

WorkWell

A Deloitte podcast series to empower your well-being



Creating equity at home and finding your Unicorn Space with Eve Rodsky

Jen Fisher (Jen): Hi, WorkWell listeners. I'm really excited to share that my book *Work Better Together* is officially out. Conversations with WorkWell guests and feedback from listeners like you inspired this book. It's all about how to create a more human-centered workplace, and as we return to the office for many of us, this book can help you move forward into postpandemic life with strategies and tools to strengthen your relationships and focus on your well-being. It's available now from your favorite book retailer.

Personal time is vital to our health and well-being, but in modern society it's also difficult to find and manage. In our already too busy life, how can we reclaim time for ourselves to focus on the natural gifts, interests, and talents that make us unique?

This is the WorkWell podcast series. Hi, I'm Jen Fisher, Chief Well-being Officer for Deloitte, and I'm so pleased to be here with you today to talk about all things well-being. I'm here with Eve Rodsky. Eve is a Harvard-educated lawyer who began a national conversation and launched a movement toward greater equity on the home front. Eve uses her law training and years of organizational management experience to create a life management system to help couples rebalance the work it takes to run a home. She's also, the New York Times bestselling author of *Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do (and More Life to Live)*, and its follow-up, *Find Your Unicorn Space: Reclaim Your Creative Life in a Too-Busy World*. Eve, welcome to the show.

Eve Rodsky (Eve): Thanks for having me, Jen. I'm so happy we finally get to do this.

Jen: I know. Me too. So, I want the listeners to learn about you, know who you are, if they don't already, because I feel like everybody knows who you are. But tell us your story and tell us how you became passionate about helping families find greater equity at home.

Eve: Well, thank you for your intro and I will say that I did not set out, Jen, to be an expert on the gender division of labor. That is not what I was on my third grade would you want to be in grow up board. It wasn't what I talked about with Elizabeth Warren in our Harvard Law School orientation when she asked what you're going to do with your law degree. I think it's important to set the context that this work came out of personal pain, and the personal pain was that I had really big dreams. And I think especially in 2002, right, I'm resolutely Gen X, we were told, women were told, especially in college and law school, that we were going to have the same opportunities as men, and I believe that, I told everyone in that orientation I was going to be President of the United States and the US Senator at the same time, possibly, because you could always legislate during the day and, you know, issue executive orders at night, and I was going to still never give up on my dreams of being a Nick City dancer and dancing on the iconic Madison Square Garden floor. And so, I think the hard part for me was instead of smashing all of

these glass ceilings, if you want to call it that, really all I can tell you is if you cut to my life 10 years later, the only thing I was really smashing was, you know, peas for a toddler, you know, while breastfeeding, a baby trying to negotiate to come back to a job that wasn't president, wasn't senator, but it was a job that I liked at a corporation and realizing that they were going to take my direct reports away from me, that breastfeeding meant pumping in a dark broom closet without an outlet that would need a battery pack and meant that I was going to be in charge of all the domestic labor of my family still, because my husband's job was still more important than mine in my mind. So, it was a really hard time. That's where this work comes out of. A lot of physical pain from realizing that everything I've been sold at that point when I had those big dreams was really a lie.

Jen: Well, thank you for sharing that and sorry to hear it, but I think the reason why your work is so needed is because your story resonates with far too many women and families even today in our lives. In your book, *Fair Play*, you talk about invisible work at home, and I think that that is something that wasn't talked about for so long. But can you tell us what that is and how it impacts individuals, but also how it impacts the family, the family dynamic, the family well-being?

Eve: Well, thank you for saying that. I think the beauty of your podcast, I got to catch up and listen to you. You have a great radio voice, you know, is really this idea why we're together and our work is that leadership in the workplace it begins in the home. And people forget that they haven't been taught that, they don't understand that, and so what ends up happening is that assumptions take the place of structured decision-making tools in a way that we would never let it happen in the workplace, Jen. I couldn't work for you if I came into your office every day and said, hey, what should I be doing today? I'm just going to wait here to tell me what to do. But that's how we often operate in the home, where there's a primary person, and then there's a helper as opposed to, and especially to partner in a home of two partners where you have a co-partner in running the home organization.

