

Hello everyone welcome to Ask Right + Good I'm so excited that you're here today. My name is Rebecca Grmela and I am the founder of writing guide and you have found yourself at the live bimonthly speaker series where we're talking with incredible women, a few men hopefully as well in the future about just things that are going on in the world of social impact communications, all things ethical businesses and equitable businesses. I'm fortunate to work with an amazing community, as an entrepreneurs, people who are kind of doing their own thing and excited to bring you today. So I will I will give you a little introduction and let you know the agenda here and I will let her take it away. So again, these are meant to be short, impactful conversations. We anticipate this being about 20 minutes if you're watching live, feel free to interact and pop in questions that we're happy to answer. If you're watching this after the fact you can always tag as an ask questions. We're always happy to do that. Amy Steinmann is the founder of Hellberg and LM strategic communications. She has decades of experience or excuse me not decades more than a decades of experience in healthcare, government and nonprofit communications. And she's passionate about developing strategies for her clients to help them overcome their communication challenges. So I won't get into her official bio because she's gonna say about our work today that's going to be a great so yeah, I'll let her introduce herself and and take it away. today. We're discussing all things to great resignation. So definitely a hot topic going on in our world right now.

Yeah, thanks so much for that introduction, Rebecca. As Rebecca said, I'm Amy Steinmann. I'm Principal at Holbrook and helm strategic communications, where I provide communication social media and content marketing strategy to health care, government and nonprofit organizations. And yeah, talking about the great resignation. You know, I like to think that I was one of the early adopters of this trend. I resigned from my full time role in October of 2020. And I'll get into a little bit more about that a little bit later. But, you know, four and a half million people left their jobs in November which is a covenant to pay 65, and overpopulation in Florida, which is a huge number of people. And people are leaving jobs for all sorts of reasons. Not only you know, who are in the service industry, but all the way up to executives and CEOs. Yeah, and you know, I found some information from this executive outplacement firm called challenger gray and Christmas. They track CEO departures and October there were 142 departures which was the second highest month on record. And then the final quarter of 2021. The number of departing CEOs was up 16% year over year. So yeah, yeah. I mean, if you're for some reason less familiar with this conversation, Amy and I just really naturally reached this topic because I think when we first started working together, we bonded over the fact that we move through different routes. And found ourselves working for ourselves, leaving our full time jobs to do so. And now at this point, I should say when I started doing that, I was also a little ahead of the curve. I was a little nervous about it kind of trepidatious with what it looked like to work for myself. And now that I hear when I hear someone contemplating leaving their job, I'm excited I'm like their cheerleader like yeah, quit your job out of there, deer do your own thing.

You know, it's interesting to see like you said, the numbers really just speak for themselves as well. And so if you're not familiar with this topic, as anyone sharing in the last year or so, just huge swaths of people are leaving their full time employment. I think a lot of times when we hear about it on the news, it tends to be coming from like an HR or an operations professional

discussing, you know, data at large and how, you know, we're having difficulty filling part time roles at restaurants or gig economy workers, but as you pointed out, it's the CEO from the top down people just really reflecting on you know, their values and how they're spending their work time during the week.

And this pandemic definitely hasn't helped anything. I mean between quarantines and lack of childcare or lack of reliable childcare, it's really put stress on people to figure out how they can balance you know, managing their workload and managing their family life. An interesting I found a survey that was conducted by MetLife in September that found 42% of managers in the 26 to 40. age bracket reported experiencing burnout which was the highest among the age cohort cohorts that they surveyed. And that's definitely a reason that I considered or I decided to leave my job. I was feeling just really burnt out and overwhelmed. Especially because of the pandemic. It just was a factor that really affected me. Yeah

We can get into some of the details of that in a minute because I know everyone kind of has a different reason for doing so. I coincidentally I was telling me just before we started recording, I listened to a fun podcast last week also about this topic, by the breadwinners, a shout out if you want to check that out, but they were discussing how much of an identity shift has happened for the individuals that are out there working right now. And you know, that also that people would plan on quitting with COVID are kind of being forced to come back and they're just basically all this discontent has created this environment where people are leaving their jobs. A fun fact the term the great resignation is coined by I wrote down his name Anthony D'Amico from the School of Management at my alma mater, Texas A&M, but people are calling out all kinds of things are calling it the big quit or they're saying, you know, we're going to be our own business leaders. There's a lot of like startup and entrepreneur culture here, but it sounds like that isn't really what motivated you to shift into the role that you're in now. So can you do you feel comfortable sharing some of the license does that lead you to where you are now?

Yeah, so it's funny because always in the back of my mind, there was this idea that maybe I would start my own business, but it was something that was just so far removed from my reality that I just never thought that it'd be something that I would. I don't know. I don't even know when I thought I would do it, but it just seemed like something long in the future.

