
Jaime: Welcome to *Eventual Millionaire*. I am Jaime Masters, and today on the show, we have Cherylanne Skolnicki. Now, she runs brilliantbalance.net – you can check her out there – and she is amazing with energy management and really trying to balance, which is so hard when it comes to business. Thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Cherylanne: My pleasure.

Jaime: I feel like it's a four-letter word when people say "balance." We really, really want it – or, some case of it – but it's so elusive, nobody actually can go after it. So, tell me a little bit about your thoughts regarding that.

Cherylanne: Sure. So, I think that balance has gotten a really bad rap. I basically serve this generation of women who – we were promised from a really early age we could have it all, and the way we were gonna do it was to balance it, and yet, the definition that we were fed and the way to do that became a really outdated definition really quickly. We all had the scale shown with the two stacks of rocks, and we were gonna set them perfectly and never move a muscle.

And so, my definition of "balance" is much more dynamic than that and much more powerful, and I think it's all something we should aspire to.

Jaime: Okay, tell me more about that, then. What is your definition?

Cherylanne: So, I look at balance as elevated beyond that static. So, my metaphor is ballet, and I always think about Misty Copeland dancing in the ballet, and she's so strong and so powerful, and really, it's about landing the pose. So, my definition is can you transition with strength and grace so you can land the pose where you need to during the day? And, that – which poses matter shift for each of us; some of them are at work, some of them are at home, but we have to know which key moments really matter so we can be all in for those.

Jaime: That's a really interesting distinction. Tell me a little bit more about what that is, especially transitions, because I am so many different roles. I am mom, I am business owner – I am all the things at all the times, is what it feels sometimes – texting from my son and all sorts of things – so how do we really pay attention to what goes where?

Cherylanne: So, most women identify with 14 roles. If you ask them to name all the roles you play, they will come up with at least 14. Really, it's about identifying what is the essence of each of those roles. For me, it might be really important to put a homecooked meal on the table every night and gather my family around it, and that's a moment that I'm gonna make matter, and I'm gonna land that pose.

But, for you, that may not be important. You may be perfectly happy with picking up takeout on your way to practice. Cool. I think we get to decide within each role what are the elements that matter. So, when we take a really broad view and say, "Well, I wanna be a good mom, a good sister, a good wife, and a good pet owner, and good entrepreneur," and all of those things have – they come with a set of definitions, a set of rules that we're playing by. What most of us haven't clocked yet is that the rules are really malleable, and we can set them for ourselves in a way that feels exactly right for us.

Jaime: Okay. So, I wanna unpack this big-time because I feel like we're – me specifically, especially the "good mom" thing – I wanna be a great mom, but what I realize is I have so many beliefs on what a great mom is that I don't even totally agree with anymore. I feel like it's what we were taught when we were younger, and there's this reassessment of some of these things, so how do we handle all of that?

Cherylanne: Very consciously. What you just said is, "I have this definition; it came from somewhere." The first step is really, where did that definition come from? Where did you learn what it means to be a good mom, and have we ever paused for a hot second to say, "Do I even agree with this? Do I even believe anymore that that's really what a definition of a good mom is?"

So, when we redefine that for ourselves, then you get to write the rules on which things are in and which things are out, and I always tell the story of I had to let go of making birthday cakes for my kids. I love – I grew up baking, my mom's a great baker, but guess who makes the birthday cakes for my kids? My mom, and she loves it. It's a big passion for her, but I was like, "Wait, a good mom makes birthday cakes, and now, my kids' definition will be 'That's what a great granny does.'" So, think about just what that one generation does for changing the definition of whose job is it to do anything.

Jaime: Good question. I have so many questions. So, birthday cakes were a thing for me. I'm obsessed with making crazy, awesome-looking things, and when it got to the point where – and, I'm divorced too, so business and everything else – the cakes had to go, kind of. We tried to half-make them and just decorate them, which we've done a lot of different things, and in the end, I'm like, "I'm buying you a cake. I don't know what to tell you."

