

Join us for a live podcast event with guest Lori Sullivan, a trailblazer in career diversity and personal brand empowerment. Lori's journey, spanning 25 years, defies the traditional career trajectory, showcasing the power of embracing multiple passions and skills. In an era where the old model of lifelong allegiance to a single career path is fading, Lori advocates for the ME-EO mindset – a paradigm shift where individuals craft a portfolio of skills and income streams. Through her experience in marketing leadership at esteemed companies like General Motors and MRM//McCann, Lori illustrates the value of traversing the career jungle gym and discovering one's unique talents beyond job titles. As a business strategist, Gallup Certified career coach, and published photographer focused on sustainability, Lori embodies the essence of a successful modern career – one that's multifaceted, fulfilling, and continuously evolving. Don't miss this opportunity to learn how you too, can redefine success on your terms.

#### ABOUT LORI:

[Lori Sullivan](#) is a multi-passionate who has spent the last 25 years climbing up, down, and around the career jungle gym. She worked most of those years in marketing leadership positions at General Motors and MRM//McCann before venturing out on her own. Today, she is a business strategist and Gallup Certified career coach. On the side, she is a photographer with a passion for sustainability having published her first book - One Shade Greener at Home - in 2023.

#### **Featured in the Episode**

##### **Lori Sullivan**

##### **Business Leader, Strategist & Author**

Lori's LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lorijsullivan/>

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Stratify Collective

<https://www.stratifycollective.com/>

One Shade Greener

<https://www.amazon.com/One-Shade-Greener-Home-Environmental/dp/B0BT25MSNB>

What is Gallop Certified?

<https://www.gallup.com/learning/309920/strengths-certification.aspx>

The jungle gym analogy

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/6565764-the-most-common-metaphor-for-careers-is-a-ladder-but>

<https://youtu.be/0g7ARarFNnw?feature=shared>

<https://www.morethanmytitle.com/>

<https://businessmodelyou.com/>

<https://www.brucefeiler.com/books-articles/the-search/>

<https://lorisullivan.com/togetherdigital/>

**Amy Vaughan,**

**Owner & Chief Empowerment Officer**

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/amypvaughan/>

**Takeaways:**

- Organizational Support for Employee Growth
- The Role of Mentoring and Coaching
- Acknowledging Personal Strengths
- Balance in Passion and Profession
- Career Development Resources
- Embracing the MEO Mindset
- Managing Career Gaps and Experience

**Quotes**

*"The efforts we put into our work are just as vital in crafting the life we desire."*- Lori Sullivan

*"Be a curious storyteller who crafts words to inspire and connect, delving into diverse perspectives to spark meaningful conversations."*-- Lori Sullivan

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## **Transcript:**

### **Amy Vaughn:**

Fantastic. Alright. Hello, everyone. Welcome to our weekly power lounge. This is your place to hear authentic conversations from those who have power to share. My name is Amy Vaughn, and I am the owner and chief empowerment officer of Together Digital, a diverse and collaborative community of women who have power to share and choose to

share their knowledge, power, and connections. You can learn more about us and join the movement at [togetherindigital.com](https://togetherindigital.com). Alright, friends.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Get ready for today's episode, which is going to be packed with insights and strategies to help you shape a successful and fulfilling career on your own terms. Why am I emphasizing this? Because I think this is a concept that's hard for some of us to even fathom. But to help you get on your way, our guest today, Lori Sullivan, is a pioneer in career diversity and personal brand empowerment. With over 25 years of experience, Lori breaks away from traditional career paths advocating for the MEO mindset. Throughout her journey, Lori Sullivan held leadership roles in marketing at General Motors, MRM McCann before becoming a business strategist and Gallup certified career coach. Additionally, Lori is a passionate photographer, writer, and sustainability advocate, having published her first book, *1 shade greener at home* in 2023. And those of you who are viewing with us live right now can see her lovely book back there in the corner behind her. I love it when we get to interview some book authors, and you've got the book proudly displayed there behind you.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Lori, thank you so much for being with us today. We're excited to chat with you.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Before we get into kind of helping others and how they're going to shape their career journeys, I would love for you to share a little bit more about your journey from marketing leadership at General Motors and MRM McCann, as I mentioned in your bio, to becoming a business strategist and Gallup certified career coach. How did you get from here to there?

