

EPISODE 465

[INTRODUCTION]

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FT: Welcome back to So Money everyone. I am your host, Farnoosh Torabi and today, we have a guest who is an executive leadership coach and a business mentor. Sarah Kaler is here and for the past 17 years, she's worked with business leaders across all industries. In particular, she works with female CEO's who are building high-growth companies, international brands and Fortune 100 and 500 companies like Facebook, Lululemon, Intel, many others.

She's been featured for her work in Huffington Post, Entrepreneur, Fox News and many other news outlets and Sarah dedicates her business now to helping primarily, as I said, female entrepreneurs drive their business with purpose. Not just passion but purpose what does that mean exactly?

How to know when you are earning enough;
how do you know when it's time to stop focusing on your bottom line and that you can be happy and feel fulfilled with what you've created and what you've earned and the importance of setting very clear boundaries for yourself and your business especially when you are just starting out because you can't and shouldn't say yes to everything. Sarah learned this the hard way.

Here is Sarah Kaler.

[INTERVIEW]

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FT: Sarah Kaler, welcome to So Money.

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SK: Hi, thanks for having me.

[00:01:55.4]

FT: All right, answer this for me: passion versus purpose. You have built a very successful practice, a coaching practice teaching entrepreneurs women in particular about designing a life and a career that is centered around purpose. We always hear about passion. What's the difference and what do you think about the word passion?

[00:02:20.8]

SK: I love this question because we do here about this a lot and you know what's interesting is I think passion is good. There's nothing wrong with passion, right? You've got to have passion but I think where passion falls a little short is that passion is self-serving. It's about us, right? As an individual and it is where you come alive and it's important in that sense, right?

However, when we start talking about purpose, it's where it gets multidimensional.

This is where we start to talk about service. This is where we start to talk about impacting others and where we can actually start to start to impact communities, others, the world and we're talking about what we're really up to in the world and not just what feels good to us as an individual. I think that that's an important distinction.

[00:03:19.7]

FT: Another distinction that you make is success. There are the metrics to success that we've come to accept as a society but those aren't necessarily the best ways to measure success because for you, for example, you were very successful, climbing the ladder, multi-billion dollar company but your health was the tradeoff, and so how do you define success?

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SK: Well for me, as you mentioned, having the money, the metrics, the house, the car, all the things that we typically know as success and then to face that moment of health crisis, it all didn't matter in that moment, right? So for me, success is really about legacy and not just about

the material assets or even just about the money, which I will talk about money in a second here. But to me, legacy is ultimately about what are you here for right?

At the highest level, what are you here to lead? What is it in you to serve and what does that require of you? Success, I think from the classic standpoint that we're so used to, is about climbing and acquiring and that can be fulfilling on many levels and on a certain point when we are looking at legacy, it's actually like leadership. If we look at leadership and leaving a legacy, it is actually about service, right?

So when you're serving from an abundant place, the money is going to show up. Money and income and impact and influence all come from leading your legacy and really leading from your ultimate genius. So for me, success is about finding what that is for you and asking yourself to step into that.

[00:05:32.0]

FT: I definitely want to talk to you about your advice on how you know when enough is enough financially because you can feel as though when you're trying to achieve "success" that there is no limit to how much you can earn, should earn. But that can lead to burnout, health problems, there's only so many hours in the day that your energy has a bandwidth. But I am curious to also first learn how you can to these realizations about success, about purpose. What was your lightbulb moment and how did you start to see the world differently?

[00:06:06.0]

SK: Yeah, so for me I knew two things my entire life. I knew that I was going to make a massive impact in the world somehow and I didn't always know how, right? But I just knew that intrinsically. Even as a kid I knew that, and the second thing that I knew that I was going to be a mother and as you mentioned earlier, a moment ago, in my early part of my career, quite young grew a very successful career.

And at a certain point was at the really top of a corporate ladder and senior leadership and I have all this success, right? I had money, I had visibility, I had roles that I hadn't dreamt of and then I had a health crisis. So in the midst of that, I was faced with that moment of I'm making a

lot of impact on paper. The results were there, the numbers were there. I had literally developed thousands of business leaders at that point in my life and yet, there was something missing.

There was something missing and it wasn't just the obvious of my health. It was that I was out of alignment with the ultimate work that I wanted to do in the world and it was like my values were compromised. So for me, I had to look deeper into how do I actually do what I'm great at and actually leave the mark that I want to make and have that all work in my life?

