

DEAR MINDFUL CHANGEMAKER,



HOSTED BY
MEICO MARQUETTE WHITLOCK



Dear Mindful Changemaker Podcast

Episode Seven – Shelby Rogala 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: I have with you today what I consider to be another everyday changemaker out there doing great work in the world. Her name is Shelby Rogala, and she works for the Montana Nonprofit Association where she leads training and educational programming for nonprofit volunteers and staff across the state and she is deeply passionate about adult learning, community building, and helping folks feel more confident and joyful. I love that joyful in their work and their lives. And she is so dedicated to this, and she is currently pursuing a master's in adult education and training from Colorado State. She has a range of experience working with folks from as

young as three to 83 and a range of different environments. And something that I found very fascinating is that she's also on a national board of an association for snow sports instructors. I had no idea that such a thing existed, but she is working there to create a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant snow sports community. So, I definitely can appreciate that.

Meico: And hails from Darby, Montana currently lives, works, and plays in Helena, Montana. And when she's not volunteering or working, she can be found reading a good sci fi or fantasy series on her couch with her cats, taking walks with her dogs, or adventuring with her partner. And so, with that, I want to welcome you Shelby to the podcast.

Meico: It is so great to have you here.

Shelby: Yeah, thank you so much. It's great to be here. I'm excited to catch up and have a conversation.

Meico: Awesome. So, I appreciate you being here. And I want to just go ahead and kick us off by just asking a question about who you are. There are folks that are listening that are wondering who you are. I gave a bit of a brief bio sketch, but I want to ask you this question this way. So just briefly in your own words, tell us who is Shelby.

Meico: What do you want people to know about you? What do you want them to take away from this conversation?

Shelby: You know, I, I kept skipping over that question 'cause it's a big one. But I think, I, am somebody that works in the nonprofit world, has found myself in this, sector, in the association world as well. Both through a string of events and also in some ways feels like, oh yeah, that was absolutely the spot that, that I would end up. I am someone who is very excited about helping other people find ways to do their jobs better, find ways to, feel more confident or competent, help connect resources to people to make sure that we're spending less time worrying about, some of the, the solvable problems and more time grappling and getting curious about how can we facilitate change, or just have a better day, right? Because we're not stressed about our relationship with our board, or how to file our 990 in the nonprofit association world, we spend a lot of time trying to figure out what tools and resources, we can folks in that area.

Shelby: And then I'm deeply, goofy and, irreverent, I think, is also probably an important thing to note. Yeah.

Meico: right. Love it. It's a goofy and irreverent. It sounds A connector of people and resources from what I'm gathering. And also really concerned about making space for people so that they can focus on the important things, right? And so, you're got the broom, you're sweeping stuff up and you're making space for things and people can just come in and do the good work.

Meico: Right?

Shelby: Yeah, I love that. I love, I like the broom analogy. I'm gonna, I might have to bring that back to the rest of the team here.

Meico: Awesome. so, let's talk about where you started in your journey. So, if you can remember, tell us about your first real job. However, you define real people have different definitions of that. But for you, when you think about your first real job, what was that for you?

Shelby: I love this question. So real, real, I don't know because there's so many right in Montana? Oh, you start doing ranch work and doing whatever at a pretty young age, and then babysitting. But I think we were chatting with this, about a colleague a couple days ago unrelated to this, and I actually think my first real, real job like W-9 or W-4 whatever the document is was teaching skiing or working for an after school program doing mentoring.

Shelby: I can't remember now, but one of the first real jobs I had, was teaching skiing, which is something I started over 15 years ago and continue, to do this day and now I'm involved in this in my volunteer and other life in ski instructing and being on the board. So, it's fun to think about that through line of a pretty large chunk of my life, was, has been spent, with my feet and really uncomfortable boots and a cold nose, working with folks on, you know how to ski and now my role is more in working with other instructors and how they work with students on the mountain. And I think you know skiing is a not a super relatable sport. It's a very, it can be really exclusive and there's a lot of barriers to access, but one of the things that has bled from my longstanding history of skiing has just been the education aspect of that. And I think even more than the actual sport has been the idea of, how can we help people, have a better day on snow, have a better day in their job, have a better day, outside of their work, what does that start to look like? Yeah, I think that was my first real, real job.

Meico: That's pretty awesome. And I, so I have, I'm thinking about this. I'm thinking about my own experience. I think skiing is one of those things for me up there, like with skydiving. It's why take the risk? But now that I know that you are an experienced instructor, I might have to make my way to Montana and get some instruction.

Meico: I feel like I can trust you.

Shelby: You're welcome anytime, you're welcome anytime. It's one of my yeah, it is. It is a risky thing, but I think people can find so much joy and like agency and autonomy and excitement, doing this risky thing and in a way where they feel supported and always love to do that so standing invitation.

Meico: And I love to this thread to that. I'm sensing from the from our conversation to about, even with your work now, but also with, as you talked about your 1st job, helping people to have a good day. Like, how awesome is that, that to have that as an intention. To help other people have a good day.

