

Matt Bowles: Hey, everybody. It's Matt Bowles. Welcome to The Maverick Show. My guest today is Sarah Gregg. She is back on the show. If you missed the first interview with Sarah, it was episode No. 4. You're definitely gonna wanna go back and check that out. But she is back on the show because she has been up to all sorts of incredible stuff since the last interview that we're gonna talk about today.

If you have not yet met Sarah, she is a life coach, a business coach, a certified NLP practitioner, and the founder of The Power To Reinvent, a company entirely focused on helping individuals and businesses achieve their goals in less time. Over the past decade, Sarah has worked with hundreds of clients ranging from large corporations like IKEA to startups and individual entrepreneurs. She has also worked with the European Commission on developing an entrepreneur accelerator program.

In 2016, she sold her house, her car, and all of her stuff to become a fully location-independent entrepreneur and design her dream lifestyle. She left her home in Belfast and has been traveling the world with her husband, Chris, while running her business from some of the world's most beautiful locations. And she is also the author of the fourth coming book, *Find Your Flow: Capture It, Use It, And Make It Yours*.

Sarah, welcome back to the show.

Sarah Gregg: Yay! I'm so excited. I feel like so much has changed since we last sat in Chiang Mai sipping on that really good bottle of red wine. And it's incredible to back on the show with you. Thank you so much for the lovely introduction.

Matt: Well, we should definitely set the context here because it's rare that you and I are not having a bottle of wine during our discussion. It's a very rare situation. And the only reason that we're not having a bottle of wine today is because we're in two separate locations. I am recording this from West Africa. I'm in Dakar in Senegal. And where are you today?

Sarah: I am in really sunny Copenhagen in Denmark.

Matt: Amazing. And you and I last hung out about two months ago in Cape Town, South Africa, which was amazing. It was me, Jen

Magee, who listeners know from The Maverick Show as well as a guest, and then you and your husband, Chris. And we had an epic night out.

Sarah: Oh my word. Epic. Some of the best food and wine ever. It was so good. So good. Take me back.

Matt: Well, I wanna actually hear about your reflections on South Africa because I saw you of course in Cape Town, and we connected there for an amazing evening. But you then went on and experienced a whole lot more of the country. So I would love for you to share what you did in South Africa and what your reflections were on it.

Sarah: Yeah. I've always wanted to go to Africa, and I don't know why it took me so long to get there. I really didn't know what to expect. You hear all these, "Oh, it's not safe," and all these kind of tales of horror or danger. And I fell in love with that country hands down. It's one of the best places that I've ever traveled to I think purely because of the diversity. One minute, you're on safari with lions walking out in front of your car. The next minute, you're in beautiful kind of like wine region sipping on the most glorious rich, full-bodied red wine to hanging with penguins on a beach. It was just next level amazing. I loved every second of it.

Matt: It is amazing. And a lot of people don't even know that there are African penguins that hang out on the beach.

Sarah: Penguins.

Matt: It's like we – you associate them with cold weather freezing cold climates, walking around the snow. And then, you go down to Cape Town –

Sarah: Yeah. They're just chilling on the beach.

Matt: They're hanging out at the beach. There's a giant penguin colony. It was amazing. So that's absolutely right. And then, how was the safari experience for you?

Sarah: Oh my word. The safari was beyond expectations. When we arrived, we stayed in this fabulous luxury tent that overlooked Kruger National Park. So even from our first arrival, there were

elephants right in front of our accommodation. We could see crocodiles. You could hear the hippos at night. And that was even before we went in the park. And the park itself was phenomenal. It's the same size, it think – well, the guide told me this – as the country of Israel. So it's huge. And only 10 percent of it is covered by roads, so it gives this really natural-feeling experience of actually – it's so well managed. And the animals really come first, which was incredible to see.

We go so lucky on our trip. We saw four out of the five big five. The only one we missed was the leopard, which hid from us at one stage under a drain, which was kind of frustrating, but that's part of nature, right. We saw rhino, baby rhino. We did a walk through Kruger, which was probably one of the highlights, even though on the walk I didn't see that much because the animals are hiding from you. But just to be able to walk and see a lion's kind of footprint beside you and hear the guide say, "I know that there's a lion somewhere in the long grass, and it's watching us at the minute. And that's why all the animals have kind of disappeared." It was just the most magical experience that I've had, just that connection to nature in a very authentic and natural way.

Matt: Amazing. And then, of course, I have to ask you about the wine country in South Africa, which I feel like a lot of people are not exactly aware of what exists in South Africa with respect to wine. Can you share your experience?

Sarah: Oh my god. It's heaven. I literally felt like I'd died and gone to wine heaven. And the price – I don't know if you experience this, but the price of a really good bottle of wine or even to do the wine tasting blew my mind. So we'd wine tasted before, mainly in Hunter Valley in Australia. And when we went to the first vineyard that we arrived at, and she gave us the tasting menu, so the first – for like – to taste, I think it was nine wines from their kinda of standard. And then, the reserve range was the equivalent of €5.00, €5.00 for wine tasting. It was just crazy. And the quality of wine was superb.