So it wasn't a question of I have one or the other and be left questioning, burnout and frankly, putting my whole life on the line here which was the reality for me but it was more looking at a world of "and" and thinking that that was possible.

[00:08:11.2]

FT: I like that. So it's not either-or, or this or that, it's "and". How did you begin to answer those questions for yourself as far as how are you going to leave an impact, what was going to be your ultimate purpose, how are you going to execute it? How do you figure it out when you're at that crossroads and you teach this to your clients so you're the expert, for yourself what was that transition like?

[00:08:33.8]

SK: Yeah. Well, I always tell people, personally, I did not build Rome in a day. It was probably a solid year for me to take the time to make that transition and the first thing I knew was that I had this expertise. I had talent, I had this genius and it was clear to me that people were coming to me, within my company and outside of my company for my help and I needed to start to look at how was I going to leverage my strength, leverage my genius in a way that I could continue to impact people.

But I could see that why I was here was not just to stay within the four walls of the company that I was at and so I started to see that connection. That's when I got back to that deeper purpose that I had known my whole life of making a massive impact in the world. I saw, "Ah okay". So I have done, I've served here and now it's time to serve beyond.

I need to start to look for what's the vehicle to do that. I know where I'm great at and I need to start to look for the opportunity to move just beyond these four walls, right? But here's the next piece, was, how do I make the impact that I want to make and do that and lead the lifestyle that I want to have and do that abundantly? Because I knew that the lifestyle that I had had was no longer working for me, right?

I was on an airplane every week, I was working 80 to 100 hour work weeks. Like it clearly was not working and I was in the hospital all the time. My life was behind the curtain, it was falling apart so I had to face some serious questions around that so I looked at impact; desired impact and desired lifestyle and with that concept of how do I lead with my genius with putting me first? Because we hear all these things about you've got to fuel yourself first. It's like put your oxygen mask on before you go putting on others'.

[00:10:52.1]

FT: Pay yourself first, right.

[00:10:53.6]

SK: Pay yourself, fuel yourself, feed yourself, right? Whether it's money, sleep, food, rest, whatever it is you are your greatest asset and as the leader and CEO of your company, which I was transitioning into, I had to do that and those are my clients. So for me that was key, was looking how and what does that look like? And so that was step one, let's get this straight and building that foundation for what was my business model going to look like.

Because if the business model inherently is not going to fuel both of those things then it's going to be out of alignment. It's not going to be sustainable.

[00:11:47.1]

FT: So then just to take a quick step back and as far as figuring out the lifestyle that you want, specifically what are we looking at, at how many hours a day I want to work, do I want to be home, do I want to be in an office environment, do I want to have time for a month to take off to

go on a vacation. Is that the sort of stuff that you're outlining and then trying to reverse engineer as far as the business that you build that can support that?

[00:12:11.9]

SK: Yeah absolutely. A lot of my clients are thinking about those things because I am working with so many women CEO's and a lot of them have children. A lot of them have families, a lot of them are scaling up. So they've already had a lot of success, right? So those questions are very present in their minds about, "Well how do I go from here to that next level and not compromise the things that I care about?"

Now, what those things are and what that looks like is different for each person. For me at the time that I was making the leap, I had a very young child. For me I was very protective of my time, I was learning to create very firm boundaries and traveling less for work and being really choosy about when I traveled and for what was important to me. So those things then got built in and the business then really blossomed out of that.

[00:13:22.4]

FT: Because now you know your boundaries, isn't that it? We feel like we shouldn't limit ourselves when we're just starting a business because we're eager to get out there, to get known but that can backfire really quickly as you've experienced. So having boundaries is actually the smartest way to approach it, personal and professional.

[00:13:44.1]

SK: Absolutely because a lot of times what happens is, like you said, you're growing and you put everything into it, right? You put in the hours, the time, it's your voice, it's your brand, it's your work, really it's like a baby you're growing and then you get to a point where you think, "Well how am I going to go to the next level and continue this?"

Something has to change typically in order to get to the next phase and it's not necessarily just about maintaining what you've already done, right? It's about creating something else and if you

already learned clear boundaries and you have a foundation that is going to stay with you forever.

[00:14:31.4]

FT: Your website homepage says you're "developing conscious leaders one soul at a time." I think we can all use more conscious leaders in this world. But at the same time, there is a resistance to that because the world is very competitive, it's all driven by bottom line.

