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Rejuvenating Your Career at Half Time Deborah Johnson

Pat: This is Pat Iyer with Legal Nurse Podcast and today we're going to be talking about one of the special challenges of being an entrepreneur—and being in the second part or the second half of your life and what are some of the nuances associated with that.

I met our guest when we were both at the National Speakers Association attending a session. We started talking, and I instantly realized that she had a message that I wanted to bring to you. She's an international award-winning music artist, author, and speaker. She helps others get unstuck with mindsets so that they can reinvent their life and reach their goals. Her new book is called, *Women at Halftime: Principles for Producing Your Successful Second Half*, and my guest is Deborah Johnson.

Deborah, welcome.

Deborah: I am so excited to be here, Pat, with you today. It was so much fun that we got to meet, and I was instantly drawn to your message and what you do as well, so it was a lot of fun.

Pat: Thank you, I appreciate that.

First, can you define what "halftime" means, so we are starting with that frame of reference?

Deborah: Yes. Halftime, people go, "Okay, are you talking about a game? Halftime in a game?" and actually it is, halftime in the game of life. But it's officially, if you look it up online, it's age 40 and above, which is scary to some people. They think you know, "Halftime, I can't be that old." But really, we start kind of regrouping at age 40 and above. And most of my audience is in the halftime of life in their 50s or late 40s to the 50s, and a lot of things happen during that time of life. So, it's a great time of life.

Pat: And it's an interesting time of life for many of the people who are listening because legal nurse consultants come almost always from a

clinical background with a lot of physical demands. I used to work in a hospital as a medical surgical nurse. And I can remember running up and down long halls, being on my feet all day, sometimes 12-hour shifts. And we get to a point in nursing where we can't keep up with the physical demands; or the price that we're paying is too high. And that price could be the long hours. It could be time away from family. It could be back injuries from lifting heavy people.

I would imagine you encounter other women or workers in other careers where they've got some of those same issues affecting them. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Deborah: Yes, or they've been in one job for a long period of time. They've been trained in it, and they've never really been able to pursue some of the passionate things that they've wanted to go into. And there's a lot of fear at that point because you're leaving security and going to something else. There are a lot of mindsets that you go through at that point of time. Yes, either the physical demands. I have a son who's a fireman and you have women who are firemen right now or fire... What do we call them? Fire people or firewomen?

Pat: Firefighters.

Deborah: Yes. My dad was one as well, a captain, but there are a lot of physical demands and sometimes they get hurt, and suddenly you are recreating your life. And how do you do that if you've just had this box and you've had this path, and now suddenly where do you go, and how do you really start from there?

So, yes, the physical demands, the emotional demands. Many people are leaving one job and usually not because of the job, but it may be because of the management. We know that most people leave a position because of management. They want to do something else. They just want to do. You know there's more to life. They want to have a life. They want to have a different lifestyle.

Pat: This is a very specific subject. How did you get interested in this piece?

Deborah: It's a great story of my life that I found myself at halftime. I've raised three sons and worked at the same time. Of course, I've been a professional musician, working for over 25 years in that field, and I've

had to reinvent myself so many times from the gig economy because your last gig is your last gig unless you have other things going at the side. And you have residuals, and you've got licensing. I do some of that. But I understand that there are a lot of people who don't know how to take the next steps, and I had to do that when I started branching out into doing more speaking and workshops.

I went back to some of my educational background. I've taught university courses, and I've got the educational background to be able to do that. But I was able to start using some of that in my new business structure and incorporate some of my music and my arts background.

And it was fun to be able to do that because I realized there are so many who can reinvent themselves and put a system together without discounting everything they've done before. Because sometimes we think, "Okay, I'm going to do something different. I'm just going to throw everything away." No, no, no, no, no, you have so many skills. You have so much experience that is so needed right now. And so that really attracted me to this subject and I feel like my audience, we're afraid.

I think as women sometimes we're afraid of showing our smile lines and getting a little older and showing our experience. We're thinking where it's in our culture, at least in the United States culture, that's kind of what we feel. But because I'm at the place I'm at right now, I feel like it's a great time for me to speak to this audience because I've got the experience. I've got the structure that can be in place and really helping people, so that's what drives me to do it. And I've felt that feeling that so many people have. "Okay, so nothing is going to happen. Should I just quit? Should I just stay where I'm at and be unhappy for the next five to 10 years or 15 or whatever it is in this job, or should I develop something on the side?" And that's really what I help women do, develop that side business. It's little by little, those baby steps, and it could develop into something that you want to be able to do full time. And it's lower risk, and it's very doable, and you just must believe in yourself.