And we had a picnic dinner at the Warwick Vineyard, and they brought us out a lovely gourmet picnic basket. You have the views of Table Top Mountain. It's so lush and so green, and it feels quite French. The architecture is just – it's stunning. Yeah. South Africa

for me was just surprise, after surprise, after surprise. No amount of photos does a justice.

Matt: Yeah. The wine region is absolutely stunning. I was out in Stellenbosch for my birthday in the end of May, and it was just insane. They're some of the most beautiful wine vineyards in the world, hands down, for sure. So, amazing. So I also wanna ask you – I know you've spent a lot of time in Copenhagen since the last interview, where I, by the way, have never yet been. It's super high on my list. I know you just invited me to come visit, which I think I will take you up on that shortly. But tell us a little bit about what you have found in Copenhagen and what that's been like.

Sarah: Copenhagen has been really interesting. So we've been moving about for the past while. But Copenhagen's become a bit of a base mainly as a result of book because I find, whenever I was trying to write, the writing and the moving process just – it was really disrupting my flow. And so, we based ourselves here in Copenhagen, which feels really apt because it's one of the happiest places in the world. And it's just stunning.

The way of life, the energy, the atmosphere – it's a really vibrant, young, energetic city that just has so much going on. It's kind of hard even to put into words how much there is to do here. And I don't even think it's that. I think it's just the attitude of people. This laid back approach to life where they just embrace it to the fullest. It's a very, very special place.

Matt: Awesome. Well, let's use that to transition and talk a little bit about the book. The title is *Find Your Flow: Capture It, Use It, And Make It Yours*. Let's just start – I wanna start with the very basic, broad question. And then we'll go narrower, and we'll go detailed. What is the concept of flow? Can you explain what it is and sort of the history, where that comes from, and how you came across and connected with this concept?

Sarah: Yeah, of course. So, if we start with the definition, so from a psychology point of view – and the concept of flow was first coined back in the 1970s by a Hungarian psychologist called Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. It's a hard name to say. And he discovered when he was interviewing people, particularly artists who were lost in their activity, that most people described that experience as flow.

Commonly, most people associate flow with flow-state experiences, and they're really intense experiences against the dull kind of background of living where you lose your sense of self and time distorts. Athletes normally refer to it as being in the zone. And it's normally experienced in kind of brief, fleeting moments, like when you ski down a slope, or you solve a problem, or you're involved in a game of chess. But flow is much more than that, and I think that's where my fascination for flow really started, was discovering the surprise in psychology of flow, which was it went beyond these brief fleeting flow-state moments.

And, actually, what the theory of flow describes is, not only are they experiencing that joy in the present through flow state, but also creating a unified sense of flow in your life, where life makes sense to you, and you're able to order your consciousness, direct your intention, and invest it in a goal that matters most so that you get this seamless unfolding of life and time where everything makes sense, there's order in your inner reality, and your outer reality responds to it. And psychologists really call this the – they call it the secret to happiness, and it's a formula for living life fully without the waste of your time or potential.

Matt: Wow. Okay. So let's break that down a little bit and talk about how someone can go about starting to move towards experiencing that. What are the building blocks and the components of that? And where does someone start?

Sarah: Yeah. That's a really good question. And it's actually the question that started my journey because, when I read about flow and this concept that it was happiness that you could control and create in your own life – it wasn't dependent on an achievement or some distant goal – I became really curious. Okay, what does the theory teach me? And how can I take that and practically apply it in my life?

The great thing about the psychology of flow is the research, when it started in the 1970s, has continued on. And they've broken it down to find that there are three core conditions that are necessary for flow to occur, whether it's in a flow-state experience or whether it's to give you a unified sense of flow in your life. And they are you must have a clear goal. So, in other words, I know what I'm doing. I understand the purpose of my actions. That helps order

your consciousness and direct your energy and attention.

The second one is that it's at your optimal level of challenge. And this is really important. So, in flow, there exists a flow channel, and it's almost like the Goldilocks zone of your optimal level of challenge. It's the sweet spot. So you want to engage in a goal that's not too easy that it makes you bored and unmotivated, but equally not too difficult that it causes you to feel a sense of overwhelm and anxiety. So it's about finding what works for you and what's the kind of sweet spot where you feel motivated, you feel challenged, and your skills wanna be developed and stretched.

And then, the final component is immediate feedback. And immediate feedback is really your attention, being able to understand the feedback queues as to what success or achievement that you work towards that goal looks, feels, and sounds like, so it knows as the information comes back into consciousness, that, yes, I am congruent with my goal. I'm working in alignment. And it creates that flow between your thoughts, actions, and your outer reality. So it kind of works in this beautiful, seamless feedback loop that our brain loves. And it creates this lovely sense of serenity harmony and alignment.

Matt: Amazing. So what would be the sort of logistical components? If people wanted to work towards this, what would be the actual steps, the practices, routines? What would someone need to do to start moving in this direction and integrating certain techniques into their life? Where do they start?

Sarah: This is where I also started. This is really – that question is exactly what made me create the journal system for flow because the research says that flow can occur in almost any activity as long as those three conditions are part of your everyday life and that that's really the key to improving the quality of your life. But what the research doesn't say is exactly how you do that. Like, how do I go about my day and continually check in with myself, "Is my goal clear? Do I have immediate feedback?" That's too difficult. It's not really practical for our busy lives.