And, it's on them – if they think it's bad mom, then I feel horrible, and if they think it's okay, then it's not. So, how do you separate from what your kids actually feel in this specific scenario or anybody on what their perception of a good mom is or a good business owner is? It starts to get sticky.

Cherylanne: Well, now you have your finger right at the heart of it. The heart of it is it isn't always about our definition. It's can we withstand the judgment? Even if the judgment is a raised eyebrow, sometimes that's too much judgment, so a lot of what I'm always talking to women about is can you withstand the judgment that may come with the choice? Whatever the choice is, whether it's the birthday cake, whether it's what you're wearing to the office, whether it's the job that you're choosing to pursue, can you withstand someone else's judgment of that?

And really, shifting your locus of control from external – I'm gonna be affected greatly by everyone things – to internal, and staying in dialogue with the people you love and care about so that they understand why you made some of the choices that you've made. Do the kids understand? I care about you and celebrating your birthday. How do you want this cake to get made? Half the time, they'll pick the store-bought cake because it looks really fancy, and we need to allow them to have a role in that.

Jaime: I love that, too. I love the nuances of how things matter because most of it is internal when we actually unpack pieces of it. So, when we go, "Hey, I made a decision, but I'm not 127% sure of this specific decision versus being kind of wishy-washy," then I feel like the judgment hurts you even more. "I wish – I wasn't – I don't know –" So, tell me more about how to handle because it's so internal and if we didn't consciously make a decision and really know what we're going after, we've got so many things that we're trying to handle all at once.

Cherylanne: Honestly, Jaime, I think a lot of our decisions are non-decisions, and that's what you're talking about. You never actually made the

decision; it was decision by default. We ran out of time, we ran out of energy, and so, that's just how that's gonna go down. We're never really committed to those kinds of decisions. But, where there is intentionality, we're out ahead of it, and we're making a choice, then we have something to settle into and say, "I did that on purpose, I can substantiate why, I can make the argument for why," and it's so much easier to stay committed when it was an intentional choice.

Jaime: Do you have a list of all these decisions we need to make? I feel like there's a million that we need to go, "Yes, no, maybe –"

Cherylanne: There are, but they shift and change. So, one of my favorite exercises is to just get out a blank sheet of paper and write the word "decisions" at the top, and ask myself on any – I call it a decision sprint – on any given day or any given week when I'm starting to feel overloaded, that's often the pressure of unmade decisions, and one of the things that can make us feel out of balance is we have a lot of swirl, a lot of unmade decisions swirling in our head.

That simple exercise – any piece of notebook paper, the word "decision" at the top, and start listing them. I need to decide where we're going on vacation. I need to decide if I'm gonna hire that person. I need to decide who the agency's gonna be. And, even seeing the list of decisions is freeing. Then, when you make them, it's massively empowering.

Jaime: I don't know that I've ever heard that before, and that seems so easy.

Cherylanne: It's easy to list them, maybe a little harder to make them, but it does put you in a frame of "I understand what's causing this swirl. I'm burdened mentally." It's a really heavy cognitive load of unmade decisions, and they create open loops in our mind. So, you're trying to focus at work, but part of your brain is swirling on "Where are we gonna go on vacation this year?"

If you just decide and commit, you get all that brain space back, and that is a huge element of how we get women to this state – we call it brilliant balance, and it's really about clarity of vision and a pathway toward it where you're consistently making progress toward that vision that you've established. When you're having that rhythm, and you're feeling productive and energized, it's driven by making decisions quickly and sticking to them.

Jaime: Okay. So, we wanna get better at this because the wishy-washy decision-making really does drain so much energy, and especially when we just postpone, we're just punting. "Eventually, eventually –" And usually, it's for a reason. We don't have enough information or something. What do you say for tips in terms of trying to make decisions faster?

Cherylanne: So, I think often, we don't make decisions because we don't have principles by which we're going to make them. We actually – I will often ask women – so, in my business, if women are trying to make the decision about "Am I gonna work with you or not?", they'll say, "I have to think about it." I say, "Awesome. What's your decision framework?" How often do you think people have an answer for that?

