

This is a rough transcription of The Femails podcast. This transcription is for Season 2 Episode 11, featuring Lauren Smith Brody. It originally aired on April 9, 2019. There may be errors in this transcription, but we hope that it provides helpful insight into the conversation. If you have any questions or need clarification, please email editorial@careercontessa.com

Alright, Lauren. Tell us about your career path leading up to the fifth trimester.

Sure. So I for years was an editor in the women's magazine industry most of my years. I spent a Glamour magazine doing a bunch of different jobs there and rising up to be executive editor, which is the number two editor and the industry went through a lot of changes in my years there. So I got to try a lot of different things producing events. It didn't even you know TV shows that we were doing and stuff like that along the way I had my two boys and I was really lucky to be working largely in a very female environment with you know, other women who either were moms or certainly were familiar with talking about things like breastfeeding in the workplace and pumping that sort of thing and yet it was still an incredibly challenging transition for me. So it took me some years. My husband was actually in his medical training. So we were very dependent on sort of the steadiness of my employment at that point. But once I had my second son and got a few years into working and mothering with him. I realized that I had really approached the return to work as almost a an additional trimester and I had heard of the fourth trimester which was the newborn phase and sort of the idea of recreating the womb for your newborn baby and I just decided one day and my head the fifth trimester was a thing and so I went about getting it trademarked and I. I knew I wanted to write a book. I had wanted to write a book since I was a little girl, but just didn't know what it would be about and suddenly I found this really new meaning in the work I was doing a lot of women, I think experience sort of the urge for you know, a different kind of satisfaction in their work after having children and I definitely experienced that and so I went about looking for a book agent and simultaneously realized that there was no way in the world I couldn't fill 80 thousand or a hundred thousand words just with my own experience, which was admittedly pretty privileged in spite of the fact that it had been hellaciously hard to go back to work with X. And so I did a big survey and thank God for social media because it spread it around really quickly and I could see using the tools that I use but it was a pretty diverse array of mothers responding to my questions about their transitions back to work. So there were single moms, adoptive moms, there were moms who worked in hourly wage working jobs and professional sort of career ladder climbers and moms who works part-time work for themselves moms who worked very much for the man and given all of that. I was able to really build a skeleton for this book I wanted to write that would connect the dots between all of our experiences and offer women a collective mentor of the things that we'd all learn the hard way and the successes and struggles we'd had to really help one another through this because also in my research I discovered that there was a reason that it was really hard for me to go back to work which was that we're not living in a particularly supportive culture around new Parenthood and our federal laws certainly don't do enough to support new parents coming back to work and new parents at home with their babies in those early months. So given all that and given that you know, most families are dual income families. I really wanted to look at what would best support these women, you know through this admittedly challenging

time, but knowing that most of them need to be there. How do you do it? And so that's what I put together,

right? How old are your boys now?

They are 7 and 10.

Oh, wow. So you even had them somewhat close together. I'm sure three years goes by in a blink when you have kids.

My second one was actually do my second son was do on my first son's birthday. So **wow**, not on purpose

well and how is working motherhood being disrupted today compared to you know, what it was when you were when you were in the workplace and you had your first son.

It is amazing how much has changed even just in this decade? I think largely the biggest change. Is that women feel more? More open and honest about their motherhood in the workplace. And I think we have seen that in some of the most some of the healthiest and most competitive Industries. There's almost an arms race for benefits given around new Parenthood, you know, who's got the best parental leave and you know, who's got the most flexibility and it's interesting because those things have made headlines. Which is fantastic because that does really help sort of change our idea of what's normal and yet when you look at who's being offered them, it is a very select group of already extremely high performing parents for the most part who have access to those kinds of benefits and if that helps shift the norm great, but I also felt like it was very important in this book and in the interviews that I did to communicate the idea that even if you're in an industry that is sort of Baseline not that supportive. If you can be just one degree more transparent about the challenges of being a working parent. It gives us a problem to solve you can't know what needs to be solved unless the problem is apparent. And so I really encourage all of my readers and the women who I'm in touch with when I give corporate talks and things to just be like a little bit more exposed than they might like to be knowing that it will ultimately benefit not just their own situations, but all of those around them and largely their company and help their company be more competitive.

