

welcome to the society pod a podcast for  
entrepreneurs marketers and leaders  
here's your host Jessica  
yarmy all right hey there everybody and  
welcome to episode three of the society  
pod I am just picking my first few  
guests strategically and intentionally  
you probably listen to Hensley's episode  
and maybe the one with khed and this  
episode guest is next in line and no  
different in terms of like the reasons  
why she is in seat number three episode  
number three so my guest today is  
amazing she has spent her entire career  
in health and wellness and beauty and  
most importantly  
franchising with Brands you know uh  
curves Title Boxing Elements Massage  
like all these nationally known brands  
that she has spearheaded but the most  
interesting part of her background is  
she is BAS basically my career twinflame  
except on the operation side because we  
have spent the last years in  
basically parallel path careers yet  
never have worked together so my guest  
today welcome to the show  
Karissa hello thanks Jessica thanks for  
that intro looking forward to  
chatting well I just gave a very brief  
intro of you but why don't you share the  
more official intro that you would give  
about yourself

well thank you yes so I am the President of the emerging Brands incubator for Unleashed Brands so I currently get the pleasure of working with two fantastic brands in the youth enrichment space class and XP League like you said Jessica I've been in franchising like for my entire career which is years are we supposed to say the years that we've been in this industry as women or does it age us I don't know

Jessica but I can actually say that that my um kind of entrance into franchising started when I was really young so when I was three my parents purchased their first franchise business it was a rainbow carpet cleaning franchise and they moved me and my younger sister from our home in Central Texas to Pensacola Florida so that my parents could operate their their franchise business and my dad always says that they had when they pulled up they had \$to their name like that was it and on day one they had to put down \$as the deposit on their rental house so truly whether or not my family ate was because of my parents franchise business so it has been kind of jokingly like the family business they obviously that that Journey for my parents wasn't scary enough because they've since owned five different franchise businesses

throughout my life um but my uncle's  
been in franchising my cousin's been in  
franchising my mother's worked for  
franchising

so I feel like it's just in my blood and  
I feel incredibly blessed that I get to  
do this every day well it shines and  
shows in you because you're so  
well-versed in this space so you're  
three years old at what age did you did  
it at all click for you like what that  
your parents were small business owners  
or that they were owners of a franchise  
like when did that business knowledge  
start coming into your brain yeah that's  
such a good question I was definitely into  
my franchising career I think before  
those two clicked when I went to college  
I was you know like I'm my degree was in  
international studies I wanted to work  
for the state department I wanted to  
work for the CIA it was not a  
franchising

focused career um but I thought you know  
I got out of college and my hometown is  
where curbs was and at that time curbs  
was a huge International franchise  
organization they had franchise  
locations uh I'm sorry franchise  
locations in countries and I thought  
oh well you know I'll just work here  
until I get into the CIA as as one does  
right um so I I started working there

and that one that one I will say I had a lot of friends who owned curb's franchises um but it was such a big Global brand that I personally was a little disconnected from like the the small business owner who was operating these businesses until the recession hit in and so when the recession hit at I was still with curbs and I was actually living in Australia and I just remember I was sitting down with a lot of franchise owners who were having to close their business they had invested their K into this business they had invested their kids college fund into this business and that I think you know this Jessica you have these moments in your your career that just changed you forever and in that moment I had I had been in with the with curves for probably four or five years at this point but that was the moment it hit me that what we do has an impact on families around the world you know it's not just this big Global business it is truly the the entrepreneurs all over the world who kind of give us this incredible business that we get to work with and so that was one of those solidifying moments where you're like the the heart for what I do uh really kind of came through and I think solidified a lot of why I do this and my

passion for this  
industry so maybe the best question is  
how many years have you worked where you  
haven't been working in franchising in  
health and wellness and  
Beauty I had like a really small stint  
of three years where I worked for a  
corporately owned location okay okay  
diversifying we are we're getting out of  
we're getting out of the niche look at  
us doing something new and different  
going corporate owned  
Studios I love that and so my start in  
franchising was and so I always  
think I feel like I've had a full  
lifetime in franchising and you really  
started earlier than that so your  
Evolution you've really seen the whole  
Space evolve and change it has been one  
of the things that I do think I'm great  
for is like I've been through a lot of  
uncertainty when it comes to kind of  
like the economy and how does it impact  
both the small business owner as well as  
the franchisor so it's like even kind of  
when we're in these times of uncertainty  
right now and people are talking about  
recessions and those kinds of things I  
think when you've been in this career  
long enough right like you've kind of  
seen it all and I think it gives you a  
sense of um this is going to be okay  
right like it all is going to work out