So how do you prepare your clients for entering a world that maybe not so patient, that is money driven, that doesn't really appreciate soulfulness at the price of maybe some work getting done at a different pace, at a different price point? We still live in a very capitalist society so how does this work in that environment?

[00:15:16.8]

SK: Yeah, well it's a great question. So for me, the money comes, like I mentioned earlier, the money comes from having human to human connection. Spending more time focused on the impact, the transformation, the connection, the community building so that to me is a competitive advantage. When you're in the business of people, whether that be your clients or customers or team, your internal culture, these are the things that actually give you competitive advantage and help you win in a crowded marketplace, in a competitive marketplace.

Because people need their products, their services to matter and people want to belong to brands that care about the world and care about them and that's important. So we need our leaders to have that level of awareness in leading their companies and how they create work environments, how they treat their people, how they deliver customer service and so people are looking for that and we need leaders to wake up to the fact that if they're not doing that, they are actually falling behind.

[SPONSOR BREAK]

[00:16:36.5]

FT: If you could carry only one makeup item in your bag, what would it be? For me, it's something to help shape and fill in my eyebrows. I know random but brows are the thing people. Today's sponsor, Glossier, is a New York City-based beauty brand known for their unique skin first makeup second approach to beauty and I am in love with their eyebrow product called Boy Brow which leaves you with thicker, fuller, more naturally groomed looking brows.

And listen, even though I haven't gotten much sleep, the Boy Brow helps my eyes pop and the internet is all abuzz over calling it a game changer because it's an all in one product, not a complicated kit with a four step brow routine, it has a tiny mascara-like brush for easy application and it's only \$16 and since I'm allergic to a lot of makeup, the Boy Brow is perfect because it's hypoallergenic.

Curious? You can get 20% off your first purchase. Just go to [glossier.com](https://www.glossier.com) and use the promo code "So Money". That's [glossier.com](https://www.glossier.com) promo code "So Money".

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:17:42.6]

FT: Going back to one of my questions that I promised I would ask because I am so curious about this too, when is enough money? When do you know you've reached financial fulfillment and that maybe you should start focusing on other things and it shouldn't just be about the bottom line?

Because obviously, we need enough money to, as you say, satisfy a lifestyle that we want to achieve.

That takes money but it can feel like you're this hamster on the wheel that more is more. Who wouldn't want more money? But I think that can be a very hard thing to stop lusting after because when we think about if we just had another \$10,000 more dollars or another \$1,000 a month or whatever it is, that changes lives. So how do you know when you are good?

[00:18:33.1]

SK: That's a really good question because I really believe that you need to know what drives you, right? For a lot of people, money drives them when they set goals. I always ask my clients like when we were setting KPI's in their business, for some people they are driven by the money goals. They want that to be the driver and some people are more driven by the impact goals even within the realm of we're all making an impact here.

So I think what's important is to ask yourself, "What's the goal underneath the goal here?" If that makes sense, because you could say, "I want my business to break \$5 million this year," or whatever the number is and I think how I think about money is what's the purpose? What's the purpose for your money? Because if you get connected to the purpose of your money, I think you're going to know when enough is enough.

If it's just "I need more, I need more, I need more", to me you could be on that hamster wheel forever. It's endless. But if you have purpose for that money like, "I am investing in XYZ for," or, "I'm saving for my child's college," or, "I have a vision for my life in the next 10 years and it's going to look like this and because of that, I am earning at this level 50% year over year growth so that I can do that," right? Or I want to give back to a foundation or start a foundation and in order to have the means, the wealth to do that, I need to earn at this level.

[00:20:34.2]

FT: I think that's an important point, the whole giving back variable because I went through this where I was like "Well I am making enough to pay my bills and there's food on the table. I get to splurge once in a while, go on a vacation, so I'm good." But it was a conversation with actually a guest from my show, Barbara Stanny, who is all about encouraging women to think big when it comes to earning. Because let's be honest, a lot of us if we are employed, we're making less than many on average.

Even if we're self-employed, we pay ourselves less than male entrepreneurs, so there's something going on. One of the things I think is we sometimes underestimate our potential to earn and we're such givers that, like you said at the very beginning, we are the last ones to be on the receiving end of our giving but I have this conversation with her and she goes, "Well

Farnoosh, why can't you be this eight-figure earning person or make multi-millions of dollars a year?"

And it wasn't that I didn't think I could.