Right, right. I was going to say not being transparent doesn't really it doesn't help anybody really know know it feels uncomfortable at first to be a little vulnerable and say this isn't perfect but transparency ultimately leads to as you're going to probably tell us like actions being taken their policies being put into place and all that's good. And I know it's always hard to be the first person to start that but it's a great thing. Click here is exist. And I know we talked about what inspired you to write V trimester, but can you define like what is the fifth trimesters and maybe even like what the fourth trimester is because I should be aware that we are you skipping a number

Of course. Yeah. No, I remember somebody said to me in the very beginning I had there were two trains of thought one was. Oh, thank God somebody gave it a name now. I know it's real I feel so I feel so good and validated and somebody else was like, oh my God, like what the heck there's another time Esther. Yeah, they're just surprised. **They're like no.** Yeah the first three, of course, you know about that's pregnancy and actually even if you're adopting a baby, they're sort of this term that adoptive parents use called paper pregnant while you're anticipating the birth of a baby. Um and the fourth trimester I learned about from reading the happiest baby on the block by dr. Harvey karp who is an expert in these days pediatrician and has this huge best-selling book that I really relied on that defines the fourth trimester as the first three months of a baby's life with the supposition that baby. Human babies are actually born a whole trimester too early because of the size of the mothers pelvis in the baby's skull to accommodate a human brain. So you recreate the feeling of the womb by shushing and swaddling and all of these s verbs that make a baby feel cozy, and I remember reading his book. And it was very helpful with my with my first son in particular and and yet like every few pages he would say something like just get to 12 weeks get to that 12-week point and your baby will wake up to the world and give something back to you and start to get on a schedule maybe sleep a little more and I just kept thinking like crap. That's when I go back to work. That's what it's going to get good. Yeah. And I knew even then that I had a pretty I had most of my maternity leave it was FMLA but a lot of it was covered by disability. There were a couple of unpaid weeks and yet it you know, and we were in a position to be able to save up and afford for that. But I knew even then that not everybody had even had access to those 12 weeks and the statistic that I know now is that only 56% of working parents are even eligible for FMLA which gives you 12 weeks of job guaranteed unpaid leave.

I'm shaking my head just because it's it's. I mean, it's crazy that that exists and yeah, the United States does not guarantee any paid maternity leave let alone paid leave for both parents, which is a whole nother conversation about the fact that that actually creates a lot of inequality in the workplace and really puts the burden on the employers to offer paid leave. Yes. Yes exactly. Which and well we're going to get into that but what did you discover? What did you discover in your research about Paid Family Leave policies in general?

Just how widely varied they are and how how much they vary industry by industry company by company and team by team because there are a lot of companies particularly the ones I've evolved my my sort of authorship career into more of an entrepreneurial I now do a lot of Consulting and I do some contract coaching and. Help work places develop mom mentorship programs that kind of thing and I do a lot of a lot of speaking and I'm so sorry. I just lost my train of thought because I like brag about my career with me. Are you saying you want me to stir the question over? Yes, that's a great. Thank you. **Well, the United States is not guaranteed any paid maternity leave let alone paid leave for both parents which is a whole another conversation because it really creates a lot of inequality in the workplace when you are encouraging women to take time off and not men and it really puts the burden on employers to offer paid leave. So, what did you discover in your research about Paid Family Leave policies in general?**

Oh gosh, just how incredibly variable they are industry to industry and work place to work place within those Industries and then really team by team what I've learned in a lot of the companies that bring me in to do speaking sort of corporate speaking and some corporate Consulting for them as they help try to improve their policies and their culture is. Policies aren't enough and a lot of workplaces at least at the managerial in HR level have fantastic intentions and they kind of know what needs to happen and yet when you look at the actual raw numbers of how many dads are taking the six weeks of Parental leave that they're offered and it ends up being like, you know, 10% take the full amount something's going wrong there. So it's really it's the policies can be there, but the culture has to support those policies so that people feel like they can actually use them and that's that's where it gets really hard to try to thread the needle

right? It seems like we have two sides here Industries and companies. They don't even offer it or they call it disability which is kind of right. I've never like that term for it, but who aren't even offering it so it's like we just need. Them to understand like this is something you need to offer and then we have this other side of the Spectrum which is they offer it but people aren't actually taking advantage of it or only the women are taking advantage of it. And I mean when you were doing your research what you have like a shining star example, either a company or an industry that's doing it really well.

