

Ep #25: Following Your Law Firm Strategic Plan with Melissa Shanahan



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John E. Grant

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In today's episode, I'm really excited to bring on my friend and collaborator, Melissa Shanahan, founder of Velocity Work and host of *The Law Firm Owner Podcast*. I first wanted to bring Melissa onto this show because she teaches her clients a planning and accountability method that she calls the Monday Map and Friday Wrap. When I first heard about it, I recognized it as being really close to the Agile practices of the weekly planning and weekly review meetings.

So of course we talk about that, but we also dive in on the importance of finding the right kind of support to help navigate the challenges of running a law firm or managing a legal team. I think you're going to learn a lot from the conversation. Ready to become a more agile attorney? Let's go.

Welcome to *The Agile Attorney* podcast powered by Agile Attorney Consulting. I'm John Grant, and I've spent the last decade helping lawyers and legal teams harness the tools of modern entrepreneurship to build practices that are profitable, scalable, and sustainable for themselves and their communities. Each episode I offer principles, practices, and other ideas to help legal professionals of all kinds be more agile in your legal practice.

John: All right, well, welcome to *The Agile Attorney* podcast. I am really excited to have my friend, my colleague, sometimes, I guess, partner in crime at this point, Melissa Shanahan.

Melissa: Oh my gosh, thank you so much for having me. This is so fun.

John: We're turning the tables because you've been gracious enough to have me on your podcast a couple of times, and we've had great conversations, and we have tons of great conversations where we're not speaking into microphones. But hopefully we can have a quick one now.

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I'll just set the stage, right? Part of why I really wanted to bring you on to *The Agile Attorney* podcast is that you, through your business Velocity Work, and I guess I should let you introduce yourself for a minute. So let me ask the question, and then I'll say, I'll ask you to introduce yourself.

Melissa: That's great.

John: But through velocity work and the work that you do, you've got a technique that you teach called the Monday Map and the Friday Wrap. I remember the first time I heard about that, and it's been years now because you've been teaching this for years. I was like oh my gosh, that's agile. That is the weekly planning meeting and the weekly review meeting that is like straight out of the scrum methodology.

Not to say that like oh, it came from Agile, because it didn't, right? This is fundamental sort of human wisdom that works for any number of reasons. But I'd love to know, after you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do, how you came to this concept of the Monday Map and the Friday Wrap.

Melissa: Sure. Before I forget to say, the fundamental, you said it's really just fundamentals. That is why I think you and I really enjoy learning from each other, working next to each other is because that's what we care about is getting underneath it all. Like the fundamentals are what drive everything. You and I are very aligned on that and have different backgrounds, but that's a common core theme.

John: Well, I also don't think we care who gets credit, right? The fundamentals are real. Like let's get the good thing going. If it gets its own legs, or if it takes off, or if somebody else is using it, by all means, like take it, have it, like run with it.

Melissa: Exactly.

John: Okay, we're on a tangent already, but thank you.

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Melissa: Okay, sure. So yes, I am Melissa Shanahan. I am the founder of Velocity Work. Our company is really set up to support law firm owners when it comes to thinking about their own growth. There's two things that'll be helpful just to give you context for how we think and how we work.

One is that I did this work for a long time inside of a consulting firm. What I realized through lots of boots on the ground work with lots and lots of clients is that there were three things that mattered. One is that the people who really succeeded, they knew what they were aiming for. Two, they worked really hard to create a plan that made a lot of sense in order to get themselves to what they're aiming for.

The third sort of leg of the stool is that they honored that plan to the best of their abilities. There's no one that was perfect at this, but that was core to their success. It sounds too simple, but that's exactly what it takes. Most people are missing one or more of those elements. You will spin and not really spiral up towards what you're wanting if one of those legs is missing.

Not that people can't experience success without all three of those legs. But if you're listening to this, and if you're listening to John's stuff, we're kind of interested in doing so as streamlined as possible. It's never a cakewalk to get something that you're looking for. But.

John: It's not a straight line, right? The plan will change, and the plan will change based on information. It's the working the plan that will give you the feedback loop. That's like oh gosh, this thing that I was doing maybe isn't actually helping me achieve my goal. So maybe I need to be working towards a slightly different goal, or maybe I need to be doing a slightly different thing in order to get what I actually want out of it.