Jaime: "Uh –"

Cherylanne: Never. They don't have a framework. "I just need to think." Well, that's how we make a lot of decisions. We tell ourselves, "I just need to think about it," but we don't have a framework. We don't have principles we're going to use to ultimately decide. And so, that's the key. The key is knowing, "Okay, am I gonna hire this person or not? Well, what's my decision framework? How will I know if I think this is the right decision for now? Can I unmake the decision if it turns out to be wrong, and move forward?"

So, that paralyzing fear of "What if I make the wrong decision?" is often what really is in our way, if we're honest. And so, I always wanna know if it is the wrong decision, can I unmake it? How long am I stuck in that decision? And, there are very few decisions in life that you can't unmake if they turn out not to be the right one.

Jaime: I have to highlight that again and again because I've interviewed so many millionaires, and that keeps coming up over and over, and I feel like the people that are not as successful as they would like to be is because they're like, "But, what if – I just can't –" Whether it be fear of failure, fear of making the wrong decision, or fear of the loss of time or energy, which is hilarious, because that's the thing that is probably punting, holding them back, and draining their energy.

Cherylanne: Right. They're trying to perfect things from the starting line. "I have to think through every variable and have it perfect before I can step across the starting line" is a huge inhibitor to growth.

Jaime: How do you take the time to step back and create the decision framework? It seems like there'd be a lot of different pieces to that.

Cherylanne: There are, but it's probably simpler than it sounds. It comes back to that decision sprint. If you look at each decision you document and say, "How will I decide? What's enough information to make the call and move on? How high are the stakes?" That can be documented for each decision, or at a macro level, how do I make decisions? Am I a gut person? Am I pros and cons person? Am I a "I need to get three people's point of view, and if it calibrates, I'm good to go"? And then, you can move from there.

Jaime: I am a researcher, so, no. What does that mean? My Kolbe assessment is crazy.

Cherylanne: It'll take you longer.

Jaime: The reason why I'm asking you so many questions about this is because the nuances of, for me, how much I need is more than most people anyway, so my team's like, "Really? You need seven more of those? All right –" And, I'm trying to get – and, my entire life, I've been trying to get better and faster at making decisions, and that's why I care about data so much. So, how – once we know it's a pros and cons list or whatever it is, how do we know – let's just get the information on it and make that – how do we make that speed faster for those decisions?

Cherylanne: I like to set deadlines, just time-boxing the decision. I think if we're honest with ourselves – "I don't have more time to make this decision because it's starting to impede other things I need to do" – the work will expand to fill the time allotted. So, if we say, "I have an hour to research options on this trip that I'm gonna take, and at the end of that, I'm gonna call it and move on," because beyond that, it's costing me more than I might be saving.

I'm a big fan of setting a deadline. I am such a recovering perfectionist. It's a miracle I can even speak from this side of the story. I could get paralyzed in my closet picking a sweater if I'm not careful, so I think the stakes of the decision are really important to weigh. Does it matter that much? If there's 10 good options, then great, pick one of the 10 good options and move on so you can get your headspace back.

Jaime: Even with entrepreneurs especially, I help them with hiring a lot,

and even this past week, she had 10, so I was like, “You know we can pick one, so why don’t we just pare some of this down at least a little bit to chunk it, to make it a little bit easier?” Otherwise, we’re trying to weigh too many options, and it’s a little bit worse. And, unfortunately, we sort of – as soon as we don’t make the decision, it goes lower on the priority list. “Oh yeah, I have to get back to them. Oh wait, there’s a squirrel. We’re over here now.”

Cherylanne: It’s so important because the audience I work most with are working mothers. They’re this time-crunched collection of humans, the worst of the worst in terms of the pressure on their time, and when you think about how choice plays into their lives, the entire notion of curating your life down to the things that matter most really is about getting good at making decisions or making choices.