And so, that assumption, when things fall on one person is often what I call the "she-fault," because it happens to women. Women hold two-thirds or more of what it takes to run a home and family. And actually Jen, it gets worse, if they're the primary breadwinners. So that's a real statistic that keeps me up at night, because it's not going to get better on its own, and that's why I'm out there pounding the pavement. But I think if you really want to understand the visible work and sort of the toll it takes, I'll just tell a quick story that I talk about in the book, because it reminded me that this wasn't just a me issue, right. That private lives are public issues, and I tell the story about a breast cancer march that I was on. And this was, you know, about a decade ago, this was 2012. So yeah, more than a decade ago. And we were honoring a friend who had been recently diagnosed. And I remember this Saturday morning so well because it had a girlfriend's getaway type feel. It was very hopeful, you know, we were all in pink glitter and I was with women that were incredibly powerful, like a Head of a stroke and trauma at a big hospital and an award-winning producer, women who were trained to use their voice in all these different contexts.

And what was so hard about this breast cancer march day was that when the march was over and we were all supposed to transition to go get dim sum together at around noon, it was sort of like the opposite of Cinderella, where all these women started to turn into pumpkins. And I was aware of because I told you, I was sort of breaking down in my own life at that time. And so, I became more aware of what was happening to other women. And so, what I saw of these strong women was that they started to respond to phone calls and texts. Not all of us were married to men, but the ones that were, were getting texts like when are you coming home from the parade? Did you leave me a gift for the birthday party and what's the address? Where is Hudson's soccer bag? My friend Kate's husband was my favorite text because he texted her, do the kids need to eat lunch? And so, what I remember about

this time was that the answer of these women wasn't to say, turn off their phones and say, let's just go to lunch. Every single one of those women, Jen, left me there. They left me and said thank you for the dim sum reservation, but we left our partners with too much to do. And I think what was really hard about that was that they were going to bring the perfectly wrapped gift to the birthday party. These women who use their voice everywhere else, you know, clamped down and said I got to go home to feed my kids lunch. I had to go home to, you know, find Hudson's soccer bag. But that day was one of the big acts of resistance in my life that sort of sparked this fair play movement for me. And that was I made them before we all dispersed. I made them count up how many phone calls and texts we had all received, and it was 30 phone calls and 46 texts for 10 women over 30 minutes. That's invisible work. Because while their partners may be helping them with the execution, getting the kid to the birthday party, all of the mental load and preparation to get that kid to that birthday party whether. It's RSVP'ing for the party, getting a gift, putting the appointment in the calendar, were all still falling on these strong women. And so, we know it's been called invisible work. That was the term coined in 1986. We know it's been called the second shift. We know it's been called the mental load. We know it's been called the emotional labor, but I think what's really important is that while we've given these terms out, since the 1980s or the '70s even, it's the same ****, different decade until we truly understand and unpack why this keeps falling on women? And that's really what the Fair Play movement became, not just telling you that this sucks, but telling you why it sucks and how you can fix it.

Jen: So, tell me why it sucks and how we can fix it?