Yes, I mean I can I would love to to shine that light on American Express. It's doing just its policies on paper are fantastic. And when you look at the numbers of women who are and men who are actually using what's available to them. It's quite high they offer I want to say it's 28 either 26 or 28 weeks of leave. Now that might incorporate some of the initial disability for the mother, but they also this is really key. They allow you to keep your year-end bonus for that same amount of time. And then it's only prorated after that amount of leave if you negotiate to take more leave than that, which is which is really fantastic and it's those hidden costs of taking leave that I think a lot of employers don't realize. You know women's sort of ability to be able to stay in their careers and stay in their jobs, you know, even if you give paid leave if someone Works largely on commission or on your end bonus, right or if they're going to be out during their busiest time of the year and miss out on a lot of opportunities that has Financial impact so they are doing amex of doing a great job. I also am really impressed by the companies that have hourly wage workers like Starbucks that have started to offer, you know, even people who are working hour by hour access to paid leave. I think that's huge and is going to make a real difference and I think when you know when other companies see that, you know, even hourly wage workers are able to have access to these humane benefits, everyone else feels like gosh we have to get on board to in terms of what the actual kind of right number is. It's a scary number to say out loud the United States because I don't even know what tiny tiny tiny percentage of people have access to this. But when you look at the research of what actually is protective of Mom's mental health, mom's physical health, and baby's physical health. It's not just six months of leave, It's six months of paid leave and that is you know, that's like a. In the sky number and I used to go into companies and you know, if they gave three months of paid leave I'd say hey, that's great. I've started saying no that's that's actually that's Humane, but we're not there yet. Like we can't apply these companies that are giving what science tells us is really

just the minimum of what's needed and only in the United States. Do you have to ad hoc negotiate the stuff for yourself. And only in the United States do employers have to ad hoc figure out. Like, how are we going to keep people and do right by Humanity at the same time everywhere else there are guideposts that really that. Businesses and help individuals

right? I was going to say it's also as much as I agree with that. I'm also like as someone who employs has employees like six months is and we also have a small company like that. I see the burden for companies as well. Absolutely. That is yeah a lot of time to have a Personnel but be paying and I mean the companies you mentioned while they're doing a great job. They're massive corporations. So which to be fair? Like those are the companies that usually lead the way with this and then it trickles down but and how can working parents affect more family-friendly policies at work? I mean, I hate to say that the burden is on them, but it's clearly one of those things where when it's happening to you you go and advocate for it. So I you know, like I don't want people to think like I think that you guys should have to do the work but sometimes that's what it takes to get what you want.

I feel like you are quoting exactly what I just said since this last week. I feel the same way. I was looking at an audience of 500 women and saying hey, it shouldn't have to be on us and yet guess who's going to get it done and that's not to say dad's don't get it done too because I feel like the dads who are really vocal about being able to bring their sort of family and home life needs into the workplace move mountains. But yeah, it is about not just. Sticking with your career in the first place to allow you to move up and have the authority and the agency to change policies. It's also about remembering that if that happens, you know, three or four or ten years down the road for you. You may be past it, but you are you're a subset. Of sort of survivors like you somehow you had something supporting you whether it is your fantastic brain your fantastic partner some set of circumstances that made it possible for you to stay in that can also sort of predispose you to occasionally, you know, judge women who are going through it. Now who are asking for these things as Millennials are and should be and think like eh, I had to get through it like she has to pledge motherhood chicks at squash that. And then the other thing is what I was saying earlier, I wanted everyone everyone who ever hears me give a talk or anybody who reads my book. I want them to know that. Yes, I can help you through these other, you know through this network of women. I can help you figure out how to move up in your workplace and change policy, but it. Just as important to just stay in put one foot in front of the other get your job done. But ask for what you need the flexibility you need and be open about the challenges because we cannot solve a problem We cannot see and that actually. When I talk to these women who are struggling with sort of moments of kind of ambition blips or just not knowing how they're going to make it work. One thing that really does fuel them is knowing that if they're a little transparent. It's not just a reflection on them. It's actually something that ultimately will improve the workplace for everyone **right** and that there's a selflessness. I think that is unworthy. It's born when you become a parent because certainly I had moments. I hope of selflessness before I became a parent but it is something that is certainly bolstered by it and it is. A wonderful instincts that we can really lean into In This Moment.