Meico: I think that's so awesome. So, let's bring that forward then. So, let's talk about how you're having have helping people have a good day in your current work professionally, how are you currently making an impact in the world? We talked a little

bit about the big room you carry, but can you give us a bit more about who the, the association is, who you serve, and what is your role in the organization?

Shelby: Yeah, my current work is with the Montana Nonprofit Association. I've been here for about four and a half years of through a pandemic and, navigating that continuing. And so, it's been a really great experience. most states have a nonprofit association of some type or region. So, if you're listening, and you're in Nebraska, there's a really great, nonprofit association there.

Shelby: If you're in Idaho, same thing. So wherever. Florida, wherever you may be joining from odds are there's a local or regional association and we all work in similar areas and, different ways, but we work to provide nonprofits, particularly C3 organizations with resources and support because we believe at least what we say in Montana is that we believe that nonprofits are so vital to a healthy environment, community, sustainable future, they're so important to the work, that we, to our livelihoods, to the work we want to see as, a state. And so, we want to support that. So, we do it through training and education, which is my area. We do it through advocacy and policy. So, figuring out, what are those big picture things that allow nonprofits, as a, as a. tax structure type of organization, a business structure, what allows them to have the resources they need.

Shelby: And then we also have like member benefits, so that people can purchase, like insurance at a lower cost or, access, other services like accounting or other back-office services at a lower cost by pooling the benefits of having a larger group asking for some of those things. So, we've worked to provide that support to nonprofits across the state. and then my role specifically, we have a small team. I think there's seven of us right now and everyone, I would say one of the things that's happened through the pandemic is we've really broken up some of the silos we used to have of this is member services and this is policy and this is training to say Oh, let's work collaboratively to solve these problems because we need to tackle and address them, get some resources out so that all of those myriad of obstacles facing nonprofits, which is a whole nother conversation of like structural things.

Shelby: Like I think a lot of the time we are providing resources to support nonprofits. Operating in the system that currently exists. Another that conversation is okay, how do we change some of those like systemic things so that we're not constantly sweeping and maybe be like. Just don't get as much dirt on the floor to begin with, but,

Meico: excellent carrying through that metaphor.

Shelby: I was like, can we do it?

Shelby: Can we do it? We did it. so yeah, I think that my work really focuses with the rest of the team on figuring out what are the solutions, how can we help connect, nonprofit leaders, decision makers, volunteers, new nonprofit staff to each other, to resources, that can save them time, money, headaches, whatever.

Shelby: It's down the road.

Meico: So, let's talk about your job as dealing with uh, learning and development, professional development. So, can you tell us specifically, maybe can you give us some examples of the types of needs organizations that you serve might have and how you specifically in your role help to meet those needs?

Shelby: yeah. So, we, the standard thing is we provide, different training opportunities that kind of fall in different buckets. the first need that we see nonprofits have is simply like feeling isolated and disconnected because they're in their own, little sphere trying to do the work. one of the services we provide are month, free monthly calls for our members across the state where they can hop on if they're a development director, a marketing.

Meico: Building community

Shelby: yeah, so just getting to hop on, connect, talk through things, peer problem solve together. we also offer a whole host of virtual, like workshops and series.

Shelby: For us, those really fall in, Some of the main areas of nonprofit management. And so, for us, that's board governance. So how do you recruit, retain, and have a really high functioning, high performing board of directors in Montana, we have so many nonprofits per capita, but like the requirements for leadership are so high in the state that we really need to figure out how are we cultivating that volunteer leadership service, we have a Pretty strong offering in financial leadership and management.

Shelby: So, the people that got into nonprofits, cause they were so excited about change making, look at their budget spreadsheet and want to die. Like how can we help support them, move through that? and then we also do trainings and fundraising because of course. once again, we're in this position where we need to make money in order to, fulfill our services and that can be grant writing or working directly with donors.

Shelby: We provide trainings in those areas and then a whole host of, HR, how do we work through conflict. How do we make sure our employee handbook and personnel and policies are up to date? all the way down to IT. So how do we keep our website? So, some of those things we provide internal training on.

Shelby: we have a really talented staff that can speak to different areas. Other things we provide external speakers and resources, to meet those needs.

Meico: Awesome. So, it sounds like you all are doing a lot and it sounds like also that your excitement is palpable. In terms of the work that you're doing, and really, as you described earlier, helping people to have a great day. can you tell us, is there was there a specific moment or specific project that really started to onto the journey to doing the type of work that you're doing now,

Shelby: It's a great question. I'm not, I don't think I have to have a single moment I think it's a series of. growing up in a small town like thinking about how experiencing and thinking about how, you have what you have in a small community, you can't

really afford to alienate people you can't really afford to bring a ton of external resources.