Melissa: It's like data. It's as you go, it's data. The other thing I'll say is that based on those principles, our company is set up on no matter who we work with, no matter what level personal law firm owner and what they decide to engage in what they do. It's all centered around quarterly strategic planning that we facilitate. That takes care of leg one and leg two

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of the stool, which is getting very clear about what you're aiming for and making a well thought out plan to get there.

Then in between the quarters, there is support and accountability and coaching and camaraderie to honor the plan. It's all about progress, not perfection, just as you just pointed out. I know many of us are type A, but it's not about you make a plan, you have to expect to work the plan, and it's not going to go as you had planned. That's the name of the game. Having a community or people that you're around, like that's where the learning is.

Then the next time you plan, you sit down to plan, kind of lift your head at the turn of the quarter, get the lay of the land, make some adjustments for moving forward, process some lessons. That's when you take the learning. It's like you have a different vantage at that point.

John: Totally. Yeah, you're a different person after three months.

Melissa: Yes, especially if you've been working your plan. Some people struggle with that part. They get busy and all that. So that's what the company's set up on. Many people don't really know what strategic planning is.

I've been trying to be better and clearer about what that means. But essentially, it gets you very organized with how you're thinking about your current state of the firm and how to bridge the gap to where you want to go with the firm. That is a gift. It gives you visibility. We go on facts, not feelings. Your decisions become better and faster. You can make it more quickly. You become a better business owner when you get organized in these ways. So.

John: Well, and I think you start to realize that there's no shame in having gotten things not quite right or even completely wrong, especially if we're talking about, and I should say, right, I've been fortunate enough to be a fly on the wall in your process sometimes. So I've got some familiarity with it. I feel like, correct me if I'm wrong, you're really good in the first parts of

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your engagement. It's not even a strategic plan so much as help them figure out what's the direction, the strategic direction they want to go.

Then that quarterly planning process, again, as I've witnessed it, is really about okay, you have the strategic direction, now let's make it actionable. Now let's actually try to put it into something that's a little bit more concrete. Then to answer the question I asked you, and again, correct me if I'm wrong, boiling it all the way down at this week by week level, right? So for the 12 or 13 weeks that you've got between quarterly planning, the Monday Map and Friday Wrap is about creating the micro feedback loops within the context of this larger strategic plan.

Again, partly to make sure that you're working the plan, but also partly so that you're fact checking and data checking and making sure that oh is this the right plan or not? That gives you information when you come back the next quarter, and you can say okay, great, this is what I learned.

Melissa: Yeah, absolutely. You said micro. We call it macro planning and then there's micro planning. It's just you kind of reverse engineering okay, well, this is the bigger plan. Then you get that down to the quarter. It's like what do I need to be focused on? I know what I need to be focused on. We map that out in planning.

How am I actually going to make that happen in my busy world? I have people pulling at me from all directions. It's so easy to let the priorities slip out of focus. So this is a practice to make sure that you stay intentional and you stay focused on the plans that you set when you worked really hard to do that all day in a room.

John: Right. It's a thing. You and I both said this in different ways the last time we were in a room together full of law firm owners, that the act of prioritization, inherent within that is the act of deprioritization. It's learning what you need to say no to.

That's actually, especially, I think, in the early going, for me, at least, right? I think you've experienced this as well with law firm owners. It's that

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saying no that is the hardest part. Because the work it takes to spin up a law practice requires being open to saying yes to a lot of things. You almost get in that habit, right?

What's necessary in the early phases in some ways, right? I think even then, probably a lot of people say yes to too many things. But I think it's more necessary in the early phases. Then as your maturity grows as a business owner, as a practice owner, as a delivering attorney, right? I mean, even inside of the practice, you hopefully will begin to recognize the need to be more and more protective of your finite capacity.

Melissa: Yes. I mean, actually, I recently on a podcast I was quoting you. I said it's just like John Grant says. We're talking about weekly and time and how you move through the week. You have this thing that you say a lot about the honest reckoning with capacity. Monday Map, Friday Wrap is that for you as the human.