Well clearly you are a supporter of women staying in the quote-unquote career game, which I think is also really important but I realized that as someone who doesn't have children and doesn't, you know, of course I can feel that way but I haven't been there. Yeah, I mean besides changing policies. I mean, why else do you think it's important for women to stay? In the career game because I mean it's hard. I mean I can only imagine especially as your kids get older and now you've got, you know, not just you know daycare but you've got ya kids with soccer practice and this practice and I mean, you're just looking at the calendar and you're thinking I cannot be at yeah places at once. So like what are some ways that women can be set up for Success when they do return to work and they're managing all that.

It is a lot and it never stops being a lot. I do believe that when you get through something like a transition that is as hard as the fifth trimester. You can look back on it and think okay, I did that I did that. **I survived** that I learned about you know drawing lines saying, you know saying yes with real intention saying no to the things that don't have add value. You can carry those over into other transitional times and know that you can make it through which is really helpful, but it's interesting. I mean, it's interesting to hear to hear you ask that question because it is not for most American women. It isn't really a choice about whether or not your family needs the income and you will or won't. Keep working, you know, the reality is for most women. They need to keep working in one way or another and a lot of a lot of families are end up having one person. Stay home really almost entirely because of the cost of childcare, which is something else. I think that needs to be supported and helped at a federal level. **Absolutely**. But you know, it's there's also there's a there's something a little bit scary about setting it up as a choice of you know, stay home or go to work, which is that we all start. We start judging a little bit more freely when we have children, I think in part because you're making life and death decisions, you know, really about your kid all day long even when their little, you know, when they're when they're tiny babies. It does feel like, you know deciding to feed this baby Now is really important. Yeah, and so it's I think a natural instinct to judge but we get ourselves in trouble as women when we start judging sort of who's working and who's not working. I have to tell you I. I've learned a lot in the couple of years since I researched and wrote the book and have just been out in the world talking about it. I now absolutely believe that all women work. What do you have kids whether you don't have kids whether you work for money or you do not work for money it all counts as work. Some of it is just paid and some of it isn't when you look at what happens in the home just to maintain a home and the fact that we're all just trying to I don't know continue the human race. We're all putting in work and the more we can you know band together and realize that you know, the difference is that we need to make in terms of the wage Gap in terms of valuing the work that does happen in the home. Those those changes are better made on mass with all of us working, you know linking arms together,

mmhmm. Yeah, I love that and what's the boss approved way to request Flex time or a change of Duties? Because I also love that you have said that like you can also sometimes ask for what you need and maybe that's what you need to just have flexible hours. Or maybe you need to cut your job back to part-time before, you know, like there's a lot of options which is. The things I love about the world we live in now that it isn't nine-to-five. We recognize that humans are not

you know one size fit all but I think even though people here that they're always kind of wondering but how do I do that? Because my boss is a guy who loves nine-to-five our love's face time and requires me to be in here. So I mean if you can give us some examples, that would be awesome.