Shelby: it's a problem. And so, you really have to learn how to work within your community past those like points of tension and pain, or disagreements and figure out how do we, how do we make these things work? carrying that through college and getting more, Interested in engaged in community organizing and impact and conversations like once again, how are we taking this huge amount of like human capital?

Shelby: We're all surrounded by every day and helping bring people together in a way that. Both is like fun and enjoyable and then also is impactful and hopefully moves, some needles forward so that we're not just condemned to repeating, the status quo or feeling trapped. So not a like specific moment, but I think a series of, opportunities and incredible people I've been able to work with or be inspired by

Meico: I love that the beautiful evolution made part of what you described is what some folks might describe as herding cats right and in the nonprofit spaces, particularly in the role that you're in where you're working in an association where you're serving different types of organizations different sizes people have different personalities, and part of being able to successfully serve people.

Meico: It's being able to navigate those differences and resources being able to navigate the differences in terms of the relationship dynamics and it's, so it sounds like you're, you have a natural fit in that regard for this type of work. And not only that, but people also are facing internal and external pressures that are tied to the work.

Meico: That impact how they show up as well. So, we have the pandemic. It's 1 of the ones that we experienced collectively is an example of that. in that context, I'm curious if. Is there 1 project, or maybe initiative. That really stands out to you in terms of since you've been doing this work that you're really proud of.

Meico: that you want people to know about.

Shelby: Yeah, so I think I don't know that it's a project or initiative. I think it's more some of the approaches we're starting to. To take and some conversations we're starting to enter into, which is like everybody right across the country, regardless of sector or industry right now is like, how do we recruit?

Shelby: Like, how do we retain employees? How do we recruit new employees? How do we keep them in? how do we have better conversations? And there's once again there's fixing that and saying oh post your job here have this job description of your benefits. But there's another, deeper conversation around how are we structuring for us in the nonprofit industry like how are we structuring.

Shelby: Positions and organizations. How are we embracing shared leadership models so that we can, adjust to a different set of expectations for leaders that are coming up and maybe don't want to work 80 hours a week for no pay and be exhausted and burnt out and not able to really take joy in meaning and the work they're doing. and so

it's been really cool. and how do we restructure some of our workplace expectations, that. So that we can benefit employees differently. So, we can provide spaces for well-being and mindfulness and then recognizing, workers are always exploited in a workplace. That's capitalism, right?

Shelby: But how can we connect individuals like desire to have meaningful impact and to do their work well, with the things they're working on. While giving them the flexibility to also live their lives in a way that is rewarding and meaningful, so that they are filling their cup not just so that they can be better workers right but like really meaningfully living a better life, because we certainly have that, so I've been having.

Meico: You're speaking to the heart of my vision for the

Shelby: I was like you can say all this way clearer than I can. So, we've been able to bring in speakers and have conversations and bring leaders here in Montana and share some of the things they're doing to shift that expectation around what is work and what is play and what is meaningful. And so, it's been neat to shift that conversation.

Shelby: We have, we've had you come and speak at our conference. We've had other folks talk about, co-director models for organizations. we get to talk about, we here at MNA have a 32-hour work week. So, I've lied. We do have a cushion. But it has been such a change and such a shift and also hard, like it's hard to change the way we've been taught to work, to accommodate a different, setup.

Shelby: There's tension points with managers, but there's some momentum in our state and sector right now to explore, like, how can we meaningfully shift and reimagine, the world of nonprofit work in our state, so that we can. retain people who are like passionate and continue to be passionate versus getting tired and disenchanted, with what it takes to be a change maker when, you're not working in like a fun, flashy entrepreneur role or, getting, some of.

Shelby: The recognition that might come out of, working in politics directly like as a, running for office, but how do we again make that gap that third sector that nonprofit work, attractive impactful and maybe do things we didn't think it could do. yeah,

Meico: So, let me ask you this. So, you alluded to this in terms of some of the challenges folks are facing. The internal and external pressures in terms of the sector and the demands of the work and the. mismatch between that sometimes and the resources and other things that are available, for you personally I know that for any journey, like we're talking about your journey, but we're highlighting some of the shiny milestones, right?

Meico: But obviously there are things don't always go well. and we have difficult moments, right? And that's just a part of life. And so, I'm curious, how do you stay inspired? How do you stay motivated in spite of Sort of the, and what I would describe as inevitable ups and downs on the journey.

Shelby: yeah, that's a really good question. First, I love, I have a degree in philosophy, right? I love to think about things and organize them and explore them and I will say that the decision to start a master's program, for me has been really, additive because I get to have that space in that community to, really dive deep into exploring topics that I'm interested in and it's renewed some of my excitement for the work I do and added another layer of it and I don't think a master's is I don't think you know education is always, I do think education is always the answer but not necessarily formal education.

Meico: yes.

Shelby: So, I think that if you folks are able to connect to communities of practice or learning where they get to have some other perspectives or deeper knowledge around how to, how to think differently about their work. I think it can add a lot of energy. The other thing has been very slowly deconstructing the idea that like, I need to show up at 120 percent every day or every week or every month and giving, both myself and also the people I work with the grace to say Whoa, like we need a break.