So, it sits at the epicenter of the work that I do with them because once you build that skill and you build some confidence and speed in your ability to do it, you really can curate your life down to the essentials and do it regularly because guess what? We’re dynamic, and so, it changes. The things I’m prioritizing right now in my life are not the same things I was prioritizing even a year or two ago, and they won’t be the same a year or two from now, so it’s a regular practice.

Jaime: What is wonderful and crappy about that is it’s like, “I finally did it! Oh wait, I don’t feel the same way anymore.”

Cherylanne: To do it again.

Jaime: Right. So, if you could outline maybe a timeline or – I wanna know what this looks like when we’ve got it because it sounds amazing, but also elusive.

Cherylanne: So, the cool thing is it scales up and it scales down. Typically, we start with the day. How do you optimize your day in a way that you feel good about the choices, you’re getting enough sleep, you’re getting enough good food, everything is foundationally in line, and then, what are the activities you’re gonna tackle? The big time unit we work on is the week, so can you optimize a week so that everything’s getting its turn? For most of us, we can’t construct a perfect day. Days are different from day to day. We can get pretty close in a week at hitting all the highlights.

And then, in Breakthrough, which is my four-month program, I

work with women on scoping a year. So, how do you build a plan where your life is actually moving from A to B over the course of the year? And, that requires longer-term planning, so you have to start stacking those weeks on top of each other to really deliver change. At that point, you're in a cadence, so once you have an annual plan and you're working against it, you dust it off monthly and say, "All right, am I on track?" And then, annually, you're pushing your line of sight out by another year. So, I came out of the corporate world. This is business planning 101.

Jaime: That's exactly what I was gonna say.

Cherylanne: Totally, right? You just apply it to your personal life. So, for me, I run my business and my life at home on one plane. It's all unified. I've got objectives for the business, and I've got different things I'm pursuing at home. When we introduce that idea to women who've never thought about it that way, it is a gamechanger because it gives you – you're casting a vision for what do I want it to look like, and then you're learning how to make choices that are in alignment with that vision. Otherwise, how do you decide what to do today? It's what everybody else needs. But, as soon as you have that long-term vision, you can make choices that are in alignment with what's gonna pull you closer to it.

Jaime: Okay. So, when we're looking at the personal side of things – because business stuff makes perfect sense. Everyone's like, "I get it. We can break that down into metrics and know how it goes." But, I feel like on the personal thing, it's not like, "We wanna do this one thing that's gonna take us a whole month, and we're gonna chunk it down." It's like, "I wanna do this over here, I randomly wanna do" – it feels a lot more disjointed. So, how do you create a year plan hitting all the high points and having – do you have a bazillion high points? Do you make them cut? Do you do it based on time? Tell me so much more.

Cherylanne: So, it is always harder for people to think about it in their personal life because we're less experienced – this is a less typical model to apply to your personal life. What I find is that most of the change we wanna make personally can be broken down into projects or practices, and the practices are what get people because everyone knows how to create a project with multiple steps. If you want your marriage to be stronger or you wanna have a closer relationship with your teenager, that's not a project. That is a day-in and day-out practice.

And so, we delineate those two. Practices need to be adopted as a way of living, and you can't tackle too many at the same time, or you get completely overwhelmed. And, projects can be – I know when I'm done. I complete a step, and I can check it off and move on to the next one, but you can't say, "Had date night, check. My relationship's great." It doesn't work that way. So, the delineation of projects and practices really helps put us in a framework of "There are things I need to be doing regularly to feel the way I wanna feel, to get the outcomes," and there are some projects that are gonna advance.

So, even at home, the house is in disarray, and it's disorganized, there's clutter everywhere. Well, that's a project. You can tackle that, have an intervention, and bring it under control, but guess what it takes to sustain it? It's practice, the daily practice. So, the way those two things live together is a really important framework that we teach, and once people get that, it really opens up growth in all areas of their life.