Yeah, absolutely. So it is I mean, it is hard to ask for this stuff and it is for a lot of a lot of parents. It's the first time women and men that they've had to ask for any kind of flexibility particularly particularly, if you're somebody who listens to this podcast, right somebody who really values your career and you've leaned in and in and in and now you have to say oh but wait, actually I'm going to get charged a dollar a minute for every minute. I'm late to daycare pick up. So by the way boss, I've always worked till eight. But now I'm going to be leaving it 525 or whatever it is. So. The first thing to keep in mind is just the basics of managing up, you know realize that whomever you're asking this of. Has someone probably above him or her that they answer to and so you need to arm this person with all of the information that they need to be able to Grant this for you. You also should come into the conversation not really with a request but with a plan so and it could be a couple of different ways to solve the same problem. But hey, I have an idea of how to make this work. Here it is and what you're handing to the person in that moment. Is I would actually go ahead and write it out but keep it to like five bullets of how are you going to do your deliverables that the part of your you know, if you had to make a job description and you should know your job description in your mind before you go into these conversations. You know, how are you going to hit all those bullets and still get what you're asking for? So come in sort of anticipating what the objections might be. That's really helpful. Don't do what one super super talented and sweet and like a little overly motivated person. I met at a presentation recently did which was come into your boss with five pages of single-spaced how this is going to work because that just looks scary that just looks like something I should not say yes to so first I come in with a plan, not an ask and then when you're reviewing it's a you know, Here's here's one thing. What if we just try this what if we try this for X number of weeks or months, whatever is going to work for you and that allows your boss to feel like he or she isn't signing in blood isn't necessarily setting some big precedent that's going to have to be rolled out company-wide and it gives you the flexibility, especially if you're talking about. When you have a new baby to really reassess in a couple of months how your needs have changed your baby's schedule may have changed you may have gotten more used to one thing. Maybe your commute has changed because of a drop off or something and it also keeps it from being a one-time. I'm asking for flexibility conversation and more of a this is how we all should be working and checking in with each other anyway conversation that will be continuing now from you know from here until you know, Kingdom Come.

Right, right, and I think that's an important takeaway is that that one conversation is going to be part of many conversations? So you might as well get used to having these conversations and coming with plans and I think women are really good at that. I mean I think about how we manage schedules whether it's just us on our own and all the things we want to get done but I think women are really good at problem solving with that. And yeah, and so, you know, This is a basic confidence for anybody listening is that you're probably already really good at figuring

out how you're going to fit it all in and so go into them with the plan versus the ask I think is really powerful because you already have it. Now. You just need to say it to this other person

and do do a little research to because there's actually there's some some data that shows that actually a lot of people don't even know exactly what's available at their own workplace to do that internal research, but also look around who are your competitors? Who do you want to be? Who are you always nipping at the heels of. And what do they offer for how can you be a real leader, not just in your industry, but say in your region and make a case for how actually having this. You know, this wish granted is going to make you a better employer a more desirable employer and you know, keep women in the workplace, which I think we can all agree. Everybody wants at this.

Right. Absolutely. And what's one thing that can stop any I want to quit attack? Because I mean I have I want to quit attack so I can only imagine what it will be like when you've got, you know kids job all that stuff that you're managing. So what's one thing that some woman can do that will stop that attack.

So it's interesting when I did the research for the book. I think I told you all of the kind of kinds of diversity that I was going for. I didn't even think to look for a diversity of ambition. And I was so delighted to see that I had like waitresses. I interviewed who were super ambitious and multiple degree lawyer business women who were not feeling so ambitious. But it seems like almost everybody had a blip of I wanna quit so I was like a chapter. So let's look at it and that I did the research. There's actually there's five sort of distinct things that you can do in that moment, but I would say the most effective that really has research that backs it is to make yourself a list and there's very few places in my book where I say make a list because like it's kind of lame but actually do this make a list of all of the things. That you get out of your workplace and that your workplace gets out of you. So that first list can be absolutely a paycheck. It can also be camaraderie. It can be that you really enjoy mentoring. It can be kind of the soft skills. Soft skills stuff as well as the hard and then do the same commensurate list for what your workplace gets out of you and there's actually there's research that shows that if you are in a point of feeling stressed out that the compromises that you make will be more clear-headed and I love that there's sort of the assumption that you will be making compromise because nothing is perfect and we will all be compromising but that you're making more clear-headed, well intended compromises if you have those two lists in mind, so you feel valued, you understand the value that you bring and it makes it much easier to get through a time of transition.