And so, what I did was I took the three core conditions of flow along with two others that the work and the research had referenced as important for finding flow, which was positive emotions and reflection, and then built a journal system so that I

could start my day with clear goals that I performed at my optimal level of challenge and just scripted in my immediate feedback, so that as I went through out the day I understood and had fed my intention the feedback queues that it needed from what I would see, hear, and feel as I went about my day. And it's that that's brought me that sense of flow in my everyday life.

Matt: So can you talk about, specifically, your morning routine now and what that looks like with regard to the journaling system, and anything else that you're doing, and any tips that you have for people with respect to what works effectively in a morning routine?

Sarah: Yeah. So the first thing about a morning routine in general is it's so important to put yourself before cell. I think most people – just because our phones are our alarm clocks, the first thing we do is we wake up in the morning. We turn off our alarm. And we get into kind of this process of scrolling through apps. And what psychologists and research have found is that the process of doing that and allowing the outside world in puts us in an automatic state of reaction. Our body's kind of like – it's awake. It's responding. It's reacting before we've cultivated how we want to feel for the day.

And there's a really interesting study by two psychologists that was performed in conjunction with the *Huffington Post*. And they wanted to see the impact of our morning mood on our entire day. So how we start our mornings affects our entire mood. And so, they took a group of people and they divided it in two. One group, they showed some negative news to, just three minutes of negative news. And the other group, they showed three minutes of positive, empowering news in the morning, the news that makes you happy, like a 70-year-old guy who gains his high school kind of GED after all these years.

And they found that the group who watched the three minutes of negative news was 27 percent more likely to report feeling unhappy at the end of the day. And so, psychologists are really looking at our morning mood and are saying how we start our day impacts the entire mood for the rest of our day. So your morning mood is extremely important, and it's really good to just experiment and find something that works well for you.

What I do and how the system works is there are three parts of the journal system that you complete in the morning and then one part that you complete in the evening. The first three parts are morning, grateful, flow. And this is a gratitude practice that enables you to wake up happy and lay the foundations for flow because when we feel good we're able to focus and direct our energy and attention into what matters most. The second part then is called forward focus, and it's here that it's about living with intention. So this is about setting your goals and making sure that you perform your goals to your optimal level of challenge.

And in forward focus, I wanted to differentiate between what we must do because a lot of productivity planners or journal systems kind of focus on this daily goal or to-do list. But, often, that can delay our happiness in the present. So I created a system where you set three high-value priorities, three things that you must do that day. You may not want to do them. It could be sending an awkward email, or doing a client follow-up that you maybe don't really want to, or whatever it is. So, three things that you must do that day.

And three high-flow priorities – and these are things that you want to do or activities that you've already found flow in, whether it be in your work or your leisure time. And what that does is it enables you to be happy in the present moment but also build your future at the same time, so you can take this kind of lovely energy and be happy with your life as it is, be really in alignment with your actions that you're doing that day, but also have that ambition to build a meaningful future as you move towards those goals that matter most.

And then, the final part – and this is my favorite part – is a process called total flow. And this is how to train your brain. And the most difficult part for me whenever I was looking at these three core conditions of flow was how do I integrate immediate feedback. How do I tell my brain that I'm on track or I'm off track? What does that look like? And so, I looked to, well, how do athletes do it because athletes are the ones that experience kind of the most flow. And when they're in flow, they perform to a higher level.

And I found what athletes do is they use this process called imagery scripting. And it's where they script out their ideal performance. And so, I've adapted that in the journal system so –

to teach you how to script out your ideal day so that as you move throughout the day, you already know what feedback queues to look for.

So, whether you see yourself giving an awesome presentation in which you stand up and speak with confidence or whether you see yourself pick up that gym bag and take yourself for that workout that you promised that you would do all week. You feed yourself these attentional queues, and then your attention is able to wave that flag to say, "Yes, you're on course," or, "Actually, no, this isn't what we said we were gonna do. It's time to course correct."

Matt: Awesome. So, okay. So that the morning routine. And then, can you take us through the day and into the nighttime and talk about the entire system and what other components there are.

Sarah: Yeah. So, at the end of the day then, you'll have some lovely, valuable learning. My experience was, whenever I decided to change and sell everything and leave my life, it was really because a lot of little things had added up and made me kind of not really happy with the life I was creating back home. And so, it's during nighttime reflections that you'll lean into the little things before they become the big things.

So, in that chapter of the book, you're taught how to effectively reflect in ways that are positive, so by self-distancing for example, by saying, "What could Sarah have done better?" So talking about yourself in person really helps with that. And also discovering where you felt in flow because the joy of the structure is, as you find your flow, you add more of it into your life through those high-flow priorities. So, if I find for example I really feel in flow whenever I'm problem solving at work and that makes me really, really happy, then I start to add more of that into my work because I know that's when I'm most productive. I know that's where my strengths lie. And I know that's when I feel the most joy and challenge from the work that I do.