That's what makes it hard. People don't want to say no to things. But when you get honest about what is actually possible to fit into your week, you realize that there's stuff that doesn't fit. But you tell yourself you're going to get all these things done in a week, and you don't actually map it to see if that's possible. That will keep you in a losing loop that is pretty over time, frustrating, deflating, exhausting. So I guess that's I never thought about using your words as an honest reckoning with your capacity as a human and what's possible.

John: Well, and to continue my own riff for a second, right? So the flip side for me of the honest reckoning with capacity is the brutal assessment of priority. That word brutal like hits hard when you talk about it with people.

But as I think I've said on the podcast before, but certainly that I say a lot in rooms full of lawyers, brutal, I think, is the right word because it's hard to say no to things. It's not what most of us are built around. It's a muscle you have to exercise. It's something that you need scaffolding and protection around.

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It brings to mind, as you and I record this, this episode hasn't gone live yet of my podcast, but I did an interview with Jessica Birkin and Megan Heitkamp. They took this notion of the honest reckoning with capacity and the brutal assessment of priority and added this third thing to it, which they call the really check.

It's basically each of them is empowered to talk to each other and anyone else on their team when one of them starts to say oh yeah, this week I'm going to do this and then I'm going to do this and then I'm going to do this. They're empowered to say, really? You think you're going to get all that done this week? You? Come on now. Right? You can do it in that sort of jokey way, but it really is a super powerful tool.

In part because, and it is funny. I was doing part of a workshop yesterday with the team and we talked about this. There's actually some like human behavior, brain science stuff that I can't quote off the top of my head. Maybe I'll find it and put it in the show notes that says that we tend to be relatively poor judges of our own capacity, but we are much better at assessing the capacity of those that we're close to. Right? So our family members, our colleagues, our team members.

So one of the beautiful things about the really check, but then also in the context of what I would call the weekly planning and the weekly review in Agile, and then even getting into the daily huddle or the daily standup if you go that far, is there's a power in having close colleagues and team members who are able to really check you. You have to be open to that. Everybody has to be the right level of psychological safety or whatever to make that okay in the room that you're in.

Melissa: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. It's meaningful work to continue to increase your capacity, meaning through assistance of whether that's for the legal work or administrative, which that's where it starts to get into the firm. But you as a human only still have so much capacity. So how can you leverage resources to help more get done? I like the book *Buy Back Your Time*. This speaks a lot to this. So I'll leave that to that.

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John: Yeah, I'll link it up in the show notes too, but yeah, that's a good one.

Melissa: You asked about how the origin story of Monday Map. Do you want me to go into that now?

John: Yeah, give us the five minute version.

Melissa: Because it's probably not what people think. I used to work at a consulting firm and was on the road full time. Like for real, 97% of the time, I was on the road. I loved it at first - it was... I was at the age where that's where I wanted, energy was endless and whatever.

John: Yeah, miles are racking up.

Melissa: Oh, totally. Played that game. I realized that sitting between, I was in a middle seat. So imagine you usually get upgraded all the time when you're on these flights, at least if it's a super maxed out plane to the premium comfort, for example, or whatever. I was sitting next to two guys, in between them, who had global status, which for United is like you have to be invited to that. I'm like they didn't even get upgraded? Like I was like what is happening?

So we started talking about does this happen to you very often? They explain how they, we started talking how they got status. Well, they heard me say, they asked me, "Where do you usually travel?" I said just domestically, which was true. They were like, "You have that status - traveling domestically. I would never want your life." I was like oh man, I am pretty tired. Like they're flying to Singapore.

John: That was it. It flipped the switch. Like it introduced the first doubt and took you away from that life.

Melissa: Yeah, I realized like there's an easier way to do life, Melissa. Okay, but so I was on the road a lot. It was a lot of hustle, a lot of high, it was a high demand job. I am the kind of person, just like all the listeners that are listening to this. I'm the kind of person that I do a good job. I

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crossed my T's, dot my I's, things didn't fall through the cracks. I was reliable. I kept moving up the ranks because of how responsible I was and how I would perform well.