I really like that. You mentioned the diversity aspect and I know you've talked about it a couple times. I recently went to this event and it was talking about restaurant workers and. I think they said about 70% of restaurant workers are women and the hour, you know, a lot of states don't even have an hourly wage for right? They they a lot of states make them rely on tips and not actually give them an hourly wage. And I mean I left that just being like ready to take. Yeah, exactly and it's very irritating. So, you know, just the fact that you included that in your book is super super important because I think a lot of us. And almost hit forget but I mean as you said

it was hard for you and you were from a place of privilege. What were the other, you know from A diversity perspective. There's obviously the hourly workers, but can you shed some light just because I want to make sure everyone recognizes and because we don't you don't hear about it as much as in like you said like when you started your research, you didn't necessarily think you were looking for that but then it like really open your eyes. So could you just shed a little light on the other diverse? I guess like backgrounds are audiences that inquiry included in your survey.

Sure, absolutely. So I really I really learned the people I learned the most from were the ones who were the most different from me go figure. It's not that shocking right actually like I continued to be shocked by it The Single Moms if I can lump them together and they were you know, they were many approaches to single motherhood there. There were those who had gotten sperm donors. There were those who had gotten divorced very soon after having a baby and they. They kind of had the least amount of mom guilt and Bs around asking for help. They just knew at their core that in order to take good care of this baby. They needed to take care of themselves and that would require finding support in whatever form they could take it. And so I loved that and I felt like we all actually, you know partnered or not should learn from that. I also spoke to a handful of adoptive moms. Who face. Really different challenges because you don't necessarily have some of the physical challenges around breastfeeding for the most part some actually you can you can actually there is a way that you can breastfeed as an adoptive mom, but none of the ones I spoke to did around breastfeeding around healing from delivery around pregnancy, but there were a lot of people who said, you know, what is an adoptive mom. I felt like I. You know no more than just like a dad. And first of all, like how many things are wrong with that statement like dads are equally valuable first of all and secondly know the fact that you haven't physically been through a change doesn't mean that you aren't physically needed for that baby and that the emotional change which. Usually quite abrupt and sudden with adoption because you find out you're getting a baby. Boom. You have a baby you haven't had the on ramping or off ramping time to prepare necessarily are real and I mean, I just left all of his conversations thinking like, you know, what everybody needs everything we all need the options to be able to take the time we need. I also spoke to a lot of women who worked for themselves, which. At the point I was doing the interviewing was new for me. And now I do full-time work for myself. And so I get it. There was a lot of boundary drawing there was a lot of I had to go back to work while in labor, you know. Yeah and and yet I don't regret it and yet this is the choice I made for myself and so then it became about how can you be considerate boss to yourself and you know and really embrace the choices that you're making and I just I got to tell you through and through. I really learned to check my judgment, you know as I'm sure there are some ways that I'm still biased and don't know it because that's sort of the nature of bias. But the more I heard the more I learned the more I understood how privileged my position had been and yet I also knew how hard it was. So it just made me have so much empathy and have so much belief in the strength of these women to have gotten through these situations.

Absolutely. Well, that's actually a great segue into my next question, which is really about our Collective expectations for how to be a quote-unquote successful woman a successful

employee and a successful mother and they're really probably pretty crazy. And yeah, you know you throw in judgment and bias on top of all that and it's not easy. How do we manage our. Expectations versus real life realities and whether you're already a parent or you're maybe going to hope to be a parent one day. I mean as you said Sometimes you have this bias and reality is probably going to check you pretty quickly.