**Lori Sullivan:**

I would say the high level thing is it wasn't going from a to b, and I think all of us in our journeys take a lot of twists and turns, and I have throughout my career. And what I've done is a lot of following my passion, so I definitely have crossed disciplines with engineering, market research, marketing, spent time on agency and client side. And, you know, as you go across those years, you're moving up a career ladder. You might be moving across. I got married. I had 2 children who are grown now. So I know those

challenges when you're going through the phases of life of having a family and everything that that brings. And during that time, I worked full time.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I worked part time. I worked freelance. I feel like I tried all the different models. And then on the side of my mainstream career, I kept side businesses going. I feel like I have so many hobbies and passions, and I've always loved my job and loved what I did in my mainstream career, but I also enjoyed following those passions from photography to, you know, writing a book. And I even spent a year and a half focused on some jewelry making. So trying out different things and then just furthering my education. So I got a certificate of photography.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I did, as you mentioned, go in 2019 to get my Gallup certification. And right now, I am almost at the end of getting my now see, I can't say

**Amy Vaughn:**

a word sustainably. It's contagious.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Sustainability certificate from MIT. So it's been interesting because I didn't kind of jump from one thing to another, but just kept a lot of things going throughout, and you start to see red threads. I think everyone, as you start to look back at the history of your career, you'll see those interesting threads and paths that you

**Amy Vaughn:**

I wanna follow. I think it's more fluid. Right? And I think what's interesting that I'm seeing, you know, women in the workforce starting to model that that even men can start to model is this ability to kind of flex throughout your life and your life stages because women coming into the workforce and and becoming you know, there's this whole kind of crazy clashing, right, of, like, motherhood and ambition, right, between us entering the workforce in the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, but then also that contending with maybe our desire or ambition to raise a family, and things like that, or even just kind of have a life outside of work if you don't choose a family. Like, there's still so many things about our life and our life stages that, you know, kind of might change the way that we look at work and the way we approach work. And I think that that is evolving. And I say, I think attitudes towards career and career path are evolving. And so I think a lot of what you spoke to there will speak to a lot of our listeners in that sense of maybe starting to find some ease in the sense that, yeah, my career path doesn't

have to be linear, that I can kind of ebb and flow with the stages and phases of my life. But then another thing you mentioned is, you know, this sense of, a multipotentialite or multi passionate, I think, is the way that you phrased it in some of your write ups and things that I've read.

**Amy Vaughn:**

You know, the sense that you're you're you're good at more than one thing. So how can you make a career or a living or money off of more than one of those things. Right? And so they're just thinking, I have to show up to work and be this thing and do this thing for the next 45 years or however long until I die.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Exactly. All although I also don't wanna discount that because there are a lot of people out there that just have a thing. They found it. Expert. They love it. They're passionate and can go the 20, 30 years, the long haul doing that thing. And Same. And I admire that.

**Lori Sullivan:**

But I think it's good for people to realize not everyone

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Is that. And if it's not you, kind of accept

**Amy Vaughn:**

that. No. I definitely agree. I wouldn't discount those folks either. There's a gentleman my husband's been talking to. He's a professor at a university, and this gentleman's retired. And he's been, like, just, what is the term I'm thinking of? Like, okay. I'm blanking on it.

**Amy Vaughn:**

But he's just, it's like when you kinda just come in it's not moderating the class, but he's not, like, officially taking the class. He's just kind of there observing, and he's, like, donating to the school. And he just wants to continue learning, but he's, like, a retired engineer. And he's just like, I just wanna keep learning. I love that. I love that. Like, he's just not in the field, but wants to keep taking classes. I thought that was so great.

**Amy Vaughn:**

So for you, I'm kind of curious in particular, what is it about, like, traditional corporate roles that sort of influence your kind of positioning in this kind of thing that you're trying out, you said right before we got on the call, this advocacy for the MEO mindset. And what does this MEO mindset, as you're calling it, mean to you?

**Lori Sullivan:**

I think for me, it's probably stemmed from a lot of my background in strategy and planning. So creating a business plan, setting a mission, vision, and values, and I started to realize that a lot of those things that we do for our companies and at work are equally important when it comes to our life and kind of creating the life that we're looking to have. So the idea of a CEO to me, EEO is the same way a CEO looks at their business. We've got that opportunity to look at our life through that lens. And you said a minute ago something triggered for me. You mentioned how what we need at different moments, it changes. And if you think about a company's business plan, they'll have a 1, 5, 10 year plan, but you're adjusting it every year, so the business plan this year isn't the same one next year, and it's the same when it comes to our own lives and our careers. Things are gonna be different each year, and we should be planning for that intentionally and creating that map

**Amy Vaughn:**

more months. I think it's such a smart correlation, and I like it in particular. It's catching the sense that it gives me the sense of, like, ownership. Right?

**Lori Sullivan:**

I think a lot of

**Amy Vaughn:**

you know, maybe the company that they currently work at. Instead of looking at the bigger picture as well, it's more like the immediate future, and we'll kinda get to more of that soon. But I really do. I love this whole MEO mindset. I think it's something that's gonna take off. I feel like it's got some good legs too, and I love it.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And, especially, you know, our corporate careers really promote that, like, singularity moving up the I mean, you hear it everywhere. You move up the corporate ladder. But then what? So you retire and you what? Like, fall off the ladder? Or I understand. You, you know, you might have a period in your life where you either start a family or maybe you're caregiving for older parents or another life situation. And that's why in my intro, I