Pat: Yeah, you're right. It does require a series of steps, and I think that often catches nurses off guard when they think about starting a business. They think of it as something that's easy. They don't always

recognize that you must lay a foundation. We have a very competitive field, and we must attract attorneys to us based on our knowledge, so that requires having a marketing plan, a website, an understanding of who's your ideal client. I would imagine that all those things are some of the steps that you talk to people about. Are there any other pieces that our audience should be thinking about to get started?

Deborah: Those are great steps to get started, especially if you've had to sell to attorneys. I will disclose that I have a son who is an attorney, and I know how specific he is. He's the reason I quit homeschooling because he was so focused, and he's brilliant. He's very successful, and he's such a good guy, but I know how specific, and he's not an easy sell so you have to have those things in place. These are very similar principles here of identifying your market, identifying your product.

Things that hold people back are, "How are they going to brand us?" How are they going to take what they've got, this little nugget of what they've got, whether it's an educational course, and they're putting some things online, whether it's some consulting and coaching, whether it's starting as a legal nurse practitioner.

Maybe they want to start and still stay in the health field somehow? There's a huge aging population that needs you, needs you, and needs you. And just define your market specifically if you're going to do this and now branch off and figure out how to brand that.

That's a very big step, and people must get it. They must get what you do and understand what you do. You must make it as easy as possible for people to hire you and then go from there. You must deal with the mindsets, and that's where I deal with my program. You can talk to people about the business and about the process and about the system, but your personal mindset as you know so well, your personal is so connected to your professional.

And if those mindsets are holding you back, they're going to continue holding you back, and you don't know what your purpose is, and you know, really, some of your skills that you can bring to the table. All of that is such a big part of this and that's why it's so much fun. It's just fun to be able to do that with people.

Pat: Tell me a little bit more about the mindset because what we're talking about is somebody who's been an employee all her life and then is considering becoming an entrepreneur or has started business and needs some direction to take risks. What do you recommend to people who've been employees all their life and are now thinking about becoming business owners, and there's a little voice that says, "You can't do that. What do you think you're doing?"

Deborah: You kind of must look at that mirror every day and say, "You can, you can, you can" because those voices, I will just tell you, they're not going to quit. They're just not going to totally quit. You got it; they're going to be a part of that. But it's also an attitude of where when you define a goal, you really want to do this. You want something that is going to make you excited to get out of bed in the morning.

I mean, I love my business. I love being able to work in doing what I'm doing. It gets me out of bed very early in the morning and it gets me working hard on deadlines. Realize there's going to be work behind it, but there's going to be great reward. And understand what that end goal is, and that's what we work out too. If you really know where you want to be in six months and a year and take those baby, baby steps, in five years all that ends up coming together to be able to fully embrace at this time of life. That really helps with that mindset.

In fact, it's a funny subject that you brought up because I was just able to interview someone a couple of weeks ago. I did this while we were on vacation in Alaska, which was amazing, by the way. If anybody has that on their bucket list, yes, you need to go. Yes, yes.

But in our bed and breakfast the owner, the main owner, she had been in a job that was incredibly stressful. She'd been managing, I think it was a \$120 million business. I think it was in the Air Force or something like that in the missile launches. So, she, along with her husband, decided to purchase this bed and breakfast that was very, very highly rated in this small town. And she said she traded 15-hour days for 19-hour days, but she loves doing what she's doing.

So, understand that it's not always going to cut down your hours at first, especially at first. This is her first year as the new owner. Then you get the system more together. And you can hire, and you can do

whatever you want to do, but she just jumped into this. This was huge. This was a huge jump.

But, again, that's a mindset, and understanding that suddenly when you're self-employed and you don't have that box around you, suddenly, you're working all the time. And you may be working more than the assistant, or you may be making less than the assistant you're hiring at first because you're putting on all these hours and you're working very, very hard. But then once it's together, you've got something that could be sustainable.

Did that help? Did that answer your question fully?

Pat: It does, and it reminds me of a conversation that I had with a man who is the father of one of my son's friends. My husband and I signed a personal guarantee and borrowed a million dollars in the late 1970s to open a welding company in an industrial city near me. And my husband worked all the time for three years, just seven days a week.