Shelby: We need to make some space, man. I've just been off for a month and that's okay. Like we are even when we are saving lives like we have to know we're doing it in the long run and figuring out where is there need for urgency and perfection and then where is there not that need and pressure.

Shelby: and so, I am a big fan of, no, do nothing days like no, no checklist is when I'm not working of creating a little more space, to not hold myself or others to like this high standard, which I know all of y'all are on a similar journey, or maybe you're in the opposite side. I don't know.

Meico: So, I heard, I think, four things in there that are, I think I can tease out as really concrete actions. The first is finding a community, right? So, I'm finding a supportive community of like-minded folks that you can be in community with, and you gave the concrete example of for you right now in this moment.

Meico: one of the communities that you're engaged in is the community that you're in for your master's program. But you gave us the example of communities to practice. If you're in Montana, or wherever state you are, your nonprofit association, right? Can be a space for that to the various programming.

Meico: So that's one thing that I heard you share. another thing I heard you share is about grace. the importance of giving yourself grace and being able to extend that and share that with others. I heard you also, dismantling this idea that you have to be at 120%. All the time, right? I was in a training yesterday, and the person that was leading reminded us that, 92 percent is still an A.

Meico: Right? Yeah, so 92 percent is still an A. do you need to push to get those extra percentage points just because right? And if you do feel that impulse, then what is really there? Is it really to your point serving the mission? Is it serving the current priorities for you to give that extra push to that thing?

Meico: and then the final thing that I think I heard you say was do nothing. So, making space to rest to restore and to just do nothing.

Shelby: yeah, that wow, that was like, incredibly said thank you. Can you just, maybe pre do that for me every day? Just say, Here Shelby are your points. Yeah, absolutely. I think and that's like I'm learning that do nothing. There's been some really cool. the nap ministry is a resource that I like that.

Shelby: I, that concept of do nothing. There's been some cool thought leaders that, that push that and recognize that. And it's easy to say, but then you're like, Oh, I really have to, not, do nothing and then not feel guilty about it, or bemoan that I did nothing. yeah, really well, summarized.

Meico: I just, I'm just listening to you and feeding it back to you. So, it's wonderful. And I hope that folks are listening are really being fed by what you're sharing here today. So, let's dive a little bit deeper into this. So, we talk about how you stay inspired and motivated. Let's talk about people call it different things.

Meico: I call it work life balance because I feel like that is. That's a commonly shared language that people understand. so, let's talk about that. So, what does putting that into practice look like for you? So how do you create balance in. A dynamic where you have demanding work, you have lots of clients that you are serving, people are literally out there saving lives.

Meico: How do you balance that with being able to make space for your master's program? Being able to make space for, the reading that you like to do, the sci-fi. How do you make space for that? And going skiing, how do you, what does it look like for you? Are there concrete things that you're putting into practice that help you to balance those things?

Shelby: Yeah, great question. I do think the structural change of MNA having a 32-hour work week is probably the single biggest thing because I, I can say oh, I have, I like to organize my day or I like to do my top three things I want to do today, or I like to, plan out my week and kind of chunk time.

Shelby: yeah, I do all those things. but having the flexibility for my employer to say Yeah. You have a day a week you have eight hours a week that we're gifting back to you. we're not going to dock your pay like we're going to do that. So, I don't want to ignore the structural like big thing that happened to facilitate that's that pursuit of balance.

Shelby: Another structural thing I just started this year, which was. Due to flexibility from my employer is I'm doing like a 10 to 6, most days. So, working from 10 AM to 6 PM versus 9 to 5, which I think having those extra two hours for me in the morning is like such a big difference. so that's those are two things that are not like universalizable unless you go talk to your other employees and your coworkers and you're like, okay, how can we as a collective make.

Meico: and I'm going to circle back and ask you.

Shelby: yeah. But the other things that so I don't want to like to say, Oh, just do what I do, recognizing like I have a ton of like flexibility and support and privilege. But I do think another practice I've been working on is starting my days, not working and making a little space take the dog for a walk to like.

Shelby: do some stretching or just sitting and journaling, and then really highlighting like the three most important life things I need to do that are not school that are not work, but call my grandma, write it down and get my do my laundry, whatever it is, which seems so silly. But I think, we can let those life things stack up and then it feels like stressful to do these things that should bring us joy because it's connecting families it's making our homes feel like a space we want to go home and back to.

Shelby: tried to start like identifying my top three which I think in your journal, which I don't have on my desk right now but

Meico: Oh, the intention planner

Shelby: yeah, the intention like those are those practices, which I think are, they can make a huge difference just in reframing the kind of chaos that I wake up with in my brain and like over time that's helped a lot.

Meico: awesome. and so, what I heard in that is that there are so you acknowledge your privilege with the flexibility piece, but I think is majorly important. I actually want to ask you a follow up question about that. So, you have this. You have 2 things going on in terms of flexibility.