used the jungle gym analogy. I heard that somewhere, and it's so true. We should have moments where we can climb down a little bit, maybe climb down a lot, but have the chance to climb back up and remove the cliffs. So I think there's a lot of opportunity there to get the corporate mindset to move away from careers having to be these linear things and having more options for the employees.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I think that's fascinating too. Right? Because a lot of times, I don't think we'd look at, like, diversifying skills and more lateral moves and how that could actually serve people best because we don't always need to be stepping on the gas. Right? Sometimes we need to let go of it a little bit and give people time and space for those kinds of phases. And, honestly, I think that's you know, maybe you'll. I don't wanna jump ahead too far, but we're gonna talk a little bit about, like, you know, corporations and companies and how this mindset can serve them. But I could see how that would work well for retention. Right? You know? You don't wanna burn people out, so maybe it's a matter of looking for growth in a different direction. That doesn't mean up with more responsibilities and more pressure and more hours. Maybe it just means a different role and opportunity and a chance to learn and grow differently.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Yeah. Absolutely.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Awesome. Well, let's talk about your Gallup certification because I think that's an interesting that's a big achievement. That's awesome. How has that experience, Well,

**Lori Sullivan:**

Well, this has been a fun one. So just my personal background, I was first introduced to the assessment probably somewhere around 2014 or 2015, and I think what hooked me was my own report. I read it, and it was like a mirror. It's like the things I had a hard time articulating about myself and where I felt I brought strength to the table. It was all right there, and I knew that my combination was very different from anyone else's. So you find almost your unique fingerprint, And so I started using it at work with my direct reports or other people that I worked with. We would talk about it in team meetings and how our strengths kind of, when in overdrive, it's interesting. Your strength can show up as a weakness.



**Lori Sullivan:**

So, initially, I was just using it as a team development, and I love helping people discover their own journey when they're looking at their strengths, kind of having that feeling that I had at the beginning. And then what I've discovered over time is that it's really important that it's not just something on the shelf. Like, I pull mine out once a year. I read them. I remind myself. And then, when I'm using them with clients that I coach, we use them for all different kinds of things. So sometimes we're updating a LinkedIn profile or a resume and really trying to get those strengths to shine there. It could be something at work.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Maybe there is a work relationship where there's a little bit of rub, and use strengths to have an understanding of why that rub might be there. So, you know, some of the themes are more executing. Others are more strategic. Sometimes someone who's strong executing and someone who's very strategic, you can get an unintentional rub, and we work through those. So, tons of uses. I love the tool. And outside of that, just the research that Gallup provides on employee engagement, the future of work, so much I've learned from being part of Gallup.

**Amy Vaughn:**

We should back up for a second. I probably should have asked for, like, a little bit more of, like, a for those who aren't familiar with, like, what is Gallup strengths, like, assessment and kind of their philosophy just for those who maybe aren't familiar.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Yeah. So Gallup has an assessment that it's about a 20 or 25 mostly word or phrase pairings that, at the end, they have 34 strengths grouped into 4 categories, executing, influencing, relationship building, and strategic thinking. And you see your top 5, and you have a 1 in 33,000,000 chance of having the same top five strengths in the same combination as someone else. So they truly are unique and personalized. And

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah. That's right. I think it's really helpful and insightful for the sake of, you know, I'm constantly, like, harping on about personal development and self awareness and what a great career growth tool it is. I think it's because once you sort of have that sense of awareness and understanding of yourself, you understand more about how you show up, how you work with others, like you said, where those rubs are when it comes to working with others. And then what I love about Gallup, is it's about instead of I think

sometimes when it comes to, like, review time or when we're, you know, looking at what we do, we tend to focus on our weaknesses. It's always like, oh, I need to get better at this and that, that. I love that Gallup's all about the strengths and really kind of leaning in on those strengths and learning what those are as well and sort of learning how to develop yourself and and and acknowledge your strengths. But as you said, like, you can kind of almost lean too hard sometimes on those strengths.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Yeah. And I always like to give a personal example on that one because I think it reinforces that one of my top 5 is something called maximizer. And so a maximizer wants to take something good and make it great. No matter how good it is, like

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah.

**Lori Sullivan:**

What else could we do? What else could we do? And so very early in my career, when I was first a manager, I got feedback on my first, like, performance review that said, work my team did was never good enough for me. And that just well, it just took me aback. It was never my intent. And what I've realized reflecting back on that is it was my maximizer in overdrive that their work was great. And all I needed to do was acknowledge that before providing suggestions. It's a simple statement. Right. This is awesome.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Here's a couple ideas that could make it better. So often, when we do have those weaknesses, it can be a really small change that is kinda Right. Put it all down.

**Amy Vaughn:**

You being aware of that and then kind of prefacing your feedback with that positive feedback first, but then even them being aware of you being a maximizer, you know, allows them to be like, oh, we know Lori. She's gonna see this, and she's gonna be like, okay. This is great. Now how do we make the best of it? So, yeah, I I definitely see it too as, like, an excellent team building tool. Yeah. I'm such a nerd for all this stuff, Lori. So I'm right there with me when it comes to these things. I think they are great. Yeah.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Great coaching and mentoring tools for us to just dig deeper to better understand ourselves and each other, and we give the direction and find the direction that we need

to sort of move forward. Because otherwise, it can kinda just feel like a constant swirl of all the options that we've got in the world. Well, what are some common misconceptions when it comes to, I put it as career diversity, but what I mean by that is sort of moving, right, from one industry to the next or different roles and responsibilities throughout our careers or career cycles, you know, where we might have what a lot of us women deal with, which are called career gaps within our resumes. These are sort of contentious spaces for women in particular, I think, when we're looking at our resumes. We want to see this kind of resume we were talking about earlier, this nice kind of linear, neat, bulleted resume. What are some misconceptions there when it comes to career diversity and cycles?