We were sitting in an all company meeting one day and our CEO, we use Strength Finders a lot and Kolbe in that organization. So our CEO gave us a card that had our strengths on one side and our Kolbe on the other. He gave us an index card. He said, "There's this concept of balcony and basement, using your strengths and knowing yourself really well. There's times where those put you on a balcony, and there's times where those will put you in the basement. Like there's a shadow side to some of those strengths."

The exercise was what's your basement look like? Like what is that for you? So I don't remember the specifics of how else it was facilitated, but what I wrote down was high anxiety. Like that's my basement. It was how I was running. I was kind of running with a lot of anxiety, and it was killing me. So they had us sort of define some things about the basement and specific examples of when that shows up.

Then on the flip side of the card, he said, "I want you all to come up with three to five systems that you can put into place to keep you out of the basement." I was like okay. He gave us time to work on it. One of the systems I wrote down was sitting down every Sunday. This is what it was like back then. Sit down every Sunday and look at my week and plan my week. So I really understand what's possible and how to control as many variables as I could, take the reins where I could.

So that turned into, in that world, me looking ahead. The first thing I would do is look ahead at the week of travel, they were getting ready to book for me. They booked all my travel. Writing the travel coordinator and saying I want this flight, and I want this hotel so that I could control when I left, when I got in all that.

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So then I would go to the week I'm in, and I would look at my schedule and I would say okay. I controlled the flights. I had said these are the flights I want because I'd done that three weeks ago or whatever. So I look at all this. I'm like okay, leaving here. Then I pick up the rental car. Then I drive to Whole Foods to get like healthy food and snacks to take care of myself. Then I drive to this hotel and then I get seven hours of sleep, and I would have the times next to each thing.

So 11:00 p.m., go to sleep. 6:00 a.m., wake up. 6:45, prepare like last minute stuff, review for client, drive to client's office. I had everything mapped in a way that seems, and maybe even to some listeners now, it seems asinine. Like what in the heck?

But the truth is I got a lot more control over my life. I anticipated barriers before they were ever a thing. I excelled more. My capacity went up because I was not losing or wasting time to things that I didn't think through.

All of this, so this is a weekly practice for me. I mean, to the minute, like 15 minutes, I had my whole schedule laid out. The only way it gets thrown off, which is this is normal people's life, in my world then is delays for flights. That's it. Maybe weather, but that wasn't very often. So when those would happen, I learned how to adjust and how to think about how to adjust my schedule from there.

So this changed my life. I never stopped doing it because it put me back in the driver's seat of my existence. They used to be in control of me. They didn't think that or try that, but that's the truth. I used to have team members that would say how are you on the Delta flight and not the Frontier flight? I emailed them and told them what flight I wanted. She was like that would take an hour, hour and a half to look forward. Because we're on five, six flights a week. To figure all that out would take a long time to be able to email them that. It's like well yeah, it's worth it.

John: Yeah, but worth it for you. Yes.

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Melissa: Yeah.

John: Totally. That's fascinating. Like so you were scratching your own itch is basically what it was. You came up with a system that's now one of the pieces of what you teach and what you help other folks with. Looking at it or hearing about it as an outsider, right, as consultant, whatever, it's a form of calendar blocking, which is a practice that comes up in all kinds of different methods.

I think you and I, again, have talked about sort of, I draw a distinction between calendar blocking and calendar bucketing, which like a block is a dedicated thing that where you already know there's a one to one relationship between that block and something you're doing. A bucket is okay. I don't know exactly what I'm going to do, but I'm going to devote this to my marketing activities or my financial things that I'm going to knock off.

Melissa: We do think about that the same. That's even outlined in the guide.

John: Is it? So again, yeah. Again, it's good human practice. The other thing though, that's interesting, and maybe you've thought of this, maybe you haven't. But one of the things that's big in Agile methodologies is the idea of time blocking work and not giving yourself an unbounded amount of time to complete a thing.

Number one, because there's nothing like a deadline to focus you. But number two, because you generally can get to a good enough solution, assuming you're honest about how long something's going to take and you've got enough information. There's maybe some caveats to it. But that idea of creating a time box that says I'm not going to let this take over and consume more than this chunk of my life can be a really powerful tool as well.

