I wasn't doing any type of operations consulting. I had full on imposter syndrome. I was like, I'm self taught. I need to go take a class.

Courtney: I need to go do all of these things. And you, I think, we started a lot on mindset. Like that's we, we coached a lot on mindset. We started, I learned about like habit tracking, and I started, writing down my wins, keeping a win catalog. I started creating like a report card for myself that evolved and as my life changed, our coaching changed, right?

Courtney: So when I did start freelancing, you would help coach me on mindset about how I could use resources. And, you got me to the point where I'm working for like I have a web page. I have a business license, like I'm a full on entrepreneur through my coaching with you. You held me accountable.

Courtney: You also were a resource in terms of sharing your experience. But I think the other thing that's probably I don't know, I haven't really done a lot of I don't know if you call your service business coaching, but the one thing that I feel is really invaluable is the mindfulness piece, is a spirituality piece.

Courtney: You held space for me. There are times that I just was not ready to do any work and like I was depressed or I was crying or just a mess and you held the space for me and you would redirect. And, there are times there, there are several times that I wanted to cancel my session because I'm like, I don't know what I can do.

Courtney: I feel like I'm going to waste your time and they're always productive. And I don't know if most other business coaches can offer that, like a safe space that feels like therapy. But that, before, I didn't have a webpage. I didn't have all of these things, and now I have them, and your coaching really helped me get there. We even did setting up my price list for my services. All of those things were through the coaching with you.

Meico: I'm excited to hear about that. And I mean, just to really encapsulate this for folks. What would you say has been the most valuable part of the experience of us working together for you?

Courtney: I'm going to have to go with two things. It's the accountability. And the, and the mindset. Like at every stage I'm having a different mindset to work through and you are able to support with helping me work through it.

Courtney: At the very beginning, it was imposter syndrome and not even really knowing that I wanted to get to graphic design or not even really knowing what I wanted to offer as a service, not even knowing if that's where I was going to go. My mindset in general just needed an improvement. So like even just showing up to the job that I had, that coaching was helpful.

Courtney: And then when it got to the point of, Oh, I don't have that job anymore, I'm doing something else. Coaching with that mindset, right? But then just the accountability, the fact that we had sessions, I had homework in between sessions. If I didn't do it, I still was able to show up and we were able to either break down the homework or figure out what the block was for me doing the homework.

Courtney: And so having continued sessions help keep, help me continue to move forward.

Meico: Awesome. So thank you for sharing that with folks and really giving people insight into what the impact has been for you. And so is there anything more you want to share about that before we close out with this next segment?

Courtney: No, I would just say that if anyone is like maybe hesitant around investing in coaching. I think the Intention Planner is a really great tool to just get a taste of Meico and get started on the process. And then if you have the Intention Planner and you still aren't going where you think you are wanting to go looking at additional resources, like a course or coaching is, it's helpful.

Courtney: It's worth it. Like you are worth the investment. Not you Meico. Yes. You Meico are worth it. But you listener are also worth the investment.

Meico: You heard it directly from Courtney, folks. So let me ask you about this. So there are lots of folks that are listening that are wondering about how they can be like Courtney, right? How they can make an impact in the way that you make an impact, how they can experience the type of transformation that you're experiencing in the work that you're doing and how you're serving, but also the deep personal transformation that you have experienced and are experiencing.

Meico: What advice do you have for folks that are listening and they might be having imposter syndrome and I'm like, I can't do what Courtney's doing or has done. What advice do you have?

Courtney: Start small and keep starting small. And also if I would say one of the biggest transformations that I've had has been around my self esteem. I was someone that had very low self esteem for a very long time. And it would blow my mind if someone would think that they couldn't do what I've done.

Courtney: That just doesn't make sense for me to be where I am based on who I was. So everyone gets to really accept that they're worthy of whatever it is that they want to do. And if anyone is struggling with that, then that's where they get to start. You get to start small with your self worth, whether that's therapy, whether that's spirituality, whether it's coaching, meditation, or if it's all of it, like it was for me, start there and start small, and then pivot to, outside of yourself.

Courtney: But whatever I've done, can be done, right? Like what I think the other thing that I've learned is that it's not about how smart you are. It's not about how much because a lot of what I've done, I call myself the Jill of all skills and It's not because I have all of these degrees.

Courtney: It's not because I've taken all of these classes. It's because I know I trust in myself that if I want to know something, if I want to find out something, I'm going to figure out how to get it done.

Meico: Yes.

Courtney: That's just about showing up over and over again. And that's about starting small over and over again and not giving up.

Courtney: And if I do give up going back to it, like quitting is only quitting if you actually stop.

Meico: Yes. I think that there's a lot there, but the two powerful nuggets that I'm really, that are really rising to the top for me are keep starting small, no matter what, keep starting small. And then the other one, which I think is really powerful, which is that you're worthy, whatever it is that you are going after. And thank you so much for that, that nugget and for sharing your time and your wisdom with the audience. Can you tell us, you're at a particular point in your journey, but you're, as you mentioned, you're still growing, you're still evolving. what's next for Courtney? Is there anything you can share with us about what's next for Courtney?

Courtney: Absolutely. Right now, I'm slowly, starting small to grow my team of Designs by Courtney H. So I'm working on that. And then I'm also working to finish my EP. I believe this is the year that it will be ready for the world. and then once the EP is complete in the world, I will have created more space to venture into even more creative projects that are more rooted in my spirituality.

Courtney: That's what I'm looking forward to.

Meico: Love it. And for folks that are interested, they want to connect with you, they want to support you. And your projects, where can I go to learn more and to stay connected?

Courtney: Okay. They can go to my webpage, which is designsbycourtneyh.com and then I'm also on Instagram at [@TheCourtneyHintonExperience](https://www.instagram.com/TheCourtneyHintonExperience) and Facebook at Courtney Hinton Music.

Meico: Awesome. Thank you so much for sharing your time, your energy, your wisdom with us. I know that you have really freed somebody who's listening to this conversation. And we are just so grateful and thankful for you. And so until next time, I want to thank you for joining me.

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Meico: That's mindfulchangemaker.org/retreat.

Outro

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Meico: It's 100 percent free when you join at mindfulchangemaker.org/join. Again, that's mindfulchangemaker.org/join. Until next time, I'm Meico Marquette Whitlock. Take it one intentional moment at a time.