and everything's going to be okay  
because you've weathered so many storms  
in this industry um you know all  
especially Jessica like you know working  
in the fitness industry we've seen every  
Trend that has come and gone and you you  
don't tie yourself too much to the one  
specific Trend you tie yourself to the  
transformation that you get to have in  
people's lives and whether that's  
through a step aerobics class or a spin  
class or a pilot class it doesn't matter  
the vehicle you know the profound  
transformation that it has in people's  
lives and I think that's where our heart  
is right is just in the transformation  
not the  
modality yeah it it's funny that you say  
like like your heart is in it I think  
there's so much heart in franchising and  
then there's also so much heart in  
Fitness and so you combine those two  
things and and that's where a majority  
of your career has been so as you look  
at franchising like what do you what do  
you love the most about it because I  
know your heart is in it big like what  
it what what like sets your soul on fire  
about working in the franchising space  
yeah I think it is exactly like being  
able to see my parents in the franchises  
that I get to work with I mean that is  
what is my why and what wakes me up in

the morning that I've been with five or six different brands throughout my career that the commonality is all that I get to help people like my parents you know I get to help people who took a big risk and who wanted to build something for themselves and for their families and they wanted to kind of build this business that they could get their kids involved in and that's what is special to me so it kind of goes back to it's not the vehicle or the modality it's what we get to do for entrepreneurs that's so

special yeah now as I'm entering this entrepreneurial phase of my journey and then ALS also sitting in franchising and also sitting in all of these things it it's so big for me is just like that entrepreneurial drive but then but then helping those who are trying to build and I think that's one of the the amazing things that that come to life in franchising as you look at the franchise space What are the what are the opportunities that you see so we see the good side like what are the opportunities that you see where collectively like the franchising world needs to be doing better I think that there's always an opportunity outside of franchising really I mean this is this is big but I

think there's always an opportunity for us to be able to put ourselves into the shoes of the franchisees because what's interesting about franchising is we run a similar business but we run a different business than our franchisees right like we have the responsibility to run a franchise organization we don't actively meet with kids in do College Planning right like my class franchises do but we work together in that and so there's kind of this natural conflict to that because we're in the same business but we we operate different businesses um so I think there's always an opportunity for us to continue to put ourselves into our franchisees shoes and make sure that we really understand what the day-to-day stress in their life is where are the opportunities for us to really address some of the challenges or the struggles that they have when operating their business because at the end of the day this is a relationship business I mean everybody in franchising will say that exact same thing is is that the relationships that you build with your franchisees matter and in building those relationships trust matters respect matters communication showing Integrity showing up when you say you're going to show up and again that's why I say this

is much bigger than franchising like we could all use these value lessons and how we show up for our partners our spouses our kids whatever it is um but I think there's always that opportunity for us to as the franchisor to stay really connected to what do the daily life of our franchisee look like where are their pain points where you know how can we create solutions that make their you know make their daily business more efficient I I I honestly I always hear kind of my my parents voice you know as franchisees I've heard them complain about corporate a lot as you can imagine Jessica so I always think through I kind of have this filter of like when I'm going to kick off some initiative or roll out some project or put a project plan together I can't help but hear my parents voice about like what's really valuable to them and and the fluff that they need to get rid of and why they didn't communicate this ahead of time and you know so I kind of always have this filter of like listening to how my parents as franchisees experien interactions with the franchise or and like you know it's never a perfect relationship and I'm never going to have a perfect relationship with my franchises but I can do my part to be intentional about building the

relationship communicating well building trust teach you know treating people with respect those things are incredibly important and always where our opportunities lie yeah the dynamic between franchise or and franchisee is is just amazing I had one of my old franchisees who I'm still connected with to this day and we we get along great he commented recently that publicly um I never really liked you when you were CMO but I love that you have like grown and evolved over time and and it's it's just hysterical because it's like did you not like me at the time because it because of just the franchise or franchisee Dynamic and there's just that like give and take or there's that pressure because I'm still the same person today that I was then but it's just uh I think oftentimes you're maybe coming at it from two different two different goals and I think what you're saying is like let's be pursuing the same goal and let's like overc communicate how we're going to get to that goal together so that there isn't that divide is that a good summary of of where you're coming from absolutely and it is a common goal but to your point you're always you know trying to achieve that goal from a different perspective and so I think it is just kind of valuing each other's