Melissa: Yes, yes. Pareto's principle kicks in too where like you'll fill the space so you don't need to have extra space. Yes to all of that. It does feel important to say also that what I just described was a really crude way of

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scratching my own itch. Now I've come a long way with trying to adapt that in a way that makes more sense for specifically law firm owners.

Because I was a part of another course that they had something similar but more vague. It was basically like get it all out of your head, schedule it all on your calendar. Okay. But that, for law firm owners, for example, they have to have buffer time. Things are not going to go as planned. That's just the nature of their work.

So I feel like now we've adapted and have a guide that's really thorough, though it's time for, I think, another round of updates, honestly. Just more learning, more learning about how to make it more accessible and all that.

John: Sure. Yeah. There's a lot to be said for, and again, you and I have had these similar journeys. I mean, over a decade ago, I first had this idea about oh could these Agile things work for lawyers? The answer now I know is absolutely yes, but not at all in the way that I thought 10 years ago. It's so completely different what I've learned by actually trying these things myself, working with clients who were gracious enough.

I sometimes think of some of my long term clients as my guinea pigs. I've had a couple of clients for going on nine years now where we've just been making iterative improvements the whole time. But I would never start a new client where I started them nine years ago. It's because of them that I've learned so much about how to accelerate newer folks and bring people into these methods a lot more efficiently. I think that's the same what you're doing.

We're always trying to say okay, great. What did I learn when I taught it this time, or when I taught it to this particular person or this firm that's practicing this type of law? Because the things that the drivers behind an immigration practice are totally different than the drivers behind a criminal practice, are totally different than the drivers behind a business practice.

I feel really lucky and fortunate to have been able to work with as many different kinds of law firm owners that I feel like I've got this library. I know,

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again, it's part of why you and I get along so well is you also have been doing this for so long. So we can get in a room and be like oh, yeah, I've got this new immigration client. We can like slot into what we know about immigration practice and really bounce some cool ideas around.

Melissa: Yeah, definitely. I will say too that what helps with working with so many different practice areas is that human nature is that we each kind of have our own story of how things have to go. You've seen a bunch of different practice areas applied just using Monday Map as an example.

Monday Map, there are times that attorneys who are in court a lot think that this can't work. That's not true. It looks different, but that's not true. Actually, one of the clients that I had that made the most progress with Monday Map, more than the average person, like they really did a good job of planning so that they could actually honor their plan. They were in court. We figured out, he had 17 hours free. That's what I remember. 17 hours free to schedule because an average. So what's 40 minus 17?

John: 23.

Melissa: 23. So he had 23 hours on average of court time every week because we could go back and look at that. So just knowing that, you don't schedule more than 17 hours, and you may even not have 17 hours depending on the week that you have, but you have to get to the facts. The facts are you think you're going to do 30 hours of work. When? That doesn't work. But they all just have the highest hopes.

So basically, because they can't have high hopes, this doesn't work for them. I really realized the people who do the best, it forced them to make it math. They could succeed easier at it because of that.

John: Well, and again, that's what I call the honest reckoning. It's the same thing. It's like okay. Something else that comes to mind that feels so counterintuitive to people, but you can plan for variability. Variability and unpredictability can be predictable in a way.

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You just know that there are going to be these chunks of time that different things are going to come out of left field. You just have to be able to sort of build that in. Because if you don't, they're going to send you over the tipping point where you all of a sudden go from a manageable amount of capacity to overcapacity. Then it's that overcapacity where balls get dropped or mistakes happen or even just delayed. They don't even have to be dropped.

But the thing that's delayed then generates another client email or client phone call like where's my thing? It becomes a snowball that can be really hard to get out of.

Melissa: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I listened to an interview with this CEO named Sam Corcos. He was on the Tim Ferriss podcast. He talked about it's just his own practice, but it was essentially Monday Map, you know? You can't run off a to do list. If you're supposed to spend minutes doing it, it should be in your calendar. If you're not supposed to spend minutes doing it, it's fine. Just you don't care enough about it to put it just to designate time, keep it on your list.