Equally, finding your flow in your leisure time, so whether it's trying new activities, like I joined an improv group last month and really loved it. It was just such fun and such play. And so, adding more activities of that into your day-to-day life so that you can experience the joy of the present but also be building that ambitious vision of the future that you have. And I think for so

many overachievers and entrepreneurs, that's the bit that we're always in danger of missing. We're so eager to kind of move to the next thing, the next thing, the next thing, that we miss the joy, and the value, and flow of just being in the moment.

So, for me, in kind of a short summary, flow is a way of having your cake and eating it. It's a way to have it all. It's like I feel happy and successful in this moment, and I also know that there's more to come.

Matt: Okay. First of all, you would be amazing in an improv group. I would so, so love to see that. So I hope that you stick with that. And I hope that is possible to see some of that when I come visit in Copenhagen because that would be incredible. That is awesome. Can you talk a little bit about the concept of gratitude? I know that you have mentioned that to me, that you also practice that. And can you talk about what that is, what the significance of it is, and how that integrates into the system as well?

Sarah: Yeah. So gratitude is the first part of the system. And it's really important that you start your day with gratitude. Gratitude is like a free happiness pill that you can take everyday if you just have the discipline to practice it. And happiness actually restructures your brain. So it's like taking a neurochemical, kind of like cocktail smoothie, first thing in the morning. So you get your dopamine in there, which is that real feel-good factor that you just feel awesome. Your brains fired up, and it's ready for the day. And it feels really, really happy.

And that part of the brain really helps also with our productivity and our ability to channel our energy. It also gives you confirmation bias. That's a part – it's a psychological part which is when you feel grateful and the more you tell your brain, "I'm really grateful for my life. I love where I live. I'm so happy with my work. Or I'm so grateful for my friends and family," whatever it is, the more your brain actively tries to find examples of more things to be grateful for. So, as you practice gratitude, you physically rewire your brain to be a more positive person, which is why now most psychologists and depression treatment centers prescribe happiness because it is incredibly powerful.

It also activates a part of the brain called the hypothalamus. And the hypothalamus is a part of your brain that regulates metabolism

and sleep. And, actually, they found in studies that people who practice gratitude, not only have better relationships, but also exercise more and do more activities that make them happy. So it's just writing down three things in the morning that you're grateful for. It's not comparing yourself to other people, so that's really important. And so, for example, "I'm grateful but I'm not Jillie because Jillie's car broke down last week." It's not in any way negative.

So it not's, for example, I'm grateful that I am not sick. It's always in the positive. So I'm grateful for my health. My health enable me to travel the world, and have new experiences, and exercise. Or I'm grateful – like this morning I wrote, "I'm grateful for the Internet because the Internet enables me to work from anywhere in the world and gives me that sense of connectivity, and I'm able to reach out and have conversations like this one with you, me being Copenhagen, you being in Senegal. So it's about noticing the small things in your life and really taking that time to appreciate how much you have rather than focusing on how much you don't have yet.

Matt: That's awesome. So how long would you say that the entire morning routine takes? And, also, if people wanna start implementing the morning system, do you recommend that they start implementing the whole thing at once? Or do they do it sort of step by step and build towards that? And what's sort of the commitment there that people should expect if they wanna fully implement the flow morning routine?

Sarah: So the good news is that it only takes around 10 minutes to do. It's so short. It's literally two pages of a small notebook to do your morning routine. Probably the hardest bit – only because it's a new skill – is the scripting. But in the book, there are lots of prompts and phrases to help kind of guide you through how that should work. So, yeah, 10 or 15 minutes.

And you need to do it all at the same time because each part of the system builds on the next. So, as you feel positive from your gratitude, that sets up the structure of your brain to have that clarity to think about what you want to do for the day because your thoughts are ordered. Your brain feels clear. And then, you're able to channel that thought energy into how do I want to spend my day and what do I want.

Then, as you do that, and you decide, okay, these are my goals for the day, this is what's most important for me to achieve, and I factored some things that I love doing in there, then you script. Just – this is how my ideal day looks like. And it's not about scripting your whole day. So you don't have to do like, "At 7:00 a.m., I do this." It's about just scripting the most important parts of the day or things that are most relevant. So that's normally for me maybe one short page.

Matt: Awesome. Can you talk a little bit about what makes flow different from other self-help philosophies out there? If somebody walks into a bookstore, there's gonna be a massive enormous section on self-help, and a ton of authors, and a ton of books. Can you talk a little bit about what differentiates this concept?

Sarah: Yeah. So I think there are two main things that differentiate it. One is flow is happiness that you control. So it's a state that you can create. So it's not dependent on external things or distant goals, or achievement, or success. It doesn't say abandon those things, but it says you don't need to really rely on them. So I think the fact that you can control your own happiness is a real selling point. But the second one, and I think the most important one, and a reason why I love flow so much, is it's unique to the individual.

So this isn't about – the book isn't you should live this way. If you wanna be happy you need to wake up at 5:00 a.m. You need to do 100 sit-ups. You need to drink a green juice smoothie. And then, you need to hustle and grind all day and do all this stuff that worked for me. That's not what flow is.