It just felt like it was going to be too hard to reach but she said, "There are a lot of women doing it but let this be the motivation for you. If you feel very complacent on how much you're earning and everything is going hummily well, think about the impact that you could have on others, the greater impact you can have on others once you start being an even higher earner," and that really motivated me.

It maybe wouldn't motivate everybody because, "I am donating to my charities, I am good." But I would love the idea of starting a foundation, of really changing people's lives by giving them resources and money and training and all of that and so for me, my new purpose is to earn as much as possible with the goal and intention of giving back and I think that sometimes we forget about that.

That it's not just about your immediate life and people and community.

There are people out there that you have never met that could benefit from your prosperity and that is super motivating and as women, we are givers naturally so I always say when women make more, the world becomes a better place.

[00:22:49.1]

SK: Oh I love this. Somebody asked me recently about what my legacy was going to be and I said, "Well, there's the whole developing this current next generation of women." I said, "But outside of that sort of women and leadership," which everyone in my community knows that's what I'm up to. I said, "The thing that I want to do is have women be so clear about their legacy in terms of abundance and impact," and so I love what you're saying because one of the things that I said in this conversation was:

"The last stat around women breaking through the seven-figure mark was 4% of all women entrepreneurs." We are currently making seven figures and I said that number is frankly too small. It's frankly too small and the reality is, yes there is work, yes there is hustle and yes

there's business models and all these things but what you're pointing to is when you get connected to what it is for you and you just share it so eloquently what it is for you.

What I am saying is whatever the purpose is for women to be able to redistribute the money and the wealth in the world and have women own that level of abundance and make an impact on that scale. The world is going to evolve tremendously and that is an incredible opportunity for all of us.

[00:24:24.2]

FT: Well I look forward to it. It's going to happen. It's happening slowly but surely.

[00:24:27.6]

SK: It is, absolutely.

[00:24:29.2]

FT: How did you become so money wise? What's your background? Did you have an experience as a kid that really transformed you or left an impact?

[00:24:40.4]

SK: You know, I have to give credit to my dad. I grew up in a family of serial entrepreneurs and I didn't really know a lot as a kid. Well I didn't know that it wasn't necessarily the norm to have a bunch of family members who were running family business around me and none of them were fancy shiny businesses. They were just family businesses and what was really interesting is, I have this vivid memories.

I think you will find this humorous or at least I do.

Every morning, the newspaper would get delivered to our doorstep and I grew up in Seattle where I still live and The Seattle Times we get delivered and along with the Seattle Time, the printed Investor's Business Daily would arrive every morning and my dad who owned his own

business, he's trained as a family practice MD, as a doctor, and he owned some walk in clinics around the Seattle area.

But he, on the side, was a certified financial adviser. It's sort of a part time thing that he loved, right? Talk about passion and purpose, this was something that he did on the side and he would read that newspaper every morning, The Investor's Business Daily and as a kid, I would watch him. At first, I just thought this was dad's weird paper that he read and overtime, I started to pay attention to it and he started to walk me through what it was and why he was reading it.

He would tell me, "This is how you read if the stock is performing and this is why it's important," and he walked me through things like that when I was in third or fourth grade and it wasn't as if I was retaining all of it but the concept of money and investing and also I would say vision and possibility and entrepreneurialism was very alive in my household.

And I will say this, we did talk about the good, the bad and the ugly as well.

So things like risk and things not working out were also talked about and I just have memories of the Investor's Business Daily was always around and those are fond memories I have.

[00:27:09.2]

FT: And the truth is kids, like you said, you're not going to retain it at all at age eight or nine but being around that environment, the modeling that our parents can do for us, look as adults I think we end up caring about what our parents cared about a lot of times. If your dad was exhibiting that he was being mindful of the stock market, even though that was an abstract thing to you but it was a consistent interest of his.

He shared it along the way with you, you know that sticks over time and it's all good. I think that's great. It's a great story. Okay, you mentioned the good, the bad, and the ugly. Let's talk about the ugly. Was there a financial failure that you would love to share that taught you so much?

[00:27:55.8]

SK: I think as an entrepreneur there had been many. So many, small, medium-size but I think probably the biggest one that I made as an entrepreneur is really not trusting my own instinct and it was about, let's see, where was I? I was probably about a year into my business full time. I've been in business part time for a while but I have taken my business full time and I had already passed the six figure mark and revenue and so I had a pretty healthy business but it really was referral based.