Meico: You have the 32-hour work week. And then you have a flexibility to change your start in time for your day in a way that works. It sounds like for your natural body rhythm. And so, I want to come back to that. but it also sounds like you're doing some things notwithstanding the schedule and the flexibility.

Meico: You made a commitment to, to not do work, to not start your day with work. You've made a commitment to doing something for yourself, whether that's walking the dog or journaling or stretching. So, I think those are two very powerful things. And then you talked about making space also to focus on the life things.

Meico: You talked about identifying the big three life things you need to do for that day. And I love that you talked about the importance of doing it in a consistent way so that the things don't pile up and stress us out. I think that's so and so important that you made that, that you made that distinction.

Meico: So, I want to. Ask you about the 32-hour work, which I want to ask you about this, the scheduling flexibility with the start and stop time. But is there anything else you want to say about your personal practices or rituals in terms of. Finding balance,

Shelby: No, I think that's a good summary and I think, one of the catalysts for. Shifting my mindset there is I think as a young professional, you give so much to your, to your

work that you don't always leave that like extra energy for yourself when you get back, at the end of the day and you, and we're not learning how to do that.

Shelby: It's not like a skill we're taught and in college growing up or in vocational school, like it's not what we learn. And, I am getting married this June, which is quite exciting, but.

Meico: congratulations.

Shelby: I, as you're living with a partner and learning to, deepen that, commitment to somebody, if you get home every day and you're, like, upset, because you're tired, you haven't created any space left to, you've given all your energy to the people that you're serving, to your job, to your manager, whoever, and then you get home and, you're like, oh, do I even like, you know, this person?

Shelby: I just want to be alone. And it's no, I do like this person, and I want to have energy at the end of the day. I don't have children. But that's right. Another thing is you want to have energy for these, like really important, pieces of who we are. and that reframe also was super helpful for me.

Shelby: that was different from when I was like young and fun. And in my twenties, I'm like, did not like, that thing that I really wanted to make sure I was saving energy for, yeah, I didn't mean to just refer to my fiancé as a thing, but it happened, so

Meico: Another thing on the list. We got it.

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: So, let me ask you this about the 32-hour work week. So, I'll ask it this way. So, has MNA always had the 32-hour work week. If not, can you maybe briefly give us pre, what was life like pre-32-hour work week and how you got to where you are and how it's working out.

Meico: And, as you're thinking about that, one of the things that I share with organizations and folks that are asking about this modified work week schedule, is I share with people that. In order for it to be effective, you have to right size. The workload as well, right? You can't just say, oh, yeah, we can do 20 hours.

Meico: We can do 30 hours, but we still have the expectation. That you're going to do the equivalent of whatever we expected for the 40-hour work, which is generally for most of us, it's between 50 and 80 hours. Really? It's not really 40 hours anyway, but I'm going to hand it over to you. So, what thoughts.

Shelby: yeah. So in 2021, we, we started talking as a staff and had been working, hybrid, virtual, a little in the office, a little remotely, at a pretty high, fast pace through, that the 2020, 2021 part of the pandemic, where we're really trying to make sure we're reaching, the high need, pivoting to where there is demand and making sure folks had what they need, whether that was, Yeah, funding, support, resources, conversation, community.

Shelby: and so, by fall of 2021, our team was like pretty stressed, pretty burnt out, pretty, losing some of our excitement and creativity and, ability to perform at a high level. And so we started looking at, what, it's good for each of us individually to take stock of how do we take care of ourselves, but also what do we need to do as a team to sustain, this team in a way that, ensures like we have the space to take care of ourselves and to really focus on what is urgent and what is needed, which that list doesn't get shorter, right? We were, it's not like things went away, right? So how can we do all of that? And so, we actually started at a pilot. there was a 32 hour a week pilot and our leadership was on board.

Shelby: Our board was on board. They took the risk and the. Advocacy right to step out and say, let's do this and I think when we talk about that decision making. It's like our leaders are key people in leadership positions were willing to take that risk and willing to advocate for the team.

Shelby: And also, we had a team That was vocal and was safe like it was a safe enough environment to be vocal about what we needed to sustain the work. And so, I think it's that partnership. Often, we say, oh, it's the leadership. They, they did this or, oh, it's because they demanded it. And it's no, we met in a really cool spot.

Shelby: so, we did a pilot through 2022, April 2022 through October ish of 2022. a lot of growing pains, a lot of adjusting. We've had so many conversations about how to say no to things, and what I'm finding is we're not saying no to things that we would have done before. What we would have done before is say yes to them, over promise, and then under deliver on it.

Shelby: And now instead of over

Meico: I want to pause out. I want you to can you emphasize what you just because I think people who are listening need to understand that this is the default dynamic and a lot of organizations. can you say that again?