Yeah. I mean, I do think that we are living in a time of. A crisis of expectations and it's born out of good stuff. It's because you know, this is a generation of women who were largely raised to believe in spite of political climate as it is right. Now when we were being raised we were taught you can do anything girl. And so and so we have and we did and when we are home with a newborn baby there is this impulse and even when pregnant to just become an expert in all things, baby. You know a generation ago two generations ago in other countries, it's not that way you have an expectation. Actually that you will have a great circle of support around you people be coming into the home to check on you. You will have great postpartum care. It doesn't really exist in the United States and instead we just assume you know, you only know your own bubble of normal. So you assume it's normal the other thing that's really that exacerbates. The problem is just the disparity in the cultural expectations of what meant women and men take in terms of Parental leave. So when Mom is home on a parental leave it is longer than dads learning everything on the ground particularly if she's you know at all type A, even if she's type B, plus she wants to get it. All right, and she's learning at all and Dad. Because of the wage Gap or you know in something that actually propels the wage Gap further has gone back to work thinking or perhaps just the reality. His work is worth more right he goes back to work. He doesn't learn these things in spite of having the best intentions and wanting to fast forward to the end of moms maternity leave Mom goes back to work you both get home at the end of the day and that's when the second shift starts and guess who knows how to do everything and guess who wants it done her way and guess who has the highest expectations of herself. Mom and dad doesn't so there are solutions. I think one thing that is the most effective that can be done kind of in any degree. It could be done for just a couple days or done for a couple months. If your partner or the dad has some parental leave that they can tack on to the end of yours that will give give your partner time with the baby at home to really learn things on the ground. It lets you go back to work feeling like. Okay babies in the hands of someone, you know who loves him or her so so much and his family it lets that parent that partner learn, you know, really in the trenches without your help and and do some things, you know his way that may not be the same as yours, but are still okay and it lets the baby get a little bit older and a little bit less fragile for when you have to leave leave her in someone else's care. So it just it works the payoff there. There's actually research that shows that. For every month of paternity leave a dad takes Mom's earnings increased by 7% I mean, it's a startling statistic. Yeah. I never heard that. You can you can see why it's true though, because the work in the home probably eventually gets divided up much more evenly mom is able to go back and focus more. There's a lot of factors that work into it. There's another study. I saw that showed that dads who take and this must be dad's from like, you know, 20 years ago at this point if it's being studied dads who took parental leave have better relationships with their teenage daughter. I mean, that's pretty amazing.

It's hard to have a good relationship with a teenage girl. Yeah, no, and I'm kind of curious to for someone who's listening to this who's like, oh shoot. I didn't ask my husband that when the baby was first born. How can you like remedy to this so that you because I would imagine. Part of that statistic also comes from the fact that that means that when you're at work, you can just have peace of mind that someone is taking care of the baby. You're right. They maybe aren't doing that though. You would like it done. But you know, we all have to get over that. So if someone's listening to this and they're like, oh man, I didn't do that. Can they I mean, can you kind of like enforce this or you know, yeah courage your husband to get more. Okay. There's no like a newborn Rule and then you missed it.

Oh, no, you don't you don't there's no there's no what's the legal term? Oh, I forget at the the shoot. You know what I'm talking about the the when you have a limit on how long you can like **statutes of limitations or something.** Yes, you can course, correct on this like indefinitely. I mean I my husband and I do this all the time. He only in the last year started handling the mornings because I take the kids to school so he gets. You know, they get themselves dressed but he makes sure that you know, they're wearing they're wearing uniform appropriate pants that are clean and get some breakfast and make such a difference in my day. So it is something you can course. Correct. I talked to a mom who had a little Law Firm fairly recently and she had I think a nine month old and she had just sat down with her husband. And the thing is that the logistics and the physical labor of mom probably evens up and gets a little lighter the older the child gets but the mental. If you don't if you don't sort of get in there early the mental load only grows. So she did to prevent that which is so so smart was she sat her partner down her husband down and the two of them just made free hand a list of every single thing that needs to happen in their home in order to have the family life that they hoped for. So this is everything from you know, managing the bills to you know, remembering extended relatives birthdays, and if you're going to send a car if you're gonna send a present, too. You know buying diapers, you know ordering supplies on time groceries cooking all of it. And there's actually a study that was done by The gottman Institute which studies relationships that showed that when you have a baby. The number of tasks in the home is 300 per day. So this was a long list that she and her husband came up with and. I'm going to guess in this is my bias, but I'm going to guess that she put more things on that list than he did. But that's okay because he was there to witness how many things were in her head. Right all paper. They could look at it together and choose okay, which are you going to do because you enjoy them or you're good at them and which am I going to do because I enjoy them or I'm good at them which things do we both hate and we're going to divide up which things do we both? And we're just going to let them go. We're just going to make a little marital packed here to just maybe not send gifts for grandparents birthdays. But instead you a call and that's okay, right and seeing it all there and knowing that they had this list to come back to and check in with I think has been extremely beneficial to them and it's advice that I've given you know in a lot of talks since then.