Eve: It really sucks. I'll tell you is because invisible work is killing us. And if you don't think this topic applies to you, it does, because even if you're a single younger person in the workplace, you're going to be burned out because the assumptions that you could do work that maybe a parent couldn't. There are so many assumptions that are floating around. But really, why it sucks is because it's killing us. And what happened to me was after that breast cancer march in that time in my life, I started to really become obsessed with the term invisible work, because of all the terms, Jen, there was a modicum of a solution that, you know, if it's invisible, right, sort of like the Peter Drucker model, you can't manage what you don't measure. And so, you know that and I'm sure everybody at Deloitte knows that, that it's hard to manage a problem, unless there's explicitly defined expectations people know their role. There's fairness and transparency, like the things that make a good organization. We're not showing up in the home. And what instead was happening was when I started to make the invisible visible, I started like every other type A woman. I started with an Excel spreadsheet and a list and that spreadsheet which became the Fair Play system started off as a list of everything that women did that I could find through what I call snowball sampling, it's sort of a way you do sociological interviews through women, ultimately in 17 countries, asking them what's invisible to you that takes more than two minutes. Ultimately, that became a 98 tab spreadsheet with over 2,000 items of invisible work in it and what was really interesting about why this sucks is because when women reported to me that they were holding, that they were in charge of more than 67 of the tabs, there were 98. So again, you know, that's a two-thirds type, you know, or supermajority. When they were holding two-thirds or more of those tabs, meaning they were telling that they were the ones who did the holiday cards. They were the ones in charge of their estate planning and life insurance. They were coaching their partner on a new job, you know, and on and on and on. They were bathing and grooming the kids. They were in charge of the nighttime routine. They were the ones getting the kids, you know, selecting the doctors for their kids, researching daycares. When women told me that they were responsible for a super majority or two-thirds of the work, what we found ten years later was that every single one of those women that was 200 women in our initial cohort, is being treated for a stress-related illness. And so, that's why this became and is still incredibly urgent to me, because I will not let women get sick over this. And it came

through in hair loss and insomnia and SSRI use and thyroid issues and autoimmune issues and cancer diagnoses and the cortisol levels, the amount of stress that women are subject to, especially during COVID, when you can imagine it got even worse, was why this will always be an urgent issue for us to solve.

Jen: Absolutely. In the world of well-being, there's kind of a lot of talk around this triple peak day, right. And so, you know, when we're working and particularly remotely, we kind of spend all day on calls and videos and then we tend to, you know, what's going on in our, 'personal lives,' whether that's our children or other things in our lives that we have to care for. And then we log back on to actually get our work done because we didn't have time to do it during normal working hours. So, I'd love your thoughts and perspectives on that just because there's so much discussion, and I think that that pendulum keeps swinging back and forth and I don't think we have a resolution on it.

Eve: The way I look at these debates around work, I look for the red flags first. So, I know that a healthy organization has accountability and trust. I know a healthy organization, as we said earlier, has explicitly defined expectations, fairness and transparency, and people know their role and that they're also a part of, you know, actual decision making. That people feel like they are heard and they have agency in their decision making. So, there's not really one-size-fits-all as long as you have those things. But the thing is, I think that's most problematic is, and it's the biggest red flag I hear, if I go into an organization and they say that their biggest problem is prioritization. If people say to me...that's the word of death in my life. If people say that their employees or that the employees tell me that they're having troubles prioritizing their work, it means they're overworked. And so, when I hear that work, I always say it's a red flag. And I always say it before I hear it from the employees. And then we actually see that word, people sort of laugh and they say, how are you a fortune teller to our company before you even saw, you know, any of the surveys. But really, I think with the paradigm needs to be is leaders looking at four things, and I call them fair play, fair day, fair pay, and fair say. So that's the metrics board that I look for in companies and fair play is parenting out loud. Fair day is allowing people to have a life outside of work, where people who aren't parents are allowed to sign off at 5:00 for a mixology class, because people know that diffuse thinking is where you're going to have your best ideas or in a pottery class, or walking on a mountain. Then fair pay comes out of that, because when you have a fair day and fair play, then everybody can be seen as caregivers. You're not penalizing those caregivers. So, then the motherhood penalty will disappear. And then fair say is looking around and seeing who's in leadership. Fair say to me is the most important. If you only have people in leadership who have stay-at-home partners. You're going to have a messed-up culture. And it could be men, it could be women. Women often replicate the patriarchy, and they do the same thing. They will have a stay-at-home partner to do what capitalist, sort of, you know, capitalism has required of them. We have to disrupt all of that for this new fair play, fair pay, fair day, fair say framework, in my mind.