I had a strong network, lots of connections and people were coming in and it was about the time when I decided to really take my business online. So I made this executive decision that I was going to get this presence and I hired a brand strategist person who did more than just the graphics and the website and the logo but it was more about creating a strategy for the future of my business and my brand.

I got to this back and forth of thinking that I didn't know enough or that I needed to follow somebody else's direction and what's interesting is I invested a lot of money in this and I look back now and it is just a drop in the bucket but at the time, it was a massive investment for me and it was one of those moments where I realized when I was handed this document that was the recommendation of the future growth of my business.

The strategy in other words of what conferences I would speak at and what programs I would offer or what companies would I move into or approach, and it was really this multi-tier company and I looked at it and I thought, "This doesn't feel like me at all," and it was a real wake-up call for me because I realized that I actually already knew what to do and I had to invest in someone else and spend a lot of money actually to find out what not to do.

[00:30:20.3]

FT: Wow. Well, that's a good investment in the long run.

[00:30:24.6]

SK: It was a good learning lesson of getting caught up and thinking that there's always a time to invest and I always invest in my business to grow, but it was thinking that there was like this magic pill that was going to take me to this other place.

[00:30:43.5]

FT: Well maybe you were saying yes to too many things?

[00:30:47.0]

SK: Yeah, definitely yeah. So it was a good learning.

[00:30:50.4]

FT: What's a financial habit Sarah that you practice that helps you either in your personal financial life and/or your business?

[00:31:00.5]

SK: I think just having a really open relationship with my accountant. Thank goodness for him and also just even, I'm the same way with my financial adviser, I think my accountant, well both people in my life, but I think what I love about it is having open dialogue and it's not just meeting regularly but having relationships with, I think about my accountant in particular because my business has grown so fast and changed and evolved year over year over the last few years.

Having someone partner with me and there for me and somebody who really understands my business has been so integral and willing to answer all of my questions and that sort of thing and that's really important and I'd say the other thing is just knowing and believing and it's not necessarily that I am practicing this mantra affirmation out loud every day but it's more about believing the movement that I'm leading, and the mission and the vision that I have is for me to lead and therefore, abundance and money flows and I don't question it.

I'm just open to receiving it because I know, what I know and I always had this relationship to money and I remind myself of this anytime that I stumble or there's a roadblock or a challenge or I'm doubting what I'm doing is that I remind myself that more innovation, more possibility and more opportunity and more lives changed that all of that is directly related to more money flowing in.

So like when I look at my P&L or my balance sheet, I know that that's a narrative that gives me more information about becoming a smarter leader to create more opportunity, more progress, right? More innovation. So for me, it's about just knowing and trusting that relationship and moving forward and always staying close to it.

[00:33:30.6]

FT: Yeah. All right are you ready for some So Money fill-in-the-blanks? This is the part of the show, it's rapid fire, whatever comes to mind first, finish the sentence. Here we go: if I won the lottery tomorrow, \$100 million bucks, the first thing I would do is _____.

[00:33:48.2]

SK: I would definitely probably book some vacations but I would also distribute large portions of it to all the non-profits I work with.

[00:34:02.2]

FT: And so that takes us to the next one: when I donate I like to give to _____ because _____.

[00:34:06.9]

SK: All the non-profits that I work with are causes are not just about giving them money but causes where we are about developing skill set and sustainable solutions. So either about training or sustainable solutions so that the problem isn't just perpetuating itself. We're actually building growth and helping communities become self-sustainable in other words.

[00:34:40.1]

FT: When I splurge, I like to spend my money on _____.

[00:34:45.3]

SK: Let's see, there's probably a few things. Well like I said, I love travel so you heard me say vacation. My family travels a lot so we love to spend on experiences but I would say at home, we do things like we have our groceries delivered like that's a big thing. My husband also owns a business and we got a little one so we do things like that or just help around the house like getting those and our little home dialed and organized. I think that certainly is and we are advocated for that house-spending.

[00:35:25.5]

FT: And last but not the least, I am Sarah Kaler, I'm So Money because _____.

[00:35:31.1]

SK: Oh gosh, I would say this one for me is what we mentioned earlier around having women own their worth so we can build some dynamic legacies and really make a massive impact on the world.

[00:35:50.0]

FT: Because when women make more the world is a better place. If you've learned nothing in the last 30 minutes, let that be what moves your needle. Thank you so much, Sarah. Wishing you all the best.

[00:36:02.0]

SK: Thank you so much for having me. It's been a pleasure

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[END]