And this father said to me with these stars in his eyes, he said, "Your husband owns his own business. That means he's his own boss and he can work and set his own hours." And I said, "Yeah, let me tell you about it. Nobody's there to tell him to go home. He's the father of a 3-year-old whom he never sees. Yeah, he sets his own hours. Yeah, that's right." This guy was backing off from me. His body language was like, "Oh God, I wish I hadn't said that to her."

Deborah: It's so true, and that's why you want to pick something you really love. And at this point I've been restructuring my business a little bit because I work a lot. I love my work, again, and I still do. I still work for Disney and do some other things in the music field, which is fun. It's fun. Sometimes I'll do my concerts and all of that as well and writing.

But I ran a non-profit last year with our L.A. chapter of our national speaking association, so that was during that time, and I lost my dad last year, and my mom's in a facility now. A lot of change has happened in my life and thinking about my work schedule, it's constant. And so, I've decided to reformat my business a little bit to do 25 percent live and then I want to do 75 percent online.

I've got online programs. I've got courses and all of that, but I'd like that growing in accordance to my live work. Because, again, when we're talking about those hours, it can just suck up your time, your energy, your money, and really your relationship with your family. I've put great value on spending time with my family.

Pat: Which an entrepreneurial lifetime and lifestyle can do for you.

Deborah: Yes, it can. It can, and there are so many tools to make that happen now. And you can't be afraid of using those tools.



Before we continue, listen to what I have for you. I've gotten so many questions on how to start an LNC business, so I wrote a book on the topic. It is called, not surprisingly, **How to Start an LNC Business**.

This book is for you if you are in the early stages of your business or want to move to a higher level of success.

You will gain the principles for building a strong LNC business.

I will show you how to set **SMART goals** to which you can hold yourself accountable and **how to track and measure your results**.

Get concrete information about having a sound operating plan and mastery over your finances. This book shares tips on how to organize your finances, track income and expenses using calendars, budgets, logs and accounting software.

- This book is geared to the legal nurse consultant who is **searching for tips to jumpstart a** consulting business.
- The principles and tips in this book will help you gain **success in starting or growing** your legal nurse consulting practice.

Order the book using the link in the show notes for podcasts 270 and 271 at podcast.legalnursebusiness.com and use the code listened to get a 25% discount on your order.

Pat: Let's get into that a little bit because there is so much technology that you can easily get overwhelmed by a sense of, "Oh no, I have to update my social media. Oh, we must maintain my database. Oh, I've got to learn invoicing software. What about my customer relationship management program and which one should I buy? How can I keep up with email marketing?"

You can feel like you're under an avalanche of technology. How do we cut to the chase and say, "What do we need to do as business owners and how do we manage all of that?" I know that's a very broad question.

Deborah: It's huge. That is really, huge and I think it starts with mindset first. Because I am hiring on in my business right now to help, but again it goes back to the Drucker, Peter Drucker, principle of what you hire, you need to manage. And if you don't have time to manage then something's wrong, so it's not going to work the way you need it to work.

Number one is the mindset and not being afraid of the technology.

And then number two, it's good to get a partner or a coach or some help in where to start because there are a couple of basics.

People were saying for a while that you don't need the website. Yes, you do. You need a place that is yours. In fact, I've got like five active websites now, which is a little bit too much, but I really needed to have distinction because I've written musicals, and I have another headline group that's still going. And so, they need to be separate. My music and my speaking need to be separate, but to maintain there's one that I focus on. Just one that I do my blogs and I post my podcasts and everything. Just one so that everything else can link back to that.

So that's more manageable, but again start very, very small. Your website, maybe your YouTube channel, and blogging. Just those things because if you have a YouTube channel, you can do some live video. And you can do even YouTube Live or any of those and some of your social media. Usually, you can just do you know one or two that you're going to focus on, so start very, very small.

Now I have some automation in place that's really helpful for me because there are online tools that you can put together, and then I can

have a virtual assistant plug those things in if I get new things to work on constantly, which I do. But some things if I don't have time, she's able to repost. So, you just need to put some sort of small, small, small system together. But, again, the first step is defining where you want to go and what your branding statement is because that needs to be front and center.