**Lori Sullivan:**

If you know, cycles are going to happen, and we've gotta get comfortable with just it's not gonna be linear and it's not gonna be perfect. And sometimes when you're in the middle of it, it's going to feel messy, but that shouldn't be a reason not to pursue it. So if you have a different area that you're looking to move into, but you're scared or you worry about what other people will think, like, find some ways to just test it. Try small little things, and it doesn't change, it doesn't have to happen overnight. You know, sometimes it can if the right opportunity is in front of you, but you can also start taking small steps. Explore, test, learn, and try different things.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah. I think that's the kind of beautiful thing, at least about our industry, digital specifically, is there's a lot of opportunity to, you know, do self learning. You know? You can get Google certified. You can Yeah. Get online and learn a lot of different things. You can take it upon yourself to start to learn to code. There's, you know, a lot of options out there. A lot of people that I know that are in the space didn't even get a degree in the industry.

**Amy Vaughn:**

They're self taught. There's a lot of opportunity to kind of just pick somebody's brains. I mean, I had somebody say recently to me that, like, job shadowing should not be just for the kids that are coming right out of college.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Like Agree.

**Amy Vaughn:**

A grown adult who's interested in making a pivot in a career should be willing and open to considering a job shadow. Like, why not? Like, if you're interested in the role and the opportunity and an area of growth like, last week, we had a guest on talking about demystifying product management. It's a huge growing space, but it's a really convoluted role because not everybody quite knows and understands exactly what it's meant to be and do because it sits somewhere between, like, product project management, and other roles, which where it doesn't really belong, and then IT and tech. And so really kind of helping people start to kind of understand and know how and where this position might exist, and, b, helps them, 1, come better prepared to potential interviews, but, 2, helps them go in out into the world to start making that exploration happen in a way that doesn't feel discouraging. Because I think that is the hard thing too about, you know, an industry like digital. You know, you've got all these roles and titles and responsibilities, and you're like, what does it all mean? You know? And you could be called a marketing manager in one company, and it means one thing, and it means this number of responsibilities. And then you go to a different company, and it means something completely different, at least in the sense of responsibilities. Yeah.

**Amy Vaughn:**

So yeah.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And I've been I've been reading a lot, the topic of, like, moving from titles to tasks, which I think is a really interesting concept sort of telling from what you were saying because the titles are so convoluted, and a project manager at one company doesn't do the same strengths that you bring to the what are the tasks you do and the strengths that you bring to the table, and I would really encourage people to start shifting when they're communicating. Try to introduce yourself without using the company you work for and not the title that you hold. It's an interesting exercise because it forces you to think about who you really are, what are the talents that you bring to the table, and what sets you apart. So I would encourage everyone to try to do that

**Amy Vaughn:**

great advice. I mean, I can only imagine because, like, that example I just gave of the marketing manager. You could be managing a team of so many people that include a project manager and a social media manager and a designer. Or as a marketing manager at a smaller company, you could be doing all of those things. That those are your tasks, whereas, like, we are managing those roles versus actually doing those tasks. So, yeah, that's really interesting. And, again, too, I think it's just it is. It's where it gets difficult, and it gets convoluted.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I guess I wanna I wanna dig a little bit deeper too here and see if you have any kind of, like, thoughts or ideas on, to help some of our listeners who are currently job seeking, who do feel like they maybe have, you know, some career cycle gaps, how how do you kind of coach folks to begin to address those when they're in the interview process?

**Lori Sullivan:**

Well, first of all, if you're a Mee Eo, you don't have a gap. You are always Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yourself. So this is where I think when we have our identity too tightly connected to a company or a title, when that goes away, we feel like we've lost who we are, what we bring to the table. So I would encourage anyone in that situation to remember that today, you're the same person that you were on the last day. You were, you know, working at that company. You still have the same talent.

**Lori Sullivan:**

You still bring a lot of worth to the table and focus on those strengths. You're probably doing things during the gap. It may be volunteering. It may be other, it could be anything, but highlight the things that you're doing. It's likely you're not doing anything. Like and so highlight those skills. Lean into them. Find places where you can keep using your talent while you make your

**Amy Vaughn:**

way through. Advice. I love that. And, again, that Meehaw mindset, I love how it's coming into play. That's great. Yeah. So you've often, I've often spoken about how women have seen their diverse experience as a negative. You know? I'll get somebody that comes in as a member, and they'll say, oh, I'm trying to get into x, y, and z, yet I don't have any experience.