Jen: What makes you hopeful that we can get there and what do you think...like, what are the biggest barriers to actually getting there?

Eve: Well, to me, the biggest barrier, I'll start with that, is just how deeply rooted the gender binary is. Even if you're not living in it. It's so deeply rooted, again, which scares me, because a lot of publishers said to me, Jen, we don't need fair play because now we see that women are graduating more from college than men. It's not going to matter anymore because women will have the financial and economic security to get out of this unpaid labor situation, but what we see is the gender binary is so strong that there's a motherhood penalty 2.0, if you are a primary breadwinner you are now doing, as I said earlier, more unpaid labor. And so, I think for me that's before we sort of move to solutions, we have to look at how implicit this gender binary is. And so, one quick example was an executive that

wanted to do a fair play program at a tech company, and he was wonderful and he came on saying that he's sponsoring two single mothers on his team for big promotions. And we talked about what he wants to do and gender equity and then at the end of our conversation, I said to him, you know, really casually, what's your family structure? Like, I want to learn more about you. And he says, oh, well, you know, we've been doing fair play. My wife is holding most of the cards right now, because I just took this promotion at the job. And I'm on the road a lot. We have four kids. So, for now I totally value her work. I see the invisible work she does. We use the fair play cards. I value the work she's doing, but I can't really do my job right now, unless she was, you know, doing that work. And so, then when I said to this nice leader was, well, you just told me that the single mothers on your team can't do your job. And I think that's the hardest part, that it's so deeply ingrained.

Jen: So, let's talk a little bit about the solution and I'm going to move to *Unicorn Space*. So, you talk about kind of domestic partners, balancing the domestic work to reclaim their *Unicorn Space*, and I love that terminology. So, can you talk about what *Unicorn Space* is and how that is the solution to what we're talking about or one of the solutions to what we're talking about?

Eve: Absolutely, and as you, Jen, and I have been on, you know, panels about how to make the world change. We know that we're all breathing polluted air, and we're out there fighting the good fight for federal paid leave and for access to childcare here in America. So, we're doing that work too, but it doesn't mean you still don't breathe even if you have to breathe polluted air. And so, the individual solution there is one, and that's the cool thing. But it's sort of like telling you it's not Ozempic, it's exercise. It's a practice. There's not a quick fix. But what I can tell you is that if you adopt a practice of three things you will see major changes in your mental health and typically if you're a mother, it's worse. So, you know, that's more urgent for that part of the workplace, but for everybody. The practice is one of three things, boundaries, systems, and communication. So, when I surveyed 1,000 people on social media over the first three years of Fair Play, I was trying to do this sort of facetiously, Jen, because I was asking people on social media what's your most important practice? And I did an open-ended question because I was hoping no one would answer and no one did answer what I wanted them to answer which was communication. Communication is our most important practice, but nobody looks at it that way. They look at it as a binary, I communicate because I have to tell Jen something. Not because I communicate with Jen to get better at communicating with Jen. And so, communication is a huge piece of it. And systems are a big piece of it, and that's really what fair play is about. That's the easiest part. Systems are easy, because even my aunt Marian's Mahjong group can have clearly defined expectations. You don't bring snacks twice to the group, you're out. So, the systems are actually pretty easy. It's predicated on an ownership mindset that, just like in the workplace, you become the directly responsible individual for a task. And so, you end up not being a helper anymore, but an owner. So that's fair play in a nutshell. But the boundaries, systems and communication, the reason why we can't just stop at the systems ownership piece of what fair play is, because fair play evolved from an Excel spreadsheet into 100 cards and the premise is that it's not about 50/50, it's about fairness and equity. And when you hold a card, you hold it from start to finish from full conception, planning, to execution.

Now that plus communication wasn't enough, and that's why boundaries had to come in. And that's what unicorn space is. Because what was happening was without boundaries to say that you deserve permission to be unavailable from your roles as a parent, partner, or professional, I couldn't get buy in for people for why they should even save time.

Jen: And did you and do you find that boundaries is the hardest thing for people?