In fact, I just talked to another colleague yesterday, and I was looking at his website and I said, "I have no idea what you do. I think you're brilliant, but I have no clue what you're selling." And I referred some sources to him, and it was very important to take the time to do that. But really technology, it comes down because I've dabbled in enough technology and been frustrated enough in my past. I know there's always a way out. There's always a way you can figure it out, period. There really is. You know, you can ask online. You can do if you can spend the time because I have a production studio. I've recorded albums. Now I work with another studio if I'm going to do that, but I've done a lot by myself. I do video editing because I'm fast at it because I've done it for so many years.

I need to now offload some things off my plate and those are the hires I'm looking into right now, but it doesn't need to be scary. When you get down to binary code, it's zeros and ones. That's it, and if you take it down to the simplicity of just a little bit, that's a mindset to approach little, little bits at a time. And I have a son into coding who's going into cybersecurity and brilliant, but he's a different son than the attorney. But I start talking to him and he goes you know, or he'll roll his eyes like "Oh yeah" because he's way deeper, way, way deeper. But really, it's just be simple. Just do very, very basic little tiny steps and that's a mindset too, not to fear it.

We're just overwhelmed like we're going to think all the computers and AIs are going to take over. And I love using this little illustration with the technical and adaptive. In fact, I think I have a podcast coming up on this. The technical is what I've learned in music and it's those scales, the arpeggios, and all the runs and all that stuff that I worked for years as a concert pianist.

You need to have the technical down, but then you've got to get to the adaptive. The adaptive is the expression and what comes after that. And it's why people win contests, and they wow the audience.

They've got that sort of application. You realize that technical must be down, but you've got to have that adaptive after that to really make a difference, and that's where AI cannot take the place of your adaptive skills, your soft skills, the things you've learned. You've got the technical down, but use the adaptive. Use the application for really making an impact and really growing your business.

Pat: That's a beautiful way of defining those two skillsets, and I've never thought of it that way. Nurses are very technical because of the details that we are expected to follow, deliver the right medication to the right patient at the right time by the right route, and yet we're also educators, communicators, very good at sharing ideas verbally and in writing, and explaining to attorneys aspects of medicine. And you need both of those to be an effective human being. We've both met people who are highly in one sphere and are missing the basics in the other sphere. And they are more challenged in getting along with people, particularly the highly technical, the engineers, if I may use that as a broad term.

My husband is an engineer. My mother married three engineers, different types of engineers. They kept lists and were very detailed oriented, very black and white thinkers all of them, but they missed the more liberal arts part of their education. It was nonexistent. In fact, my husband who is a metallurgical engineer, was taught to look down at those soft sciences and skills because they weren't hard. That wasn't hard science. That wasn't something that interested him, but you must have both. And you obviously have both if you've got the highly adapted musical skills and then you've got the communication and the coaching skills to help people with their businesses.

Deborah: Well, you want to be able to pursue that a little bit and that's where when you're starting... putting this altogether for your plan and understanding what some of those are in your life because sometimes we kind of discount those. But I tell you, my mom being in a care facility right now, I want those with adaptive skills that come in to be very skilled. But they're going to treat my mom with tenderness. They're going to know the questions to ask her. The PT, the physical therapist, gentle, gently helping her walk again after a hip fracture. You know those sorts of things, those skills that you've developed in that field

Do not ask me about any of those medical details. I don't know about the medications. I've got another son who's the fireman that does because he's been a paramedic, but I'm not going to know those sorts of details. But all I want to do is make sure that my mom is well taken care of and that she's getting the right medication, but also that she's treated with tenderness and understanding of what she could be feeling. And, again, we've got an aging population, and you are in the perfect medical field, especially the women, but men too. Men read my books. But the women being able to put together something that can be so, so effective and really help people in their second half.

My kind of philosophy right now every day is leaving my day and just saying you know, "That was a great day. What I created today, the impact I created today was great. It was good." I just want to leave that and have that sort of significance at this point in my life.

Pat: Well, let's pull this together. We've talked about a lot of pieces that influence women who are starting or running businesses. In your experience, what are factors that help people ensure that they will be successful however they're defining their level of success in starting and running their businesses?

Deborah: To ensure success, it's always a risk. You just must put it out there. I can't tell you, "Okay, you're going to invest this much. My husband's been in finances so you're going to invest this much, and now I'm going to triple your money like by next week." Those are unrealistic goals, but the mindset is that you're going to take a risk and you know how much you can risk. That's very important as well because I've known people too that have bought into franchises and they've spent their life savings. And then, what happens then?