He tells his people who come in to the firm, the company works for to do this practice. A week later, they'll come back and say your method doesn't work. It's like why? Because there's not oh, it doesn't all fit. That's what that's their answer.

John: Right.

Melissa: You die laughing. They don't understand that what they're saying, so he'll help them. That's the point of the exercise. That's what we all do to ourselves by default. It requires a practice of being willing to look at this to start to shape things in a way that makes sense.

John: Totally. Well, and to bring it back, and speaking of the best laid plans. I emailed you four different topics that I thought we'd cover. We're almost out of time already. So we'll have to continue this conversation. But talk for

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a minute about the importance of finding outside help to help you make progress in these parts of your journey as a business owner.

Melissa: Yeah. The first thing that comes to mind when you say that is anything we can do to help ourselves reduce the cognitive load of shifting into a new way of working, a new way of thinking can be really, really helpful.

A lot of law firm owners I talk to initially that say, I feel like I should be able to do this on my own, but that's the rub. Like you have really important role and a really important job to fulfill. You're not expected to be the expert in all of these areas or the master in all of these areas.

John: Although I think it's a literal human cognitive bias that is the expert fallacy that like when you have deep expertise in one area, in one domain, we have a tendency to think oh, we should be able to be experts in all these other related domains. We're just not.

Melissa: Yeah.

John: Right? It's hard. Each thing is a profession in its own right. Yes, exactly.

Melissa: So I think that is the first thing that popped in my head is for people to consider. Other reasons to get outside help are that facilitation is really powerful. It's hard to even - I don't know if you consider yourself a facilitator. That's like what I think is my main job.

There's coaching and there's some consulting, but my job is to pull out of people's brains, using a framework, what is most important and how we're going to make it happen. I help with all of it, but I don't tell people what to do. Like that's not the gig. Doing that, that's my job. When it comes time for my company to have meetings like this, I'm a really terrible facilitator.

John: No, you can't do it.

Melissa: Because you can't be in it.

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John: It's too close.

Melissa: Yes, you're so in it. So, I think the power of having facilitation really just cuts to the truth so much faster. You don't have biases that take over. You don't have, frustrations they're inevitable as an owner. You have some frustrations. Like you aren't trying to be diplomatic at the same time you're trying to lead. It's really messy. On top of that, facilitators have a lot of experience seeing a lot of different things and can shine a light on something maybe you haven't considered.

It cracks open your world in a way that makes your life, it improves the quality of your life, and it can get you where you'd like to go with more ease. Not easy, but with more ease.

John: Yeah, yeah, I think that's right. I do think about, I think of facilitation as something that I'm constantly trying to learn more about and be better at, but I think it is something that's a big component of what I do, especially when I'm working with teens.

There's something about that other person in the room that allows a team to engage in a topic in an unpersonal way or depersonalized way. Let's say we never hit raw nerves because sometimes we do, but I think it's a lot less likely that that's going to happen and that it becomes about the work more than the workers or the goals and the team and the firm more than the component parts.

Melissa: Yes, very much so. We talked about, which maybe we could talk about on round two, but you and I talked a little before the recording about how important the job is to hold space in a room. Like it's a container. As the person who's leading, it's very important to maintain the integrity of that so that it feels like a safe place for everyone to speak.

There's no distractions, disruptions. You're really holding the space for this conversation and discussion and exercise and activity and planning to happen that it is impossible to do that for yourself. It's just not how we're wired.

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So I think it's like greasing the wheels when you do decide to elicit some help. This is something else I know you and I feel passionate about. Not just any help. Help from someone that you can sense, you understand that it really is as a partner. It's not consulting where you're thrown a bunch of information that you're supposed to just do. Like maybe. Depends on your firm. Depends on your culture. Depends on your everything. Right? So tailored and partnered.

John: I say this to my clients, and I've said it to your clients when you've been gracious enough to invite me in with them. That lawyering at its core is a caregiving profession. I think that also should be true for consulting, advising, coaching, etc. It should be about a care-based approach.

There are a lot of people in a lot of industries, a lot of professions in the world, but certainly in the milieu of people that are trying to get business from lawyers that engage in a little bit of either fear-based or shame-based or FOMO-based. They're all kind of flavors of the same thing, where it's like oh, you're not running a million-dollar law practice yet? What are you even doing with your law degree?