Flow is as unique to you as your fingerprints and as you are to the world. And it's about tuning into yourself, recognizing what makes you happy, where your strengths are, where your challenges lie, finding how hard you want to push yourself and you feel able to push yourself, and then releasing that. It's almost like that own unique code that lies inside of you. We all have these gifts and talents that are unique to each of us, and flow is the key to unlocking those.

And I think the world needs more than that. I think there's a lot of self-help books that are amazing and great, and I encourage people to read as many as possible. But often what the person is

describing is the system that worked for them. What the journal system aims to do is give you a format to find out and experiment with what works for you and uncover that.

Matt: Well – and the only thing that I will say about you and your work that is really distinguishing from a lot of stuff that's out there is that you root your content in science and psychology. And I feel like there's a big section of the self-help space where, for lack of a better term, we call it woo-woo kind of things, which is often times devoid of scientific merit, right, which is where I think some of those concepts and some of those pejorative connotations come from. Whereas, what I really, really like about your work, and why I'm so excited to get to this book, is all of the things that you're talking about are rooted in science and psychology.

Sarah: Yes. I cannot tell you how many journals, books I have read to create this system and to rigorously test the system. So I originally created the journal system for myself. It was never intended to be a book. It was me recognizing – actually, not probably that long after we'd had our conversation, I started to notice how old patterns of behavior were coming in, where I was chasing success, and chasing happiness, and putting this pressure on myself to perform and be my best self, which is admirable as long as it's not – as long as you're happy at the same time.

But what I was doing was attaching my happiness to my achievements, and I know that that was a broken formula for me. And I knew that I had to change it. And when I discovered flow and looked at the system, I originally developed it only for my sole use. And what happened was, one day, I just happened to post it on my Instagram account. I took a photo of my journal and said, "Hey, I've been using this. I really love it. It helps my find my flow. I feel so much happier. I feel so much more productive. I literally – it looks like I'm living a dream, but I also feel like I'm living the dream. And that's been a game changer for me." And it was as a result of that post.

I didn't realize, but one of my followers on Instagram was an editor for the New York Publishing House. And she reached out, and she was like, "I love this. I think it's a book." So, all in all, the system that I've described took me a year and a half of research. So, I know with full confidence that everything that I say and everything that I've recommended is based on science and psychology.

Matt: That is really awesome. I wanna ask you more about the book deal and the process of writing and creating a book because I have – you and I have been in touch pretty regularly. I, of course, follow you on social media. And, of course, we have our friendship for a couple years now. And I've been following you. And you have been working incredibly hard to write a really, really, really good book. And I want to ask if you can share a little bit of the behind the scenes about your writing process and share a little bit about how you've done that, what the publishing experience has been like, and so forth.

Sarah: That's really a great question. A lot of writers will say that you feel like a different person at the end of your book. And I definitely feel like it's been a journey of transformation, and healing, and challenge. And it's been the best experience hands down, my life. I can't believe someone has paid me to do this. It's phenomenal.

The process itself was really interesting. So, from kind of going from the contact with the publisher who said, "I think this is a book. Can you write a book day – can you write a book proposal" – and that's really for the exact reason that you pointed out, self-help, psychology books. There're everywhere at the minute, so it's like what was gonna make this book stand out.

I didn't have a clue how to write a book proposal. Just fake it till you make it, right. I was like, "Yeah, no problem. Book proposal – have it with me tomorrow," and then just frantically Googled book proposals in a café in Belfast because I was home. And I was like do – am I actually do – do I actually believe I can write a book? This is ridiculous. I felt like a bit of a fool at the start.

And so, I wrote this proposal and kinda showed the gap in the market, which was significant because a lot of the work on flow really focuses on creative flow or workflow. But the theory – and it blew my mind actually. The theory has never been really adapted in a system for everyday life. So it was this wonderful niche that I wasn't even looking for that was kind of gifted to me. It was just incredible.

So, after the book proposal, yeah, I really thought they were gonna send me an email and be like, "Okay, here's how to write a book, and here's the structure," but they didn't. And they just went,

"Okay, here's your deadline. See you in nine months, 10 months." And I was like what – what do I do? Is no one gonna train me how to do this? I wrote a proposal, but do you really think I can write a book? At what point is someone gonna walk into my house and be like, "Sorry, we've made a mistake. Can we have our money and our book deal back?"

And, yeah, you're really on your own. And I think you have to be – develop a real sense of self-discipline. You have to be really passionate about what you're writing about; otherwise, you would lose the will to live in the challenging moments. And you have to enjoy the journey. It's been so lovely. I've taken myself out with my notebook and my pen, like in the old-fashioned style, and sat in a café by the lake and written a chapter. I brought myself to Paris and did a bit of writing there and made it as magical for myself as possible and made sure that I had fun along the way.

But you don't actually get most of your feedback until you have your full manuscript. And that's a really daunting part, which I went through just before I arrived in South Africa. I had sent my full manuscript. So after nearly – almost – yeah, nearly a year – it was a year since I'd written the book proposal. Almost a year to the day, I sent my full manuscript in. And that's when the tense part starts because you have really poured your heart and soul into a document, and you have no idea if it's good. You think it's good. But you have no idea what that editor's going to come back with and whether they're gonna say, "No, we don't like the format. You need to change the structure. Delete this chapter."