Jaime: Put it in two separate columns. I was like, "Oh, of course." That's so logical. I don't know why I didn't see it that way because it does really separate things. So, how many things can you do at once, though? If we have to stack the practices, then I wanna do seven different projects because I'm an overachiever. How do we squeeze them all in?

Cherylanne: Yes. We've found the magic number for projects is three. So, if you have three simultaneous projects where you know you're gonna really spread your cognitive capacity across these three things and you have to keep them all advancing, most people can do three. Some people can only do one, and then we look at sequencing and say, "Let's harness all your energy, and then when you're done, you can move on to the next."

But, three is a good number for most people. When it gets into practices, we do one at a time. That practice has to become so brainless, so automatic, that you could do it without being prompted, without being reminded. Then, you're ready for the next one. So, what does everybody do? It's like it's New Year's Day, and we're gonna meditate and do yoga every night, and we're all gonna work out and eat healthy – you cannot do all those things at once. You can't even take a vitamin and drink water at the same time.

You have to – literally, one thing, and it gets automated, and then

you stack the next one on top. So, I view them as a big chain. If you can connect the second to the first and so on, it's much easier to put them in cadence. They happen in a natural sequence, one at a time.

Jaime: So, I have a meditation practice, and in that meditation practice, I have added – I didn't even notice that I was doing it, but I have added a handful of things like journaling. If I'm sitting in there anyway, I might as well just grab my journal that's right in front of me anyway. Hmm. How can I do absolutely everything else?

Cherylanne: You created a chain. One leads to the next and leads to the next. There are certain people who take vitamins or supplements regularly, and they do it well. If they're honest, it's connected to another ritual, like they do it when they brush their teeth or they do it when they have their coffee. So, in order to establish that habit, they find their chain, and those are really helpful when you're trying to build a new practice.

Jaime: That is funny. So, it takes me seven minutes to take all my supplements, which is a pain in the butt, but I never used to do it before, and it is linked to – not my coffee, but the other thing that's supposed to be healthier that I can't even remember the name of, which also changed because I wanted my coffee every morning, and now I have this. So, it is those slow processes that definitely add up. How long do you feel like it has to be a habit before you can add another one on?

Cherylanne: I like to say a month. You can accelerate it. It's kind of – people can adopt change at different rates, but a month of "I'm doing this, and it feels like I don't even have to put a reminder to myself, it's just happening automatically" – I've been working out every morning for so many years. Nobody needs to put it on my schedule or give me a reminder. I don't need a lot of systems to prop me up, but meditation is a newer practice, and if I don't have a reminder, I'm not gonna do it. It's just not gonna happen.

So, I'm still in a phase where if I want that to become a regular practice, I have to get it where it's just hardwired in and it never gets skipped, and we're all there. Some practices for all of us are now automated, and others aren't yet, and that's normal. It's just knowing which one matters most to you to do next, and if you try to do all of them, you won't do any of them well.

Jaime: I have learned that the hard way a handful of times, and I feel like

it's a recalibration for me, too. I have to check in every two weeks and be like, "Is this still okay?" Sometimes, I change the habits I'm trying to create, like "That doesn't actually fit. It's way too long or it's way too far away." And then, I feel like a failure because I gave it up, but it's really that it didn't check all the boxes, like you were talking about before. It wasn't a conscious decision of "This is actually what I wanted."

Cherylanne: That right.

Jaime: Oh man, I love this. All right, I know we have to start wrapping up soon, but I could chat with you forever on these things. You have such clear nuances of how we should do this in our personal life, and I haven't really seen it. There are a lot of things on the personal side, but not as clear businesslike, and that's what I like. That's why I like it.

Cherylanne: I think that's really an important point, is that so much of this practice and this body of knowledge exists in the business world. Many entrepreneurs don't even have access to those frameworks because they're not living in a corporate environment where these frameworks are already codified, and very few people are applying them back to their personal life. So, when we – the women I work with, about half are entrepreneurs, and about half are living in corporate jobs. It still hasn't occurred to them to channel these practices back, and the thing is they don't directly translate.