Wow, that's incredible. Well, I we're going to move into rapid fire, but I just love this conversation because I feel like a lot of times I have conversations about working motherhood. It feels very Doom and Gloom, but I feel like you've been giving very actionable and like

digestible tips on what we can do and also not sugarcoating like it's going to be hard like, you know, like it's just going to be really challenging and I also just really appreciate that you shared the Insight of other women's perspectives and and they clearly your book The Fifth trimester. I mean it should be like required reading but I'm sure mothers are like I got enough on my plate inaudible you think that's a good idea. Okay. So let's move into rapid fire on starting with a mantra that makes you feel powerful is:

okay. This is mortifying it's what I did when I was a kid and it's what I still do when I have when I have a moment of self-doubt so put your own name in this but I say, okay. I'm just going to do my Laureness best.

I love that. I've never heard that before either did that come from like a movie or a book you read?

No, it came from my own like dorky nine-year-old brain. You know, I just I was I don't even remember what is about it was something that I was having a hard time with and I thought I'm going to do my best. But what is my best my Lauren is best is like a really deep felt creative best. I'm going to try.

Oh, I love that and also it works because my name is Lauren. So that mantras great for me. Okay second one is you have an hour to yourself. You'll probably spend it doing.

I would love to say napping but I don't think that I can wind down and that that quickly so instead I'm going to say going for a run while simultaneously listening to the Daily or to another podcast. That is more relaxing.

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. My I would do the same thing. I would just replace running with walking if I'm being very honest your best working mom tip.

Mom tip is to remember that no matter how much money you make versus your partner makes that the work you both do in the morning counts. So split the nighttime wake-ups as best. You can doesn't always work for for if you're nursing in the very beginning but like. I mean if you have kids are older, you know that they're still up in the night sometimes and what the Sleep research shows is if you can get four hours straight in a row, that's two REM Cycles. That's enough to help. Keep you steady and sane and not acting like, you know unfocused and is if you're drunk in the morning ha ha ha, so just remember to lean on your partner as a resource. If you're lucky enough to have that partner.

Mhmm, and how do you plan to disrupt your career in 2019?

I plan to figure out what my next book is going to be who the sixth trimester now just getting know. I'm in the 33rd. I think I'm probably going to and I haven't decided what my name is, but I

think my Lane is probably something about supporting women through transitions. So we'll see. Well next transition is

it's definitely the most popular question we get asked that career Contessa is how do I make a career transition which I recognize is like a very big question not very specific but it's everything from traditional transitions with their schedule to Industries to you name it and I agree. I think career transitions has been come really kind of the the word that really encompasses. I'm not truly loving what I'm doing right now or I something needs to change. How do I transition to something else? So it's like chapter 2 in a lot of ways. So well, that would be great on behalf of all of us. We'd love for you to do some research

and and one thing to I also taken a vow very recently to not do anything anymore any work for exposure. When you write a book or when you have a new business to promote there is obviously some time in the beginning when you are just trying to build awareness. But especially when I'm up on stage talking about the motherhood penalty talking about the wage Gap talking about how to negotiate an advocate for your worth in the workplace. I have taken this vow. I no longer do things for exposure unless they are for needy groups that do not have access to a resource like me, so. Charities nonprofits, other than that I'm going in Corporate America. I am charging them my worth and it's taken a big deep breath for me to be able to do that and it started working. So I want to carry that through 2019.

Well, and now that you've publicly told all of us will make sure you stick to it. No, I think that's fantastic and we had a woman on the podcast for news to Robbie who said that women entrepreneurs actually struggle the most with you know, not just setting a rate but. Ensure that they are paid that rate because obviously when you're an entrepreneur everyone wants to negotiate yada yada and it's you know, you just if you give them an inch they'll take a mile and so her advice was very strongly about doing exactly what you're what you're going to do. So, I think that's really smart. And I'm sorry we didn't get to get into the motherhood penalty, but we'll have to have you back on because there's. So much to talk about with Mother head that it's you know, we'll make it digestible for now, and then we'll bring off and have another one again, but thank you Lauren so much for joining us today, and you know sharing all this advice. Your book is called the fifth trimester, and thank you again.

Thank you. I really appreciate you having me on. Awesome. Well, thank you so much Laura. This was great.