**Amy Vaughn:**

And then I'll look at their resume, and I'll be like, wait. There's, like, there's, like, inklings. Like, there's, like, little bits and pieces here and there. What advice would you give to professionals who are looking to embrace this career diversity and create their own unique path? If they don't feel like there's, like, a good sense of solidity, I would say. They don't feel great about the diverse experience, I guess. They've bounced around too much.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Okay. So you started to lean into it when you said you look at their resume and you see its red threads. Wherever you wanna go, look at your resume, and things will show up that you have either forgotten or you didn't even realize were there. So as I and I, I'll just use an example to illustrate that as I've learned more about sustainability, what suddenly clicked for me was my first role as an engineering intern at GM, and then my early engineering years was lightweight materials with the purpose of improving fuel economy. So it was sustainability. I was working on sustainability projects. It wasn't called that then, but the thread is there. I've had an interest in space since early in my career, and I think others would find this Yeah.

**Lori Sullivan:**

The same. Typically, your passions are sort of circling around a few

**Amy Vaughn:**

areas. If you take the time to kinda look back and pay attention. I realized this recently, I don't know, maybe in the last year, running a business. I was formerly a creative, in the creative field for many, many years. And, you know, a lot of people were always kind of like, why do you care about budgets and timelines and, you know, resources and all these things? Well and I and now I love running an organization, and I love managing operations. While I was in college going to school for advertising and design, I ran a graphic design firm. I did accounts payable, accounts receivable, did the taxes. You know, I was doing all those things while I was in college, so it was kind of like, oh, I had gained these skills while I was going to school for a design firm.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I wanted to be in and around creative people doing creative things while I was learning the business and was literally learning the business. And it honestly did not dawn on me until, you know, 15 years later, and I'm running a business. I was like, oh, this is why this is why these things stuck out to me. So, yeah, you're exactly right. Those threads are there. You just kinda have to look for them. And, again, I think it's that and I love that you call them threads because then it's about that story that you weave and the story that you tell. Because like you said, if you've got that MEO mindset, you're owning it.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Right? You're the one telling that story. You're the one weaving the story and what is being told about that resume.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Exactly. And I don't wanna suggest it's easy. It's not. And the number of hours I've spent inside my own head just trying to sort out and connect things, and we all go through the same thing. So I would also say if you're struggling and you feel like you're all in your head, you're not alone. Everyone everyone struggles with figuring out where we want our careers to go, what and how we define success in life, and you just gotta

**Amy Vaughn:**

keep looking

**Lori Sullivan:**

at our through.

**Amy Vaughn:**

It definitely takes time. And then I think also just getting I think someone else to, like, ask the questions to draw those things out of you. I think, to get outside of your own head. And then I would also say to just start to like you said, what looks like success for you is so important, because, you know, it's another thing, this whole, like, getting outside of the whole straight, like, ladder climb scenario. Right? This whole also what success looks like, I think that's starting to change for people as well. It might not mean a title and a salary number. It might mean a certain amount of flexibility, autonomy, a certain level of benefits, you know, for the sake of, like, health care for you or family members if they need it. Peace of mind might give me a certain amount of culture.

**Amy Vaughn:**

There's, like, other currency, right, other than the dollars that might mean success for you.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Right.

**Amy Vaughn:**

And I think that that's interesting to kind of sit with and look at as you're considering your career path as well.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And that idea of Yes. Like Right. Enough. So at some point, you've gotta assess where you're comfortable and you like all the dimensions of your life. And yeah,

**Amy Vaughn:**

That's a good place to get to. We should all want to get there. Yeah. Right? I agree. I agree. Alright. So I kinda started to lean into this question a little bit earlier too. In your opinion, how can organizations foster a culture that supports and encourages the MEO mindset among employees? And why is it so common for us to leave our career paths in the hands of others, would you say? So kind of a 2 part question.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I'll start with part 2, which is easy. If we leave our career in the hands of someone else, then it's not on us. There's a pro and a con to that, so it's an intentional choice. There's a lot organizations can do. I feel like there's a lot of one size fits all approaches, though, and everyone is looking for something so unique and different. I think there's an opportunity for companies to really explore how you could have additional tools and resources available to help employees through some of the decisions. So I think there's opportunity, both on the employee side, to come in with a better idea of, you know, kind of owning the Meeyo. What do you want? What are you, you know, what are you missing? Is there education that you need, any resistance you're facing to be able to have an open conversation around your needs? And then on the company side, to really listen to, you know, listen and help figure out resources and opportunities.