Eve: 1,000%. It is so hard that Fair Play became a movement. Why could it just be a card deck, Jen, where people saw, I designed the system for them. I gave them 100 cards. Just own them and figure out how to redeal. It's really, really simple. But the reason why there's such a barrier against, moving into systems in the home is because a) we don't have a practice of communication, but more likely it's because people tell me that, especially women, they've been conditioned to be available, Jen. Now availability is part of their identity, and if you don't believe me, I asked women, especially mothers, to close their eyes and have the school call them in my hypothetical, and just have the phone ring and ring and ring and don't pick up. Women in the hypothetical when I was asking them to visualize that, were telling me they're having a stress response.

Jen: I was going to say they're having an anxiety attack.

Eve: Exactly, just from the picturing of this hypothetical. So, we know that we've been conditioned as women to give away our time, which is obviously our most valuable currency. But we give it away, we've been conditioned to give it away for free to everybody else, but ourselves, as a parent, a partner, and or a professional. If you want that, if you want to be an acrobat as well as an accountant, then that's where society, especially for women, pushes back. And that's why boundaries are so hard, because it's not about you setting a boundary. It's about society understanding that we all deserve those boundaries and that's a harder sell. Because when you try to do it individually, it feels like it's daunting and I can't do it. So that's why this has become a movement, a movement to say we are more than our roles. We deserve to be defined as something other than a parent or partner or professional, because everyone will remind you that you're a role, but no one's going to remind you that you have an identity of your own.

Jen: That you're you. So, tell me, unicorn space, is it the same or kind of how does it differ from what we've come to know as self-care or just having hobbies?

Eve: It's so different and I'll explain why, because back to that urgency about sickness, you know, the unicorn space is a solution to burnout. And that's why it's not a girls trip once a year. I wish I could tell you it's just a walk around the block. That is important. That is self-care, and you do need that walk around the block or to put your feet in the sand. I'm not saying that, but what I'm saying is that you deserve something more. And the more is that we know, as I said earlier, that women's time is sand. It's infinite. What ends up happening? Why unicorn space is not self-care and a hobby, because hobbies were connoting in frequency when I asked my interviewees what they thought of a hobby and nice to have. And self-care, like I said, has sort of gone off the rails as maybe commodified wellness or bubble baths or whatever it is. And so, what I realize is that after talking to mental health professional after mental health professional after mental health professional, *Unicorn Space* became a book. It became a book to say if you get that time back for fair play because you need it and you deserve it, that time should not be used to overwork yourself in the workplace or to do more roles, but it needs to be used to is to understand that the true definition of mental health is not how to be happy, it's how to have the appropriate emotion at the appropriate time and the ability and strength to weather it. And so, that ability and strength to weather it is what unicorn space is. It becomes explosions of meaning and purpose that allow you to say, I can't believe I just did that and that's why it's different than binge watching TV or emotional...and where we say, I can't believe I just did that with regret. It has three things in it, and this podcast is an example by the way. Because you have the first thing which is you have curiosity. You have curiosity about your guests. You have curiosity about what work-life really look like if I talk to different experts. You have connection, you connect with your guests, you're connecting with your audience. And then you do the hardest thing I think for type A women, which is completion. You uploaded something and you put it out in the world and those three things together are that explosion of meaning and purpose. And it's not just me talking, right? This is the science that's talking.

But that's what we need to get through life, which is mundane and full of overwhelm. We need unicorn space as an umbrella.

Jen: Do you ever find that or have people ever told you that they've found unicorn space, but then they don't actually know what to do with it, because we've been conditioned to do other things.

Eve: All the time. All the time.

Jen: Because that's where my head is going. So, I mean, the fact that you used the podcast as an example of unicorn space, thank you for that. Because while you were describing it, I was like, even if I could find unicorn space I'm not sure I'd know what to do with myself? So, say we've kind of successfully found that unicorn space and we don't know what to do with it, or we feel uncomfortable, or we feel guilty, or undeserving or whatever all of those emotions are that probably come up for so many people, especially women, when they do find that space and they give themselves the permission. Like what are strategies that we can use to discover like what are unicorn spaces or what to do with that space once we find it?