So, if you just try to say, "Oh, that worked at work, so I'll do it at home," there are nuances that are different. My belief is a lot of the work/life balance issues that we're trying to solve through our work are really better solved through our home lives, and we keep trying to say, "I need to work less so I can have more time at home." I'm not sure. I think some of it is about efficiencies and frameworks for how we run our lives at home that make it easier to give the focus we wanna give to work.

I love my work. I wanna put a lot of time and attention against my work, and you do too, so it's really how can I keep my home life running smoothly, how can I accept help, how can I still prioritize taking good care of myself so that I am fully energized and I can bring the full force of that to my work. I just think sometimes, we have it backwards.

Jaime: That is so brilliant. I remember when I became a mom, I was like – I had mom guilt when I wasn't with the kids, but then I had work

guilt – I had guilt on both sides of the coin, and if you actually just flip it, enjoy when you’re with the kids, and enjoy when you’re at work – I was like, “How did I not see that before?”

Cherylanne: Right? And, my favorite phrase is “Be where you are.” When I talked about landing the pose at the beginning and I said it’s the transitioning with strength and grace so that you land the pose – when my family all lands in our kitchen and it’s time for me to put a meal on that table – and, we do this every night. It’s a really important ritual to me – I’m saying “every night”; there are a few nights where somebody’s at a practice, but most of the time, we get that family, even if we have to shift our dinnertime to do it.

I wanna be all in. I don’t wanna be on my phone or still trailing work thoughts with me. So, training ourselves to have some rituals that move us from zone to zone so we really can be all in – I’m less interested in blending everything than in having some crisp boundaries around those different zones of my day because that’s been the big enabler for me to be all in when I’m at home, and also all in when I’m at work.

Jaime: Okay. I wanna dive into that. I know I said we had to wrap up soon, but I need to dive into that because I didn’t realize how important it was until I started doing pieces of it and until I started realizing, when I didn’t do it, how I really felt afterwards. Even just a quick meditation, or I’ve got a little vibro pad, or just something to get me back in my body and not in my head from the transition from work to mama or home life is huge. So, do you have any tips on how to do that or what people can do to ease the transition?

Cherylanne: Yes. I think threshold rituals are great. So, you think about the symbolism of crossing over a threshold, and we do it when we leave the office, whether that’s a home office and you’re stepping out of that room or your actual building that you go to work in, and then we do it when we step across the threshold at home. So, threshold rituals, where you take a few breaths and ask yourself, “How do I wanna show up in this next zone? What do I have to leave behind me to walk into this new zone all here, and who do I wanna be in this moment?”

I’ll tell you – if I am still working on a work problem in my head, and I walk into that kitchen, and everybody’s excited, and they have things to tell me, I am not a good mom in that moment because my head is not there. So, if you get your head in the game

at that threshold and really set the intention of; “How do I wanna show up for these people?”, and then vice versa on your way into work for the day, it just changes everything.

Jaime: So many notes from this. I really appreciate it. That is really about – the way you defined it, I now understand completely, and I think it is actually achievable, which I was pooh-poohing on balance a little, but I – so, I appreciate that. I know we have to start wrapping up, so what is one action listeners can take this week to help move them forward towards their goal of \$1 million?

Cherylanne: I think for entrepreneurs, it’s about go sell something. We are so reticent to make an offer and tell people what we do, and if you want to make \$1 million, you have to be able to bring revenue in. So, figuring out “Who can I present this offer to who might be in a position to buy it?” is the one thing I would have you do.

Jaime: That’s smart, because revenue matters, people, just so you know. I know we can talk about balance and all that fun stuff, but if you’re unhappy with no revenue, go fix it. Awesome. Where do we find out more about you and all the amazing things that you talked about today?

Cherylanne: So, brilliantbalance.net will get you to our website. You can find us at all the social media properties – so, Facebook @brilliantbalance, Instagram @brilliant_balance, and we’ll welcome you in there.

Jaime: Awesome. Thank you so much for taking the time to come on the show today. I appreciate it.

Cherylanne: Thank you.

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