**Lori Sullivan:**

You know, maybe there isn't a full time position, but maybe the company has a philanthropic arm where they could do some volunteer work that starts to build a skill set and put some things on the resume that might make you ready for a position further down the road in the future. But I do think things are gonna shift. I think COVID was more than a tipping point for where you work. I think it was a reflection on the role of work in your life, and it really got people starting down this road of, does my career have to look like the one that has been going so far or am I at a crossroads? And we're seeing a rise in freelancers. You're starting to see terms like fractional workers, which the more I dig into it, it's just the new word for part time pretty much. Unless I mean, there might be something more to it, but fractional seems very much part time. Individuals working from multiple companies to diversify that income portfolio, And I think those things are going to impact how companies help employees sort of move through their career during the time they're at the company.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah. That's really interesting. I think this is such an important conversation for companies to be hearing right now because, you know, I think employee engagement, employee retention, All of those things are really important, you know, post COVID conversations right now, at least in, like, the kinds of the companies that we, like,



partner with and and speak with, and and then those that are members within the organization. You know, if there are folks who are leaving or quietly quitting, as they have said, it's a lot to do with the fact that they don't feel like there's an opportunity for growth. It's not necessarily dissatisfaction with the work that they're doing per se. It's just they don't see that they don't see a path forward. It's and it's such a simple solution. I realize it takes time, money, resources, but at the same time, so does looking for a new employee to replace that employee.

**Amy Vaughn:**

So I think making this kind of idea of, you know, finding a way to kind of coach and mentor this MEO mindset with your employees is a great empowerment tool that allows them to, you know, again, that could help with employee engagement and retention because it feels like you're partnering with them. You know, you're building trust. You're building respect. You're working alongside them to build the life that they want. Right? It's like they're not just looking to make a living. They want to build a life, And that means, you know, they want to live a certain way, and they want to have a certain sense of psychological safety. They wanna be able to take time away with their families, maybe. You know, something happens within their lives that they can take the time they need off, they want flexibility.

**Amy Vaughn:**

It's like you know, it's a lot for companies to have to bear, but it's also a new mindset, for sure. I think that for a lot of folks, it's gonna take a while for them to sort of figure it out, but those who can figure it out, crack that nut, and get to it are gonna see the benefits fast, in my opinion.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And I I think there's some historical mental hierarchies that just have to be broken. So there's not, like, full time up here. Yep. Time. Well, you're kind of an employee, but not really. If you're contract or freelance, you're farther down the, you know, hierarchy. I read that 30% roughly, of workforces in many industries are now not full time employees. They're contracts, and we need to figure out how to do that.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Like, teams are teams. The people need to work together no matter what their employment engagement relationship is to get great

**Amy Vaughn:**

work done for agreement. Again, having come back from, like, the agency side of things, we kind of had our permal answers as we called them back in the day. And, you know, these folks were, like you know, they were the best, and we yeah. I treated them like gold because they were as much a part of the team as anybody else. And when they got pulled in, it was because we were maxed, and we needed them. And so it always confused me when folks kind of discarded them as sort of, like, they're discardable resources. Like, you'd know first of all, I hate it when we call people resources anyways. I'm like, they're people.

**Amy Vaughn:**

They're talented. They're skilled, and you're paying them to be here. But also, yeah, it's like they're a part of the team. They contribute. They understand the team dynamic and the clients and the work. It behooves us to treat them at the same level, I agree with you, as our full time team. And, again, as we become more gig economy and fractional, yeah, I agree with you. It's essential.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Fantastic. Alright. I'm gonna just remind our live listeners. We're gonna have time at the end for questions for Lori. If you guys have any questions for her about the MEO mindset or career pathing or Gallup or anything like that. Lori, as how do you navigate the challenges between balancing we talked earlier about oh, I skipped ahead to a question. Hold on. Let me back up.

**Amy Vaughn:**

We did hint at this one earlier too, though. The role of personal development, how does that play into being the MEO of your career?

**Lori Sullivan:**

In my opinion, I struggle to separate the 2. So earlier, I did talk about the business plan kind of mindset, and I think we need to be always looking at what that plan looks like for our lives. I use the 8 dimensions of well-being to look at more than just the career lane, to try to get to that life that feels holistic, sustainable, right for me. Those if you go beyond occupation, there's intellectual, physical, environmental, social, spiritual, emotional, and financial. And the financial one is obviously tied often tightly to occupation. And that's the one where I have started talking a lot about portfolio careers. It's just the same as our investments. We create a portfolio so that we minimize risk.

**Lori Sullivan:**

We prepare for the future, and it's been interesting as I've started to think, well, you know, why don't people look at their income in the same kind of way? We sort of put all of our eggs in one basket, and this is not to be an advocate for working for, you know, multiple companies, but I do think it's important to at least consider if tomorrow you didn't have the income stream you have today. What is your plan b, c, and d so that you don't find yourself in a place that you're not expecting to be? So thinking about what that income portfolio looks like, thinking about if you didn't have your mainstream role, what are all the strengths and talents that you could leverage quickly to, you know, bring in other sources of income?

**Amy Vaughn:**

That's brilliant advice, Lori. I mean, always be looking. It doesn't matter how high up you are, how long you've been there. I have seen this last year, I've been shocked by some of the layoffs I've seen. Some folks that I'm like, oh, like, really big companies, really big roles that I'm like, oh, 26 years plus years, more than that. And I hope they'll never be laid off. They'll never lose their job. Gone.