Shelby: Yeah, so the default dynamic is over promise under deliver right and then not hold ourselves accountable to those things we said we would do that we never really do, or we don't do the right way. And so, I don't think we're doing. It's not that we're saying no more to things we would have done otherwise.

Shelby: We are saying no to things that we used to say yes to, that we still never did. We're like, we can accurately assess our capacity. We wouldn't have gotten this work done if all of our staff were working 70 hours a week. But we used to say yes to it, and now we're slowly trying to learn to say Oh, is this a priority?

Shelby: Does it fit into our strategy? Are we doing other work that's more important? And if, depending on the answer to those questions, if it's no, this isn't a priority. We're not even, we're not going to be able to do it. Let's not waste our time envisioning it and feeling stress about adding this like other to our cognitive load.

Shelby: So, I'm not going to say that we are all like rock stars and doing it every day and crushing that decision making. But I would say that we're coming along in that.

When we talk to other organizations, it's harder to say no. If you're in direct service, it's harder to say no when you're fundraising for a big project.

Shelby: but I think that lesson can be in there is like, how can we accurately assess what we can really do and then over deliver on the things we've really committed to. And we've committed to those because our board has said it's important because our members have said it's important. So, let's focus on that and move the needle forward.

Meico: so, without getting into details that you may not be able to share publicly. Can you give us examples of things that you all have said no to? have you said no to, new projects, new partnerships? Have you said no to, applying for new grants? can you give us a high level, generally, what are the types of things that you all have said no to that was really hard for you to do?

Shelby: Yeah, I think some of the things have been, like one-on-one consulting projects, so it's an organization might want us to come in and do this thing, and it's wow, we'd love to, it'd be great learning for us, it'd be great relationship development, it'd generate some revenue, like all of those are good things.

Meico: you said no to money. Okay.

Shelby: to money. Oh yeah, we did. and we've said no to, to some partnerships we've said no to. like it's tough sometimes, to say no to initiatives or having a speaker come or whatever that might be, because it's no, we want to focus, our energy and resources on the things we've already committed to.

Shelby: So, we've said or tried to say no to a couple of, yeah, money projects, partnership projects, and even our own, initiatives. That we're like, oh, we said yes to this and actually we might.

Meico: you

Shelby: what in the

Meico: renegotiated things you said yes to already? Okay.

Shelby: Yeah. And that one is more internally. we're like, oh, this was on our strategic plan. Do we have the bandwidth for it. No. The other side of that is we are still trying to work on with our limited hours, how do we make it feel like we're not like cutting down on the services and the, you know what we provide and instead figuring out how can we work.

Shelby: How can we really work be on it when we show up, not it like, Oh, you have to be 100 percent a plus every day. But how are we making sure we're using our time effectively individually and as a team and still being present for our members. So, it's a balancing journey.

Meico: it's an ongoing process. And so, what I'm gathering from this, I would pull out some basic principles, it's an ongoing process of adjusting and part of this ongoing process of adjusting requires. So, it's like open and continuous communication, right? So that's one thing I'm gathering from what you're shared.

Meico: The second thing I'm gathering is that it sounds like there's clarity as a group about what the priorities are, right? You all are on the same page about what your collective priorities are. And. You're tying that to an awareness or some kind of assessment of capacity, right? I think where a lot of folks fall down is there.

Meico: They may be good at identifying. The priorities that might be aligned with the strategic plan, but where the mismatch and where the frustration comes in is. We haven't done a really good job of matching up the priorities to. The available resources,

Shelby: is that fair?

Shelby: Oh yeah, I love, yes, more than fair. Ten out of ten.

Meico: let me ask you this. is there anything else you want to say on that? I want to pivot to the work that we've done together but is there anything else you want to say on this particular question about balance or how you all have been able to. And how are you continuing to make this. This experiment work for you all.

Shelby: Yeah, I think, I think having some pilot and some research and some team conversations are, is great. I think not letting perfect be the enemy of the good is super important. And I also think, and this is related to the first Part of what we talked about is if you're struggling to find balance and to find joy and to find connection, do not beat yourself up because there's only so much you as an individual can do.

Shelby: You, you also have to take into account the environment that you're in and recognize I can do my part, but the environment I'm in also might need to change instead of feeling guilty, that it's like, Oh, I don't have time to go to the gym or I don't have time to read my book or whatever.

Shelby: It's cause you might not. So, what can you do for yourself? But then also when do you need to reach out to your colleagues? to your supervisors to say, I need more, and I know it's not just me that needs it. I know it's my whole team. Like we're in this together. And I think that community or solidarity, can shift like the guilt and shame of I'm tired all the time and I feel bad for being tired all the time too.

Shelby: Oh. We're all impacted by this. What can we do, to shift the culture.

Meico: Yes, so I think that was so beautifully said, and I appreciate that you provided the appropriate context for folks. Right and really helping people to feel seen in terms of what their current situation. might be, and so I appreciate that. So, I think that brings us to really. Good point our conversation to talk about the work that we've done together.