And it's – there's so much love that goes into every single word that even the smallest of deletion you're like, "No! It took me so long to write the one sentence." And so, I got the manuscript back two weeks ago. I read the comments, and then I deliberately didn't dive back into it for another week or so. And they didn't actually change that much, which was really lovely. And the amendments they did make were really insightful, really shaped the writing of the book. And today, actually, just before you called, I'm just finishing the final edits for it to go off. Yeah.

And then, I don't know. I think there may be another round of edits after that. And then, it's just building up to presales. And then, it goes on sale January 2020.

Matt: Amazing. Well, we are definitely going to link up in the show notes and let folks know how they can get on the presale list for the book. I will be there myself, for sure. I wanna get it as soon as it comes out. So that sounds awesome.

Can you talk a little bit about your actually writing process in terms of how you structure your time to focus on that project amidst all the other projects that your doing like coaching, and running a business, and all of the other things that you have to do? Is it a situation where, for example, you try to create a small time block everyday to knock out some of it? Or do you create larger time block on certain days and have an entire writing day? How do you structure your writing process personally?

Sarah: Yeah. So, at the start, it was just a process of experimentation. And the book itself isn't that long. So the book itself is only – I think it's around 14,000 words, so it's quite a short book. And, originally, when I got the deal, I was like they've given me nine months to do this. I'm gonna smash that in like two months. That's nothing. I can totally write that. But it takes so much longer, particularly the research because you're double checking, kind of fact checking.

So, at the start, I sat aside smaller time blocks each day. But I found then through my reflections that that wasn't working. And it was almost like this stop-start, so I just divided my week up. So I'd have two days when I'd focus on the business, and then the other day's just to write, and to get into that flow, and to give myself permission to understand and set realistic goals of how long it was gonna take me. Yeah.

And then, I made just some business sacrifices I guess along the way. The book was real important to me, and I wanted it to be like a calling card for the business. And I knew if I invested my time in this book, that it could develop a real platform for me because, obviously, there's self-help books, life coaches, the whole industry that I'm involved in. It's hard to make yourself stand out. You have all this expertise, but you're competing in like a sea of kind of Instagram noise.

And so, I kind of really looked at my priorities. I looked at where the book sat with in those priorities. And so, I dropped all my clients and focused more time on the book, particularly towards the end. And I'm really happy that I did that. The book has – writing a

book and having it published, it's just such a blessing. And I didn't want to do anything that would ruin that gift and ruin that experience.

It was so important to me that, when I look back at this time, the time that I wrote my first book, that I could go, "That was awesome," rather than, "Oh, that was stressful, and I took on too much." So, yeah, just giving myself permission to be like, it's okay. I don't have to have all those clients. I'm good. I don't have to push everything to the next level. What's most important is I put the work into this book. That investment will last me a lifetime.

Matt: Amazing. And what's the marketing strategy gonna be for getting the book out to the world? Have you coordinated with the publisher on that in terms of what they're gonna do, in terms of what you're gonna do? And what's the roll out strategy gonna look like?

Sarah: Yeah. So I'm really lucky that the publishing house that I'm with is a large, worldwide publisher. So I have my own dedicated marketing team, one in New York and one in the UK, which is really lovely. And they've been super helpful just kind of guiding me through the process. So I've had calls with those teams.

Yeah. The main strategy is – I've engaged with some influencers, not gonna pay them any money, just people that I know from the digital nomad kind of circuit. They're gonna promote it. I've also just recently worked with a group of 10 women who've I've taught the system to. They're just finishing up. And, again, it's really important for the book and for the publisher that there's no exchange of money. All reviews have to be honest, and that's really important for me and particularly for the publisher. So they're also gonna post on social media and do some video reviews about how they found it and how positive their experience has been.

And then, there's – I'm in the process of doing some event planning. So I plan to have some events in London and then do a book lunch in New York in 2020, which is really exciting.

Matt: Amazing. Well, definitely keep me posted on all those events. And whoever I know in those areas, I will definitely try to alert them to that. And if I'm in town somewhere, of course, I will stop by. That'll be a blast. So that sounds awesome.

All right. Let me ask you a little bit now about traveling. We talked a little bit at the beginning. I wanna ask you though just broader questions for you because I know that you've made a very concerted choice towards the location-independent lifestyle as a top priority for you. And you've really taken that quite seriously in terms of designing your lifestyle. And that's been a big part of this whole thing, is your choice to travel, and where to spend time, and how much time to spend there and stuff.

So I wanna just ask you about that particular choice and just with a broad question about what does travel mean to you. What do you get out of it? Why do you choose to travel?

Sarah: Oh, I love that question. Travel means life to me. I don't any way to live. I feel like I'm so fortunate to be born in a country and developed a skillset that enables me to be location independent. And I almost can't imagine why you wouldn't travel. It's hard for me to think about people who just wanna stay in the same place. I think the world is just full of incredible people, with incredible histories, with incredible nature, wonderful experiences. And the more I see of it and the more I travel, the more connected to humanity, and the world, and what it means to be a human being grows within me.