**Amy Vaughn:**

You know? So yeah. And, also, to touch on the 8 dimensions of well-being, good on you for getting them all down. You're, like, counting. I was like, are you gonna get them all? I didn't wanna ask you

**Lori Sullivan:**

for I know.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I didn't wanna put you on the spot, but you did it. And it hearkens back to one of our live listeners, Candice. I did this just put in, especially if it's a good salary, should you stay? Like, that do you feel like that, to me, that starts to kind of hearken on that, like, those 8 dimensions. Right? Oftentimes, we tend to kind of, like you said, put those eggs into sort of one basket. Right? We're like, well, if the salary is good

**Lori Sullivan:**

and we're trained, what do you do with your career? You move up the ladder, and you increase your salary. So if you're up here and you're considering something that might be new where you take a step back, we're programmed to think no. Don't do that. And the answer might be, yes. It's the right decision, and another answer might be no. This is not the right time in your life to make that move. That's why, you know, thinking through all 8 areas, I agree. Is really important.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I agree. Yeah. A good example is, like, for me, I left the 8 like, a bigger agency for a smaller company for a short while. It was a smaller business model. Everybody was gone from the office before 5 o'clock on most days, yet the work was done, and it was done well, and we worked with great clients. And I made less, but you know what? My family didn't suffer for it and my well-being overall because those other seven little indicators all increased. So even though, like, the financial might have gone down, the balance returned to so many other things. So I think that's why tools like those 8 dimensions, kind of looking at the bigger picture versus just kind of one element of your life and career is such an important thing to do.

**Amy Vaughn:**

We talk a lot about, you know, this idea of work, life balance, and whatnot, but it's like but there is a sense of balance at times when, again, you're kind of looking at the bigger picture and really not prioritizing one thing constantly over all the things. Right? Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. Absolutely. Alright. Let me go back to the question that I was jumping to next, which is, how do you navigate the challenges of balancing multiple passions and roles in your career? Or how do you know when a passion ought to become a profession?

**Lori Sullivan:**

It's a little bit tricky, and it's almost tied to that last question about how do you know when you should leave, not leave. I listened to one of the best frameworks that I found was actually from Elizabeth Gilbert, and she talks about 4 categories. The job, a career, hobbies, and vocations. And, there's a video. You can just search online, Elizabeth Gilbert, those four things. Fabulous video. Like, a job is exactly what that sounds like. You go there, you do the work, and you get paid.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And it is fine to have a job that you don't absolutely love. You're good at it, it pays the bills, and that's your job. The hobbies are things that you love to do and you would do whether you needed to or not. The vocation is the thing that you feel you're called to do. Like, it's the calling from inside, And what I think is interesting is hobbies, vocations, and jobs can all become careers over time, and sorting out where your interests lie and what falls in which bucket at any given time is a pretty interesting exercise. And you start to learn things, like, an example for me, I love photography. I got my certification. I occasionally do professional photos and senior photos.

**Lori Sullivan:**

But when I started to do more, what I quickly realized is, like, it became a job. I I didn't want it to be a job. I love it as a hobby. So I'll still take on a job from time to time, but not very often because if I do it, I wanna love it. And if I do too many, I stop Mhmm. I Love it. So that's also kind of a gauge of where it fits in the floor.

**Amy Vaughn:**

That makes a lot of sense. And I think too early what you said about, like, the gaps too. Like, I wonder if, like, if would you ever kind of consider sort of one of those hobbies kind of becoming a job for a time being when you find that you're looking for a job, but it's like so we've got a lot of job seekers within our Together Digital community, for example, but they're also multi talented women. Some of them do photography. Some of them make jewelry. And then I'll see them sort of kind of pick up that hobby and start making extra money off of it outside of that, because job seeking is soul sucking, honestly, especially in this economy. And so they get a little bit of an extra, like, a nice little dopamine hit. They can be social, but they're also making a little bit of money, and they're not spending, like, all their time day and night job searching.

**Lori Sullivan:**

And what I have learned is there is actually, like, a lot of good, you know, resume talent to be put. Because if you're gonna sell something and you sell it online, guess what? You're doing ecommerce. So you understand ecommerce if you're promoting yourself through social media. So even though it may feel like a hobby or a little side project, there are relevant digital marketing things. I remember years ago telling someone when I started my first side business that it should be a requirement of anyone in corporate America that they have to have their own website and, like, sell something. It could even be partnering with someone at the local high school who's taking an art class because you learn so much about marketing platforms and just relationship marketing in general and ecommerce and

**Amy Vaughn:**

If they've got a brand for it.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Mhmm. Branding. Like, you're putting on all the hats. And so someone in a gap, like, acknowledges all that stuff you're learning.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Yeah. Yeah. It's a part of your portfolio. It's a part of your experience. Yeah. It's so funny how people just don't tend to acknowledge or see that. And it's like, oh, yeah. I do all those things.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I think that's maybe that's a worthwhile exercise too. Right? It's just sitting down with a trusted friend or, you know, if you're a Together Digital member, another member, and just having a coffee chat and saying, you know, like, tell me some things that you noticed, like, it was within my skill set that I talk about or that I do. Because I do think that we tend to not credit ourselves with our skills and abilities yet. Like, again, I'm just thinking of at least 3 other members of ours right now, and I'm like, yeah. Branding, ecommerce, digital marketing, social media management. They're doing all these things right now while they're job seeking, and sales, by the way, and media and PR, because some of them have been featured on the news with what they've been making and all these amazing things. And it's like, gosh. I hope you're adding the stuff to your resume if you're listening, ladies.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Because sometimes we're we're we're almost blind to our own strengths. It comes so naturally and so easily, and we're just doing it. We're like that? I would put that on my resume? It's like, yes. Yes. You should. Yeah. Put it on there.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Not everyone. It's almost too obvious to us. Right?