Eve: That's such a good question because there are two barriers that come up a lot in that specific question where someone has found it, but then is not doing it. Typically, it's either a barrier of completion, the idea that something has to be so perfect is why it's stopped them from doing it. So, I hear that all the time. I wanted to start a podcast, but I was afraid no one would listen. I wanted to start art, this one woman said to me, and by the way, she ended up doing it and she's, you know, I love her work. She wanted to start painting at 44 and then she said at 47, she's still painting, but at 44, she was saying to me, you know, what's the point you know, I'm never going to be as excellent, Malcolm Gladwell says I need 10,000 hours. Like, what's the point of even starting something this late in my life, right. So, there's a lot of barriers against completion because I think people conflate completion with excellence. And I think that it does not have to be excellent. It just has to be complete. And so, I think that giving people permission to complete something that's not excellent is one way to sort of get through that hurdle.

But another really important hurdle is, as you said earlier, Jen, was this idea of what guilt and shame means for women. So, to me that was very interesting in my interview was that when I talked to women about sort of the emotion scale that I stole from my preschooler because they have this like, emotions, like a place mat. And I would ask women, you know, how do you feel when you're angry? How do you feel when you're sad? How do you feel when you're guilty? What was interesting was that guilt and shame happen to be emotions that women interrupt their behaviors for, in a way that other emotions aren't. So, I'll give you one example. So, this woman did find her unicorn space. She was a single mother and she was telling me that she took up piano again and she loves show tunes. So, she went and she got sheet music for *Rent* and *Phantom* and all these things. And she's a single mom, but what she found was that her building, because she shares it with the rent stabilized students from Juilliard. There's a music room in her building, which I think is so cool. They have a piano in there. And so, she like booked some time for the piano and she's telling me the story that there's a window in the room, and then as she's practicing, she's watching the sunset and her heart starts panicking and instead of just living with that emotion of, say, guilt and shame because she starts to feel like as the sunset, she says, oh, my God, my son's in daycare and he hates being in daycare when it's dark out. So, she acts on it, so instead of interrupting that emotion, saying I feel guilt and shame, but I know this is good for me, I'm going to stay here, she left the sheet music and she went to go pick up her son. So that's what I mean about guilt and shame interrupting us in the moment, which is so alarming to me about how guilt and shame typically work. And so, what was really cool was I had her as a beta tester and I did it for myself as well, and I

talked about this in *Unicorn Space*, the second book, is one of the best things I ever did was start a guilt and shame journal, Jen. And what I did was I got a moleskine and what I started to do was I started to write down, I feel guilty because. So, I feel guilty because I'm not putting Anna to bed tonight, that's my daughter. And then I cross it out and instead I say I'm making the decision not to put Anna to bed tonight, because I want to see Jen. I haven't seen her in a while, and friendship is really good for my mental health. So, there's agency and changing it from my feel guilty because I made the decision because and then what's really cool is if you look back a year later, you're going to see things like I feel guilty because I went downstairs for 10 minutes to get a drink and didn't put my kid to bed and you are like what is wrong with me? What was I feeling guilty for? It allows you to break the cycle. It feels so urgent in the moment, and you realize, come on, you know, there's some perspective here that I can have.

Jen: And talk to me a little bit about what you've seen just in terms of outcomes and feedback that you've received, you know, how this helps prevent burnout? Because I think that it's so incredibly important and everyone seems to be searching for this solution for burnout and in some ways it should be obvious to us, but it's not.