I gave birth to my daughter, at the end of the summer in May 19. Have a great fall week. on maternity leave, I was really ready to go back to work. Going back to work, and the company that I worked for is a federal contractor and for the better part of 10 years. I had worked on a contract that while I was out on leave ended and I knew that it was going to be ending and my supervisor who was a mentor and almost like a second mom to me, she retired. So going back to work after having a baby is a big change as is but then going back to work to a job that's a little bit different. You know, you're still with your same team members, but there's a shift. There's something that's different. And so about a couple of months after coming back to work, I had an opportunity for a promotion. I'd be overseeing the communications department, and supervising staff and so I interviewed for the role and was offered it and then I accepted it and about a month later the pandemic hit. And so what was so challenging about that is not only

was I trying to manage being a full time working mom, navigating this new role, and then all of my usual outlets for dealing with you know, stress and anxiety and all those kinds of things like chatting with my coworkers and going to social gatherings and taking fitness classes at the gym, all of that was suddenly cut off. And so I fell into a depression and you know, it was just a really difficult time and I started talking with a therapist who helped me put you know, my options into perspective. And so in October of 2020, I made the very difficult decision to resign my position and I have to say I do realize my privilege and being able to make that decision because I have the support of my husband and my family. But I realized that there are people who are desperately wanting to quit their jobs and don't have that support. So I realized that that was something that I was able to do. One thing that's interesting, I'm very tight bag. Always have a plan kind of girl I had no plan designed. I had applied to a couple of positions but I you know, obviously it wasn't offered. And so about a month after I you know had kind of come down from the high of submitting that resignation. I have this nagging feeling or nagging but just this intuition that maybe I should be working for myself. And I remember my mom telling me one morning like me if you're if you're feeling this, you really need to pursue that. And so I started doing some research and that'd be my first tip. If anyone who's listening right now or watching right now is thinking about making the jump and possibly starting a business. Do your research I reached out to a practical colleague who had started her own business about 18 months prior, another colleague who had been laid off from her job and had started her own business to really learn, you know, from them what had worked well, what hadn't what they wish they would have known when they were starting the business and really just tried to soak in as much as I could before I really decided to make that decision. And then I think you know, another tip is build your plane before you fly it. I did so much research on business structures, LLC versus S corp and how to, you know, build for projects or to do retain our clients. Coming up with my messaging, figuring out my target audience, building my website. I had all of that in place before I officially launched. And actually next week, February second is my one year anniversary which I'm really Yeah, that's like that's a guy's anniversary right in those milestone Yeah, yeah. And I remember he originally connected because I sort of maybe a little before you but we were both still pivoting and figuring out exactly like you said like, what does it look like? To do some of our offering what is bad? What's worked best What hasn't for you? Thank you Yeah, for sharing that. That's really interesting. And I also really appreciate you centering you know, the privilege component of this discussion as well because I think for the two of us on this call, you know, presenting there, there was a little bit about opportunity there to be able to say you know, let's just do it and see see if we can make that work. If not, we'll do something else. But you know, for others, the risk is much higher to leave your job and still as you shared the very beginning people are doing it so there's clearly a stronger motivation than money. I do think it's interesting to think about the fact that COVID unsettled so many people that the risk was greater than the reward at a certain point people are willing to make that change to see what they can navigate because the bottom fell out for a lot of people, right. Well, congrats, your mark. And I also love you know, you sharing your story about parenthood and how that plays into things. I myself am not a parent, but you know when I work with my peers right now, all I have are is empathy for you know what it looks like to do that double shift all day long, every single day. It's a lot that's old into the difficulty that's already there with starting a business. Right,

right. And one of the thing that has been really great about having my own business now is having that flexibility and you know, you and I have talked offline about the fact that you know, my daughter has had to quarantine twice this month for a total of 20 days. She's has gone to daycare a total of seven days. This entire month. And you know, thankfully thankfully, because I own my own business and I have the flexibility I am able to be home with her and give her my attention. Whereas if I was working in a full time you know, role I would be home but I'd have to take leave or unpaid leave or looking after she went to bed and I still have to do that to a point. You know, being a business owner, but I just have a lot more flexibility than I would.

And I think you know, I think that is important to share because what you shared is a that flexibility is I think one of the largest draws for people who are looking to leave their role. And also that doesn't mean it's necessarily glamorous, right? Flexibility means you're still dealing with life and you know that that has its ups and downs in its own way. And I think also you know, making it work is really the important situation. I also heard earlier in your comment, I love that you when you decided to resign, you are still applying to other roles you weren't 100% sure that you were still going to work for yourself. And I felt that so deeply as someone kicking and screaming became an accidental entrepreneur, and try to every avenue before working for myself because I'm gonna give us credit as marketers. We're the big project managers on the team and we're saying, you know, hey, don't feel competent, saying I'm doing this until I have a plan in place. And I think a huge component of the great resignation is that a lot of people are sitting in their office making that plan and feeling confident to take that leap if they're able to. Yeah, I'll say one of the things that was so hard even when I was applying for jobs was I really didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. I mean, I just sort of found my identity sort of shifted a bit. We talked about this, becoming a new mom and kind of living in this new COVID world. I really just wasn't sure where I wanted to be. And it wasn't until after I was able to resign and have some time to really think that you know, the idea of working for myself and you know being a business owner really started to take shape for me, and it took that downtime and that quiet time to really reflect and think about, you know what I wanted out of a job and you out of a career for that, you know, it's been for me to be able to make that decision. Sure. What do you feel some of the biggest shifts were both personally and professionally as you moved from working for someone to eventually working for yourself.