So I think travel just gives me this flair for life, this lust for life, and this – a total love of life where there's just adventures unfolding all the time. And when you get to work, and travel, and do it at the same time, it takes it to the next level because I think you get – it's more than just a two-week vacation. You get under the core of a culture. You understand the people. You understand the language. You understand the food. It's just a beautiful way to live. Yeah, it broadens you and grows you, enables you to grow as a person.

Matt: Absolutely. So I have been thinking about you lately because I am, next month, going to do the Nomad Train, which is the Trans-Siberian Railway, which I'm gonna take from Moscow all the way over to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, with – I don't know – 25 or so other digital nomads. And it's gonna be amazing. It's gonna be epic. But I always think of you because you told me this – I think it was literally the first night that we ever had our – an extended, substantive conversation. We were on the rooftop in

Thailand I think it was.

And you were telling me about how one of your early experiences, travel experiences, was that you decided to take the Trans-Siberian Railway across Russia. And I was wondering if you can just share that story a little bit and what the experience – and set the context for where you were in your life when you decided to do that, and how you were traveling, and then what your experience was like.

Sarah:

Yeah. So I was in my early – no, not early-20s. Maybe 24, 25, something around that. It was my first kind of big trip. And we had booked the Trans-Siberian Express. We'd done it all independently. Independent travel has always been important to me. But we realized that our passports – we're Irish passport holders. And we realized that the Mongolian embassy required you to travel to London for a Visa at that time. We were all ready kind of heavily saving for our big trip. And we're like, "Yeah, we're not gonna get – we'll just live on the train. We don't need to get off anywhere. The point is the train, right? You don't need to get off?" So I lived on that bloody train for like 10 days.

And to make it even more hilarious, I miscalculated the number of days that I was gonna be in Russia and the number of days I was gonna be in China. I thought that I would be more days in China than I was in Russia, and I only brought enough money to stay on the train for I think two days or three days. And we got to the stage then where we were just eating rye bread dipped in hot water. It was so next level disgusting. I think I did – I put it beer because I was so desperate. I was like, "Water and beer are the same price. I'm just gonna have rye bread dipped in beer. This is my life now." Terrible.

Then one day we were like can't do this anymore. We literally have no money. We're gonna starve for the next two days. And obviously the – no offense to the Russian train attendants, but they weren't the most helpful. So we stopped at this one particular stop, and we had to leave all our stuff on the train. And the only way we could exit off the train was we could just stand on the platform and that was it. And we saw the sign for ATM. We're like we're doing it. We're just going to that ATM. Let's just leave all our stuff. The train's here for like 10 minutes. We can make it.

And as we followed the signs for the ATM, we realized it was a lot

further than we thought, but we committed. And we were like what if we do make it back? Our passports, all our belongings are on that train. But I swear I was so hungry I did not care. I was like they can take my stuff at this stage. I would kill for a hot-cooked meal right now.

And I remember just going to the – taking out a couple hundred pounds worth of money. We made the train within literal seconds. There was this Russian train attendant that just pushed us on. And I can remember doing a money dance in the train carriage literally with these notes waving about my face. Yeah! This is being alive! I ate like a king. I'd never eaten so much food or drank so much beer probably as well. I got very drunk that night. Yeah. But it was awesome.

Matt: So amazing. Well, I always think about you since you told me that story every time I make additional plans and prepare to do the Trans-Siberian. So I'm doing it next month, and we can compare notes after that. But that's literally my point of contact. I think you were the first person I have met that had actually done it. And so, your story has always stuck with me. That's amazing.

Sarah: Yeah. I'm probably the only person that you'll meet that actually did it and didn't get off the train. Loads of people were like, "Did you see that lake?" And I'm like, "No." No, I just lived on it for ten days. Didn't see a thing.

Matt: That's amazing. All right. Sarah, at this point, are you ready for the lightning round?

Sarah: I think so. Yes! Yes, I am!

Matt: There you go. That's what I'm looking for. Let's do it.

Announcer: The lightning round.

Matt: All right. If you could have dinner with any person who is currently alive today – it could be a celebrity, author, public figure, entrepreneur, anybody – who would you choose and why?

Sarah: Yeah. I would choose Russell Brand. I don't know. Do you know Russell Brand?

- Matt: I do. That's an amazing choice.
- Sarah: Yeah. I would choose him. I just think he is so funny, interesting, spiritual, has some really interesting things to say about life and humanity. And I just like the thought of eating my dinner and him just almost performing for me because he doesn't shut up. So, yeah, I would pick him. I just think it would be dinner entertainment, and you would learn a lot and laugh a lot on the way.
- Matt: That is an amazing choice. I have to agree with that one. All right. What is one app or productivity tool that you're currently using that you would most recommend?
- Sarah: My journal system is probably my productivity tool. Can I recommend that?
- Matt: Yep. Yep. 100 percent. 100 percent. Absolutely. Yeah. For sure. All right, next question. If you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Sarah?
- Sarah: Don't think too much. Just don't think too much. I think so often, for me anyway, I can live out and play out so many different imaginary scenarios in my head about what might happen. What if that went wrong? And, actually, it doesn't really matter. The joy is just doing it. Even if you feel – I've got – I used to be so frightened of failure, recovering perfectionist. And now I really enjoy it. I enjoy the process and the feedback.
- And I think I would just – I remember being 18 and it feels like the world's kind of opening up to you. And you're ready to embrace it, but then all these kind of limiting beliefs start to filter in. So I would just say just don't overthink it. Don't think too much. Just get out of your own head and go and enjoy the world. Yeah.
- Matt: Awesome. What is one travel hack that you use that you can recommend to people?
- Sarah: Yeah. So I use a travel card called Revolut. And I pay for the premium service, which is really good because it's really cost effective. Think it's like £40.00 a year, something. It's not very expensive. And that gives you the best exchange rate on the day.
-