Eve: Yeah, it's really not. It's not because again, like you said, I think the self-care conversation has been co-opted and my good friend, Pooja Lakshman, she's a good book on that, yes, *Real Self-Care* was great. But I do think ultimately it's because people don't...it's a hard message to hear and sort of this Ozempic type culture, this idea that we can have a quick fix as opposed to sort of long-term practices. And so, what people need to understand is that again, like a one vacation a year, a walk around the block is not going to solve your burnout. The only thing that really I could find in the research and from my research that ends burnout is a consistent interest in your own life. And that's harder for people to hear, because a lot of people will say to me, you know, I don't know what I'm interested in. I'm not interesting anymore. I lost my permission to be interested and interesting. And so, I think it's harder than we think because when I say consistently interested in our own lives, that becomes the fourth C, when you can have a practice of curiosity, connection, and completion that's beautiful. And you can do that once, you can sign up for one outward bound, but it's much harder if I say, do what you're doing, Jen, which is consistency around you have more than one episode, right? You come back to the table and that's what we have to do, but to do that we need to practice of being able to be unavailable from our roles and that's why we need the movement. We need to have a culture that doesn't predicate over work. We have to have leaders believe that giving their employees unicorn space, like real unicorn space-time that everybody has to sign off twice a week at 5:00, like, their clients are not going to be answered that night because everybody does it creative activity. They're not allowed to binge watch, you know, TV. They're not allowed to sit and be, you know, just emotionally eat the way I would during the pandemic. But instead of eating the pie, they have to bake the pie. Instead of listening to the podcast, they have to make a podcast. Instead of buying a piece of pottery, they have to make the pottery. It's that active integration of all those three C's, plus the consistency that really is the key to burnout. But it's a much harder message, right? That's why I took a whole book. I can't give a magic bullet because it's a practice.

Jen: Thank you. Thank you for that. That's exactly what I was looking for your answer to be. And tell me like the, I guess, what have you heard from people or even just in your own life because I would also imagine there's, you know, fear from people, especially from women. I mean what I heard you saying is that a lot of people don't even know what they're interested in anymore or don't feel like they have the permission to be interesting. And so, in many ways, that resonates with me because there was a period in my life where, you know, I completely lost myself. And like who I was, right. But what has the impact been on relationships and families when there is fair play, when there is unicorn space? Because I would imagine there's some fear around that. Because you have to come to terms with who you are outside of

those roles, right. Like, who you truly are and rediscovering that person. And that can be scary for people.

Eve: There's a lot of pain in it. As I said to you earlier, like when I was talking about that time in my life where I had that newborn and I was losing my job, and if I could be the ghost of Christmas future for anybody out there or even people who are older than me, I will say that this has become the most important piece of the puzzle. The most important piece of the puzzle is that being unavailable to your family, to your colleagues, to your roommates, to your friends, the unavailability is really one of the most freeing boundaries you can create for yourself. And that doesn't mean you have to be, you know, people think of that as selfish or they don't call for people's birthdays. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the fact that you have some time every single week to say to yourself, the most important thing I did this week was outside of my roles. When was the last time, Jen, you could say the most important thing you, not you particularly, but people could say to me, I would ask them give me one day this week your homework assignment is one day this week. I want you to report back that the most important thing you do today is not in your role as a parent, a partner, and or a professional. Report back what it is. And actually, in that exercise, I found a woman in Far Rockaway, actually who responded to my Facebook and said Eve, I want to let you know that I jumped into the Atlantic Ocean. That was the most important thing I did today. And it was winter, right. It was last winter and so, I was like, oh, tell me more. And so, this woman, part of the experiment, I like to tell people to do is if you're thinking about the three Cs of curiosity, connection, and completion, and you want to start with what you're lacking. So, what I said to this woman in the beta testers at that time of these concepts was start where you're lacking. So, this woman said she was lacking with the middle C, connection. Super lonely, really isolated during the pandemic, parent in Far Rockaway. So, she happened to see a polar bear group on her Facebook come up. It's not her passion. It's not something she did as a kid. That's why people are so afraid of this stuff. You don't have to pick up something you didn't as kid, because I had nothing I did as a kid. I was a latchkey kid. I had no hobbies or no interests. I was just trying to survive. It doesn't have to be your passion, but it has to be something where she was curious. I wonder what it would feel like to jump into the Atlantic Ocean with this group. That connection to this group led her to a polar bear morning, where her partner took their toddler, you know, it was a full morning and she took the plunge into the Atlantic Ocean. And that's what I'm talking about. It doesn't have to be this big life-changing moment, but it's this accumulation of the consistency that is incredibly life changing. That's what I've seen. That if you're afraid to have the fair play conversations, you could at least have this conversation with your partner that says we both should be interested in our own lives. We both should have time to fall in love with each other again because we can come together at the table with interesting stories about what we did this week? That's a buy in that a lot of people can understand that we deserve to be interesting to each other. And that requires us to figure out our time better because we're both drowning decision fatigue. And that's where the systems come in obviously a fair play, but even getting people to the place, Jen, like you said, of understanding that there is something inherently valuable about jumping into the Atlantic Ocean, as you said, in the culture of overwork is the hardest part.