One of the things that I'm still working on that I kind of wasn't expecting was my competence. You know, you I made the decision to go into my own business. You know, I knew I could do it. I think there are some times where it just feels like you know that imposter syndrome GETSY, right? You see with all these great things other people are doing and you think well, I shouldn't be doing that. I don't know I'm not doing that. I don't know what to do. You have proposals that you spend time doing and then they don't go anywhere. Or you don't get accepted. But you know, the more you work out and the more work you win and even the work that you don't win is a learning opportunity. And so like I said my confidence I'm still working on it, but it's grown a lot and I really feel a lot stronger than I did when I first started.

Yeah, I completely agree with that. I don't necessarily want to perpetuate the the work hustle mentality or you know, self starter mentality but I think you know, if you are working for someone currently, and you find yourself being the proactive person on the team, like those are

the same skills that you use and working for yourself because you're you're creating your workload and you have to combat that yeah, that imposter syndrome that starts creeping in with oh I am my brand no matter what type of self employed person I am instead of relying on the brand of someone that you worked for prior. Right? It's a very interesting dynamic.

One of the things I always did when I you know, had a full time job so I always love to take the lead on projects. And so I think that then, you know, being in business for myself, you are the lead you have to take the initiative to do things manage your workload. And so that's you know, some things that some people struggle with for me, you know, I love being organized. I use a project management tool I have, you know, my lists and so, it's been nice to be the one that's calling the shots and driving, you know, flying the plane you know, so to speak, to use that metaphor again.

So, yeah, yeah. I also think it takes a little bit of time to kind of unwind from the habits that you had in that full time role. Like you said, you already proactively did all those things, but when you're doing it for yourself, for me at least, it took a little bit of time to say, Oh, I am working for myself. So if I do need to take a half day for an appointment or for a really important errand, or something like that is something I've built into my day versus feeling that I owe someone that time. And again, that just speaks to that just human element that seems to be driving the great resignation at large the fact that employers create, or many employers at least create such a dynamic that it's a constant. You only mentality of working for someone where now you get to rebuild that confidence amongst yourself, which is really nice.

Yeah, I think you know, something that I feel like happens during the pandemic is this reevaluation of our boundaries as well. You know, so many of us working from home and having to deal with childcare and even that, but just, you know, just being at home all the time. And working. I think that's one of the things I've tried really hard to do is set really firm boundaries as a business owner. So I'm only responding to emails during my business hours at seven o'clock. If I get an email. I'll respond to it the next morning. I said That's a harder boundary to set when you work for someone else. It's possible but it's harder. And so that's one of the things that I've really tried to do now as a business owner is to make sure that I set those boundaries and stick with them, which has improved my you know, satisfaction and working to you're completely right and you know, those boundaries are for you, as mentioned as they are for your interactions with other people. And the more you uphold them, the more you shape your time and freedom as well. I'm reminded of the uptick of, or maybe creation of I don't know of the entire work subreddit that we need to get base right now but just thinking about some of the most controversial posts that people share. In case you're not aware this thread basically shares really horrific work story is that people have experience and almost all of them around those boundaries that you talked about communication, illness, death, just human behavior that is unavoidable and that management has in these examples at least but completely, you know, unresponsive to or reasonable about and I find it getting referenced a lot, a lot more in articles that I read because there's so many just classic examples on there that speak to what you've just spoken about as well.

I like to joke with my friends, or you know, I've got someone that wants to meet me for lunch or you know, have a meeting. Do you think you'll be able to to join us and I'll say, I don't know I gotta check with my boss. She's been really well, in the interest of, you know, these being digestible conversations, I think the main question I wanted to end on was okay, we've, we've gone through the great resignation. We've been a part of this, a statistic that exists out there to everything that you would go back to working for someone else, or how do you feel about that topic right now?

For the foreseeable future. I see myself going back. I'll never say never because you do never know what's going to happen. But for right now, for the lightest and for the foreseeable future. I want to know as long as the work is flowing and people are interested in working with me, then I definitely want to continue working for myself. I think that that's that's kind of the new pending question right now is everyone realizing what what structures that they feel comfortable with? And I agree, I I felt the same way about the great resignation, which is why I'm so excited to talk to you about it, but it's also okay to be okay if that's not your vibe, and that doesn't work out for you as well. Absolutely. Thank you so much for joining me today, Amy. For everyone who tuned in, you can find me in the Information Group or from my website and on LinkedIn. Please connect with her. As far as as great and good. Our goal is to do this price event. So we do have someone scheduled two weeks from now and we're excited to bring you this conversation. If there are any topics that you want us to cover, just let us know and we will do that in the future. Thank you, everyone. Bye, everybody. Thank you. Thanks, Rebecca.