You're able to forego kind of like any fees. It's a great card, but more than that, it gives you perks. It has a perkometer on the app, which often includes booking.com. So we're already Genius level at booking.com because we travel so much. And you can actually combine the Revolut codes with your Genius.

So, when we traveled in South Africa actually, we stayed in this incredible five-star hotel in Johannesburg and got like 30 percent off. And it also gives you, for premium members, a flat-rate access to airport lounges for £20.00. So, when we're in Dubai, for example, we were able just – rather than spend £20.00 on a cup of coffee – because that's probably the price you're gonna pay in Dubai Airport – we were able just to activate then there the lounge pass, scan ourselves in with a QR code, have some hot food, get a massage on the massage chair, yeah, and spent four or five hours in there before our next flight. So, yeah, that's been really, really helpful for me.

Matt: Awesome. And when you're traveling, what is one item that you pack and you never travel without?

Sarah: This is a really crap one, but my curling tongs.

Matt: It's honest. Listen, this is a candid answer.

Sarah: It's literally the only thing. I would love to try and say something fancy, but I'd just be lying to myself and your audience. The one thing that is always in my bag is just my curling tongs and an adaptor so that I can use them.

Matt: Fair enough. All right. At this point in your life with all the travel that you've done, what is the No. 1 place on your bucket list that you have not yet been to that you would be most excited to go to right now?

Sarah: Yeah. I haven't done much of South America. So I'd really love to do a bit more of that. I'd love to do Chile. Yeah. That whole kind of area – I've been as far as Central America, like Guatemala, but I haven't gone beyond. So that's next. We're talking about that for maybe kind of the end of this year actually, to go spend Christmas kind of somewhere like that. That's kind of calling me.

Matt: Did I have any influence in putting Chile on your radar with all of

the Carménère wine that you and I drank together?

Sarah: Yes. 100 percent. 100 percent you are to blame.

Matt: That's amazing.

Sarah: For that and my Carménère wine addiction that is growing by the second.

Matt: Exactly. Amazing. Well, let me know when you go because Chile is indeed an amazing place. All right. Sarah, last question on the lightening round – for listeners of this episode that want to find their flow, what is the first step, the first tip – as soon as this episode ends, what should they do first?

Sarah: So, if you want to find your flow, probably the best tip is to get curious about where it exists for you. So bring a notepad with you to work or when you're working and notice the activities you are completely absorbed in, so where you feel that sense of challenge, and you lose track of time, and your worries disappear because you're just so focused on the task. And then, begin to make a note of those and add more of those into your work life.

When it comes to your leisure, flow exists more in activities where the conditions are already present for flow. So for example, in rock climbing, or dance, or any form of sports – so, again, try to integrate that into your leisure routine because it just gives you this feeling of instant harmony, and joy, and happiness. So notice when you're in flow in work and add more to it. And then, in leisure activities, think about sports or activities that you could do.

And get curious. Think outside the box. I did improv. It was hilarious. It was so much fun, and I really look forward to those classes, to go down and just have that sense of fun, and escapism, and feel kind of the joy in life. So I think so often we can be over reliant on Netflix and just stick it on the TV and binge watching a box set, when actually there's so much more to life than that. So get curious about what other things you could experience in your free time.

Matt: Awesome advice. Sarah, it was so, so, so amazing to have you back on the show again. I want you to let people know, first of all, how they can get an advanced – get on the advanced presale list for

the book, and then also how they can follow you on social media, and how they can learn more about The Power To Reinvent as well and wherever you want people to go to find out what you're up to.

Sarah: Yeah. So, I'm most active on Instagram. And it's – the handle is @thepowertoreinvent. And there, I'll kinda be posting more information about the presales and also some bonuses for people who buy the book before it's released. I plan to have a lot of additional freebies worth quite a bit of money that you'll get in addition to the book for placing your trust in me. To find out about when the presales happen, you can just follow on social media, or you can sign up to my newsletter, which you can sign up to on my website, www.thepowertoreinvent.com.

Matt: Amazing. We are gonna link all of that up at the show notes in one place. Just go to the themaverickshow.com for this episode. And you will find links to everything we discussed on this episode, including how to get a copy of the book and follow Sarah. All that'll be in one place at themaverickshow.com.

Sarah, this was amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the show again.

Sarah: Thank you so much for having me. And I can't wait until travel paths cross again soon.

Matt: I would love that. All right. Goodnight, everybody.

Announcer: Be sure to visit the show notes page at themaverickshow.com for direct links to all the books, people, and resources mentioned in this episode. You'll find all that and much more at themaverickshow.com.

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