I don't know. I mean, part of why I really gravitate towards you, and there's other folks. There's Ernie Svenson. There's Adriana Linares. There's Jared Correia. There's lots of folks that I think are doing work that is similar to what you and I do. You and I don't do exactly the same thing, but we serve the same types of clients and help them with different problem sets, but we're doing it out of a place of genuine care and concern and kind of alignment to their mission of helping people.

I think there are, and I don't want to like name and shame or anything, but I certainly am aware of marketing from other folks in this space that are maybe a little bit more kind of fear-based or shame-based or whatever. It always rubs me a little bit the wrong way.

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Melissa: Yeah. There's certain companies out there, whatever, you can feel that the words that they say don't match what they are giving off, you know? They might say that they're interested in helping law firm owners get what you and I would say we're helping law firms, like freedom and time back and all that stuff. Like that's, yes.

And there's a prescription here. It's our way or the highway. If you can't take what we have given you and implement and be successful, there's something wrong with you. It's not true. Like it's easy for someone to feel like it's true because of the way that they're saying that it's true and have to really be discerning because that's what I mean by partner. Like that's not a partner. That's not a partner. You want a partner. You want someone who cares about you. You are not a number. You are absolutely connected to the client. That's not easy.

John: It's almost like if you want to hire a boss, that's what you would do.

Melissa: That's right.

John: Right. I'm not confident in my role as the boss, as the law firm owner. So I need to hire someone to be the boss of me.

MELISSA: So you look to people who are in a position of saying let me be your boss, and I will tell you exactly what to do. Listen, there can be success, like air quotes, whatever. People get to decide what success looks like for them. There can be success in those. But the problem is you haven't had to or learned to think for yourself and develop the skill set to develop your own business and make these decisions. You've just been implementing someone else's decisions.

To each their own, but I think the people that are generally drawn towards the work that we do, they're interested in autonomy and developing themselves in the intangible ways that lead to what they're looking for. There's not really room for that when you're just implementing what you're told to implement.

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John: Right. Yeah. When it comes back to the thing you said a minute ago about holding space, and sometimes the best way to hold space is to just like let the silence ring for a minute. Sometimes you just have to marinate on stuff or think. It is a process. It is a learning process.

As we said at the top of the show, it is not a linear one. It is not if you hit mark A and then mark B and then mark C, then yada, yada, yada, riches or freedom or work-life balance or all the things. It's more like driving a boat in the wind. Like you think you're aiming at your target, but you're going to get blown off a little bit. You've got to make some course corrections and adjust your steering, adjust your speed, whatever. Over time, you're going to be more likely to meet your goals and your destination.

Melissa: Yeah. Yes to all that.

John: All right.

Melissa: And we could, yeah.

John: We could go forever.

Melissa: If you're down for part two sometime, I totally am.

John: Always, always. Yeah. We can continue. Maybe we'll go back and forth between each other's podcasts or something. I don't know.

Melissa: Yes, let's do it. That's great.

John: But thank you so much for coming on the show for the first time.

Melissa: Yeah. Thank you for having me.

John: We will definitely continue the conversation. If people want to know more about Velocity Work, how do they find you?

Melissa: They can go to velocitywork.com. There's access there to our podcast, to Mastery Group, which is a group of law firm owners that we

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lead through strategic planning, and they can schedule a consult if anything's interesting.

John: Awesome. Yeah. Again, I've done some work with Melissa's Mastery group. I've done some work with her Syndicate group. It's a great group of people that are part of your programs, and they're just smart, like well-meaning, caring folks. Like I love the community that you've built around the work that you do. It really is.

Melissa: Thank you.

John: Like, again, it's, it's an honor for me to be invited into it on occasion and be able to be part of it. Oh man.

Melissa: We're so, so lucky and happy to have you. So thank you.

John: Great.

Melissa: Thanks, John.

John: All right. We'll talk again soon.

Melissa: Okay. Bye-bye.

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Lunareh. That's it for today's episode. Thank you for listening and see you next time.