As we know, many small businesses that start, there are a lot of failures out there. They do not grow, and we have a lot that just don't happen. So, again, starting slow, starting with a mindset that will help you take those little steps successfully. I always encourage also a good coach or a partner in finding out as much information as possible. There's so much free stuff online and you can find almost everything free online, even that I provide. You can find it free.

What I try to do is put it together in a simple package so it's not so overwhelming, and it's doable in little steps. And I give away a lot of

stuff too, but there's so much information out there. It's defining where you're going to go and what your main tiny goals are. That's why I named one of my main websites "Goals for Your Life" because those are lifetime goals that you want.

And I know that there's a lot of stuff out there about goals, but if you don't aim for something, you're certainly not going to hit it unless you're very, very lucky. I would never go off in a rocket just anywhere. I'd be out in space probably, so but with my ability with directions that could totally happen. Siri is my best friend. But putting something together with a partner together with just little steps by little steps, again, every day feeling, "You know I did something to get a little bit closer today," will give you confidence.

And sometimes you reroute. You change directions a little bit. You make a wrong turn, or you make a different turn, and what happens when I've got Siri on? This just happened yesterday actually. It's going to reroute me. It's going to go somewhere different, but it's still going to get me there. So, you're going to reroute just a little bit to find out what's working and what's not and evaluate that.

And don't be afraid to invest what you can in your side business. I would say start it as a mindset of a side business. Because again in the speaking field, which we are both in, I have known those, especially when I was going through my presidency but even when I was the president elect (which I never planned on being by the way). I was not pursuing this position, but it was great, a wonderful experience.

But you would have those people stand up and saying, "I'm going for this full time. I'm quitting my job. I'm going for this full time" and I'm thinking, "Oh my goodness, you have no structure. You have no plan. You're just going to start going." Usually those people, they drop out after three to six months. They can't survive. You're going to live in your car.

I come from the music field. I've met a lot of people who are living in their cars. Okay, I know what it takes, and if you're at a point in your life where you can do that, go ahead and do that. You can be in your early 20s, you can be in your teens, whatever. You can do that, but at halftime I don't want you to have to do that. I want you to go with those baby steps, be very successful, very deliberate in what you're

going to do. If you need to reroute a little bit, that's fine, that's good. It's a mindset and it all comes together. Know where you're going to end up.

Does that help?

Pat: That does help a lot, and this has been a very fast half hour.

Deborah: It really has. I love doing this. This is a lot of fun for me.

Pat: Tell our listeners where they can get your book, the title of your book and provide that to us, and how they can learn more about what you offer?

Deborah: Well my book, I'm so excited because it just came out on Audible and there's quite the process of being able to do that. I wanted to record it as an author because I did not want to hire that part out, and so I wanted people to hear my voice. So, it is on Audible, which is part of Amazon. I have an exclusive deal with them, so that's a lot of fun.

(My book is) *Women at Halftime: Principles for Producing Your Successful Second Half*. And the reason I called it that way is that I have a wonderful friend that works with TEDx and she helps people with their TEDx Talks, and she was really grilling me on what is this going to be about, what are you going to bring uniquely to the table. And we came up with that producing word because producing is what I've done for so many years. I've produced shows. I've produced albums. I've produced musicals. I put them on large stages and original. You talk about work and talk about a money pit, oh my goodness, but it was just such a great experience. So, that is the title of that book.

My website is goalsforyourlife.com and I have free downloads. In fact, I have a new side business template download, a nine-page download. It will go through a lot of these steps totally free. I have some free webinars coming up. Then I have my Women at Halftime Weekend that happens only twice a year and that's a lot of fun. I do that here in Southern California, Friday nights, Saturday, but really going through a lot of the personal aspects that we need to get straight before we deal alongside at least with our professional goals.

Pat: Perfect. Well, thank you so much, Deborah. It's been a wonderful experience talking with you.

Deborah: Well, thank you so much for having me. It's always, always a privilege and I never take this lightly.

Pat: Great. And to you who's listening to this show, this has been Deborah Johnson and I'm Pat Iyer talking with you about *Women at Halftime: Principles for Producing Your Successful Second Half*. I encourage you to take seriously the opportunity to be involved in the entrepreneurial lifestyle and enjoy it. If you've started your business, recognize that you are your own boss. You can work your own hours, whatever that means to you as we've been discussing in the show and that nobody is writing a schedule for you and controlling your life. Enjoy that, that's a unique experience that only about 5 percent of the population of the world is equipped to handle. So, if you're an entrepreneur, you are a unique breed.

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