Jen: Absolutely. And I think until we fix that systemic issue, this is possible on an individual level, if we take our own responsibility for it and maybe that's what it's going to take is enough people taking individual responsibility for it. But I hope that that's not the case. There's got to be more that gets done.

Eve: And that's why I said if you're a company or you're leader that hears that your employees struggle with prioritization. It means that there's no time for unicorn space. I've done enough of this work to know that.

Jen: If everything's a priority, then nothing's a priority.

Eve: Exactly, exactly red flags move back...

Jen: One final question for you. You probably get this all the time, so feel free to provide a canned answer, what does unicorn space look like for you?

Eve: Well, not everybody was asking me that to be honest. When I was writing the book during the pandemic, it was 100% dance. Because for me it was the second C, I was missing connection so much by not having friends in my life. And so, I was signing up for, like Broadway Dance Center, Jazz, you know, Level 2. And so, that was really fun to be able to connect with others through movement.

But actually, Jen, in a million years I failed drafting at my high school and I never thought design would be interesting to me at all, but I'm becoming obsessed with design, like interior design. How to make spaces beautiful. So, it's interesting because part of the exercise that I ask you to do and I'll leave everybody on this last exercise. Think about something you love to do or that is just interesting to you for today. And so, let's go back to the Atlantic Ocean woman, what she was curious about was jumping into that ocean. And so, I said to her, well, why that? So, you find something that's interesting to you and the exercise can be...to take it one more level down where you can provide to us here, as your guides or you can DM us or on a piece of paper, write down five values that the thing you're interested in brings up for you. So, for me again, like I said to you, when it was dance for me, for the women who jumped to the ocean her number one value was courage. She felt like she had not done anything courageous. For me with dance it was connection. I really was feeling lonely and isolated, but now that I'm getting into design, I realize that my value of this year, one of these values that I'm really interested in is beauty. And what does beauty mean and how do I define beauty in my own life? And so, that's what I want people to do. It's not really about the activity per se. It's not about the unicorn space activity. It's about being able to realize and connect with your values again that haven't been given to you by society. Everybody will say, when I ask people without any context, what's your values? Oh, it's happiness and family. No, but when I ask people what their values are in context of what they chose as their unicorn space and what they're interested in, then it becomes courage that's way more interesting. Beauty is more interesting because you're going to know me better, Jen, if I told you my values are just happiness and family.

Jen: And that's where the meaning and purpose comes from too, because it's on a deep much deeper level.

Eve: Exactly, and then we can be accountability partners to each other, right. I can say to you, Jen, okay, you said to me, you know, that you wanted adventure, you know, the value for you is risk. Well, how can I get you risk in your life and how can you get me beauty in my life, right. So, there's a lot of fun ways you can be an accountability partner to a friend or do this as a leader for your team to really get at those values.

Jen: I love that. Thank you Eve so much in this podcast. I don't usually go back and listen to my own podcast, but I feel like I need to listen to this one again. Thank you for your time and your wisdom, and just for being an amazing guest and human being. I learned so much from you. Every single day I feel like.

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