Meico: So, we work together during the pandemic. And I'm curious. So, we did some work together with your community. You, you had me come in for a conference and we did a couple of engagements through that conference. And then you also mentioned the Intention Planner. So, I'm wondering if maybe you could just describe the work that we did together and, what the impact has been on you and the members that you've seen, have, been exposed to the work that we did together.

Shelby: Yeah, thank you for asking this question because you are one well and everybody like this was not a pre scripted answer. Working with Meico was one of the best like speakers I've ever worked with it was such a delightful. partnership just for me as an individual and as a person, like it was quite nice, to work and co create an experience for our audience, which is not always the case.

Shelby: So that individually was quite nice and enjoyable I think having, we have so many folks talk about wellness and being and work life balance and it can feel like not tangible and. It like too pie in the sky. And I think what was really cool about, I think he did a coffee talk as well as a keynote, is connecting these like, how do I organize my life better?

Shelby: How do I feel more joy and productivity. connecting that really to tangible, actionable steps that were helpful. And whether that was in the form of the Intention Planner of here's a tool you can use, whether it was in the form of, conversations to have with yourself, really practical things of like where, you know, how and when to engage in technology, people walked away with that, then more, much more than I've seen other presentations around this topic go, or it ends as soon as you leave the, the session and you're like, Oh, I guess like I'm going to wake up tomorrow, not do any of these things.

Shelby: I think what we saw from the engagement, through your session and then through the feedback. Afterwards was a lot of, oh, these are things I can actually do and make a difference. I also will note that your keynote was right before we had the conversation about the four-day work week. And so, I do

Meico: Oh, okay.

Shelby: listen to and tip to heart, okay, how can we make this A structural thing.

Shelby: And then this other opportunity came up, a couple of months afterwards, and I have to think that like some of those conversations and thoughts spurred by the work you've done in the conversations you led for us, helped facilitate that. what I was talking about earlier that partnership between our staff and our leadership, where we were all like, Oh, yeah, we need to do this differently.

Shelby: yeah, a lot of ripple effects maybe directly to me having my living my best life with. into, the folks that we've shared that, that planner with the folks that have watched the keynote. yeah, really impactful and also just fun and delightful to work with you.

Meico: Awesome. I'm excited to hear that and delighted to hear that. I'm curious. Are you a planner person? Do you actually use did you use the Intention Planner? what's been your experience with it?

Shelby: Yeah, I have used it. I haven't used it as consistently since last year. but it was really helpful because I think I am a, like I have my virtual planner, but I need to write things down sit down and write things down and having the structure of getting to go back and, force my brain to do walk through some of the activities and tasks and then reflect back on, on where it was.

Shelby: So, I don't think I finished it. Don't tell. Meico, but starting it was super helpful in, in, in getting that consistency and structure that we were talking about earlier around, charting our day and being thoughtful about what it is we want to get out of today and tomorrow and the week and the year and all of that.

Meico: Awesome and so you mentioned the virtual planning tool. One, because I share when I share the Intention Planner, that is, it's not necessarily right for everyone. And I acknowledge that there are plenty of tools out there. My invitation is always to find. The tool tools that work best for you, so you mentioned a virtual planning tool.

Meico: So, for folks that might be looking for something similar. that's virtual digital, do you mind sharing what that tool is that you use?

Shelby: I, it's just, it's like for tasks. Cause I, which is different for me than an intention, like it is for like communicating.

Meico: manager.

Shelby: Yeah. And we were a Microsoft office team. So, we use planner, which is like that one, which is fine. It's great. It works. but it definitely different function from, here's the goal.

Shelby: Here's the purpose. Here's how to really focus and use our time.

Meico: Gotcha. Okay. Awesome. as we wrap up, is there anything else that you wanted to share in terms of our collaboration together that you want to share with folks when we move forward?

Shelby: no, I would say that we, we and our audience would, highly recommend, working with you as a speaker, workshop leader, facilitator, it was a delightful experience, really easy to work with and organize, which if you book speakers and work with speakers, that is very, high, praise, and, and I think, again, It can feel hard to pull the strings that like what's going to be helpful and sometimes like just another talk about how we should all be living our lives better can feel like I know, but I will say that your work, helps make that actionable and tangible and in a really impactful way so 10 out of 10 would recommend.

Shelby: And think it's, wherever you can start that conversation, whether it's sharing resources or having him speak or, facilitating other types of conversations is, it's a good starting or continuing place.

Meico: Awesome. I appreciate that. And I'm delighted that. I was able to be of service to you all into the MNA community, and hope that might be opportunities for us to collaborate in the future. And so, we have had a robust conversation. So, I want to thank you for that. And as we wrap up, I think there's so much richness from the intention that you have with the work that you do and how you show up in the world to just help other people have a great day.

Meico: I love that. to the practical things that you're doing at the association to make work better for the staff there, but also for the organizations that you serve, what advice do you have for listeners that might be wondering how they can. Make an impact and show up to the work the way that you're showing up.