**Lori Sullivan:**

Exactly. Exactly. And I think it's a great exercise to ask those around you what they see as your, you know, core talents and elements of

**Amy Vaughn:**

your brand. And I do love what you said about just kind of understanding that delineation of and maybe if Kaylee is still on with us, she can find the link. If not, we'll include it in the show notes to the Elizabeth Gilbert kind of construct of job, career, hobby, and vocation. I think that is cool. I think I know that, you know, it can't you want to kind of tiptoe into that space and, you know, having a number of hobbies, I feel you. Like, you kind of want to be like, can

**Lori Sullivan:**

I make this a job?

**Amy Vaughn:**

But then it's like you said, you kinda get into it, and you're like, ugh. This is, like, the same thing. Like, photography people are like, you take such great photos, and I'm definitely an amateur. I've not gotten certified in squats. I took, like, maybe one college photography class, but, yeah, I'm like, I don't think I would ever try to make it like a business because I just don't think that joy part of it would kind of go out the window. Yes. So I totally understand what you're saying when you're, like, kind of notice that feeling. And it's like, if you start to lose that passion because now you've kind of commoditized it, then maybe it's not, maybe it just stays a hobby.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Exactly. Yeah.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Alright. We are just wrapping up. Live listeners, if you want to have a chance to drop a question into the chat, please feel free to do that. Also, we have some links in the chat, and we'll include them in the show note. If you want to connect with Lori, you can through LinkedIn. You can also make an appointment with her if you wanna chat more about career pathing. And if you wanna read her book, 1 Shade Greener, about being more sustainable at home, you can do that. I love that that thread is kind of throughout your whole mindset.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I don't even know if you probably do realize this, but earlier you were talking about when you're talking about the 8 dimensions, I felt like you were even tiptoeing on, like, just living sustainably for yourself even. I love it. There's that threat

**Lori Sullivan:**

again. Oh, sometimes we wanna create a sustainable life. Like, that means it means you're able to handle all of the things in your life. You don't want a dimension to become unsustainable, and I think occupation is one that a lot of people risk tilting the whole Yeah. Equation.

**Amy Vaughn:**

I agree. And right now, I will say to you, we have a lot of women leaving the workforce, and we don't need more of that. We don't need any more of that. We need women staying in the workforce.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I agree.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Alright. Well, the last question I have for you, Lori, is what are some good reading, research, and or resources for our listeners to kind of dig in more to this topic outside of, of course, checking in with you and connecting with you?

**Lori Sullivan:**

I enjoyed it if you feel like you are multi passionate with a lot of different interests, Sarah Beth Burke wrote a book called more than more than my title.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Little bit.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I think it's my title. And it's just a great work, a great book, and it has a companion workbook. And so that's a really good one for people who feel like they are more of a Venn diagram than a line, so that's a good one. Another one is called business model u and it has a lot of just activities, things to fill out, gets you thinking about yourself. And the last one is a book called The Search by Bruce Feiler. And Bruce has been on a number of podcasts lately talking about the book, and he covers 5 types of jobs. So, like, the job job, the side job, the hope job, the care job, and the ghost job. And it's an interesting framework.

**Lori Sullivan:**

I would listen to a few of his podcasts, and if it resonates, maybe check out as well.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Fantastic. Lori, thank you so much. This is such a great conversation. I hope that those who are listening live today with us got something out of it, those who check out the podcast later. I think it's such a fascinating time in our world, in the workforce, and for careers, and what it means to be in it. You know? I I am I'm so fascinated by it, and I really hope this whole MEO mindset takes off. And I hope that it helps to empower a lot of people to kind of shape and create the lives and the careers that they want.

**Lori Sullivan:**

Awesome. Great. Thank you so much.



**Amy Vaughn:**

Of course. Fantastic. Well, that's it. That's all we have for you guys this week. We hope to see you again with us next week. We've got Zanti Ho with us, and she is the managing director of Convince Convert. She's going to be talking with us about data personalization, and or data yes. Yeah.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Data, like, data driven personalization. I knew there was a word I was missing. Data driven personalization. She also has a book coming out next month. Love it. We've got all these great book authors coming on. So, yeah, we look forward to having you there with us. If you want to check it out, go onto the website together in digital.com.

**Amy Vaughn:**

Make sure you register. Until then, keep asking, keep giving, and keep growing. We will see you all next week. Take care. Bye, everybody.

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