Meico: Maybe for people that are maybe earlier on in their journey of folks that are listening to this and be like, I've tried X, Y, and Z. It didn't work. You know what? what advice do you have to those folks?

Shelby: Yeah, I, I really can't, , overstate how important it is to find community, whether that's within your colleagues and your coworkers and recognizing, we are here in this together and let's figure out how we can support each other and how we can have each other's backs and how we can talk through things, even if your coworker is radically different from you like figuring out like, how do we build those relationships.

Shelby: I will say that has been incredibly transformational for me is not just being like, Oh, I. And there's boundaries too, but you have to have boundaries in those relationships. But I think recognizing you are stronger together, with the people you work with, it doesn't, if you're working in a different environment or situation, like figuring out who that community is that, gives you strength and keeps you going, outside of that is helpful, but I.

Shelby: I can't oversell or overstate how helpful and important and impactful it is to find solidarity with the people you work with. Because otherwise you're one person trying to navigate this like very complicated system, trying to make your life feel more joyful. Things are stacked against you or us sometimes, and so how do we find community and build that like interconnected resilience so that the work you're doing.

Shelby: on your own self, can like flourish and you can celebrate that with others versus rolling the boulder up the hill every day alone. yeah, build that. And the other side of that is if you're in a spot where you can't find that community or build those relationships or you feel isolated, then like you might, there's probably another space out there for you, Where people will be excited to build those relationships.

Shelby: So that's the bless and release aspect of that community piece.

Meico: I love that. And I love that you at least I'm summarizing it as what I think I heard you say was interconnected resilience. I love that way of describing it. And I think one

of the things I see in working with changemakers in this space is sometimes a key aspect of the healing from the suffering that we're experiencing is simply by helping people to be aware of the fact that you're not alone. you're not the only one. Sometimes the suffering is exacerbated because we feel like we're the only ones and a tremendous weight can be lifted when we just are able to realize that, hey, you're not alone, that there are other folks that are on a similar journey that are trying to figure this out together.

Meico: let's combine our powers. And so, I love that. as we wrap up today, can you tell us a little bit about what is next for you. I know that you mentioned that you're working on your master's degree. I'm not sure if there's something specific in terms of projects that you're looking to do with that.

Meico: And is there anything you want to share in terms of what's next for maybe specific initiatives at an MNA.

Shelby: yeah, I think we're continuing to make sure that we're carrying capturing those foundational elements that nonprofit folks need working with our broader community across the country that does this work. And I think in the next couple years we'll really be digging into shared leadership and thinking about reimagining some of these organizational structures and norms to see how can we, empower next generation of leaders to come in and really move impact forward.

Shelby: So, I'm excited to keep exploring those conversations and have the incredible thought leadership of folks like Meico, folks like, there's a long list, so I'm not going to But so many people are more visibly pushing the, the norms and boundaries of how can we take care of ourselves today?

Shelby: And then also what can we build? That's going to be better for our communities and our mission tomorrow. So, I'm really excited to continue that work and, see where it goes. Cause it's a new conversation for some of us. It's an ongoing conversation for others. and I think there's such a diversity of perspectives that can really like. Help us shift what we think is possible.

Meico: Awesome. I love that in terms of shifting what we think is possible, expanding the imagination of what is possible. So, I imagine lots of folks listening to this conversation are going to want to be in touch with you specifically about some of the strategies that you talked about. I know some folks are going to want to know how can we do what you did in terms of the 32-hour work week for our organization.

Meico: So, for those folks that are like that. Where can they go to learn more about you and to stay connected?

Shelby: Yeah, great question. I, super happy to chat through, like shifting from the 32-hour work week. Put folks in connection, contact with other resources that are like, here's really how to do it. I would say reach out. I think I have a LinkedIn profile, so you can find me there. You can also find me on, I think Twitter and Instagram.

Shelby: Shelby Rogala, I think I'm the only one out there, although maybe you'll find. Some other, um, and then, I will share my work email too that folks can feel free to reach out with as well. And I don't know if I should share that verbally or chat it.

Meico: we can put it into

Shelby: yeah, feel free to.

Meico: yeah, we can put it into the follow up information for folks. So

Shelby: definitely.

Meico: awesome. This has been a wonderful, I think, joy filled and inspiring conversation. So, I appreciate you, making the time and I hope that we can get an update at some point about, maybe you all have gone to a 10-hour workweek.

Meico: I don't know.

Shelby: We're just a four-hour work week. It's done. We're here. we're making it look good. yeah. Excited. really great to have this conversation today. It was fun to step back from, the emails and projects that I've got going on right now and Think about some of those bigger picture questions and bringing your clarity and insight as well.

Shelby: I'm walking away with some neat things to chew on and to bring back to my team. So, thank you. Thanks to those listening and excited, yeah, to continue the conversation down the road.

Meico: Awesome. with that, we will sign off. Thank you all for listening and I look forward to you in the next episode.

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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.