diverse perspective you don't have to be approaching it the exact same way there's multiple ways you know to you know like there's multiple ways to get towards the goal and there's different ways that it can be done and it's just having that kind of respect that the franchisor is trying to accomplish certain things and the franchisee is trying to accomplish certain things and um I I love that comment that I didn't really like you as the franchise because it is unfortunately a natural US versus them kind of mentality and it's I personally have been in roles where I've been like a field coach you know a franchise business consultant that kind of field role and I know that it strikes fear when I email you and say hey I'd like to schedule a visit and come on site you know I know that not everyone is embracing me with open arms you know and I I know that there can be a little bit of hesitation when you're inviting corporate in um but again I think as long as there's just this understand in that we're people we're working towards the same goal we're doing our best and we treat each other with respect and we really try to understand how the franchisee feels when we send this email or when we kick off this initiative and how that impacts them and we speak to

that um you know we always have to be speaking to where the like what is in the franchisees best interest right because people don't my mother always taught me this like what is it the Franklin cvy principal it's like people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care and so I think we we sometimes can come off as the franchisor really just guns of Blazing with our goals and here's what we want to accomplish and here's our big initiatives but we have to make sure that that the franchisee knows how that translates to them and the positive impacts that come from them so we always just have to be thinking through we're marching in the same way and I have a responsibility to help you know kind of help explain how this benefits you and as a as as an honest kind of checkpoint for us in this industry Jessica we should be looking at our goals and saying well if it doesn't positively impact the franchisee or we should we even be doing this you know which I do think sometimes I've been guilty of you got an initiative you have to roll it out and the franchisees benefit is almost kind of lost in the bigger goal yeah I I refer to you was my my career twinflame because like you've been in big big Global franchise Brands

and then now you're like incubator  
startup mode baby Brands and I've kind  
of been in the same same Evolution and  
so dig into that thought like but  
through the lens of like big Brands  
versus small Brands like how do you see  
um like big brands in that franchise or  
dynamic versus small brands in that  
franchise or dynamic do you see any  
difference and like what what insights  
can you share yes yes but wait I have to  
ask you a question first do you have a  
favorite like a bigger brand versus an  
emerging brand oh um there's benefits to  
both um so my my most recent Big Brand  
was Club Pilates and it was amazing to  
be a part of fast growth where you're  
opening a month because you can learn  
super fast you're just getting so many  
reps but then when you're starting from  
zero you're starting from I can build  
this in the way that I want to build it  
and um I can pick early owners who are  
really going to be the right partners  
and impactful but but what I want to  
open a month in in March yes so uh I  
think there's there's there's pros and  
cons and and as a franchisor I feel like  
your level of support is different  
because  
you're you're in different phases  
and I don't I think there's um it's a  
different game that you start to play

when you're in the let's say even like Studios and up your your role as a franchisor is a little bit different whereas like small Brands you are really really in that partnership seat and I think we always say like franchisees your partners but at some point you lose the the impact as a franchisee when you're in a location brand or you were in curve so you said thousands of locations across the globe so each individual franchisee has less impact whereas if you're a franchisee and it's three locations like you are you are an OG owner and so you carry like a real real partnership and I think it's um I don't know I think it's an amazing like difference and dynamic between those two phases yeah I agree with you I think they both have pros and cons I mean personally I love to roll up my sleeves and get involved in the daytoday work right like the creating you know all the fun things around you know uh writing operations manuals and writing Playbook and the actual like development of the systems like lights my soul on fire like you know like I love to sit in a room with spark people and just really think okay how could this work like how could this look and I think that's what's exciting about working with emerging Brands is you know you may have a

footprint or a structure in place but you still you're small enough that you can pivot and you can change some of those kind of operational foundations to continue to evolve the brand you know it's kind of like the difference between driving like a speedboat versus driving a cruise ship now the cruise ships are really really nice they're not as bumpy and they've got a lot of extra perks but you know you also come with that you know things just take longer to get get accomplished right because now you have hundreds of locations or thousands of locations and you can't be as you know kind of spontaneous or reactive to what's going on in the marketplace you have to everything just takes longer and there's more decision makers involved and um so it's definitely you know there's Pro PR and cons to both because I will say and I'm sure you can relate to this Jessica it's like there's also time in working with emerging Brands where you you get that sense of like loneliness like you just want to look to your right look to your left and be like does anybody is there anybody else out there that has an idea right like you feel in a way that a lot of the decisions rest on your shoulders and I think when you're in a bigger brand you at least you have like a community that

feels like that's all that has your back  
in in a lot of different ways and you  
can leverage really smart marketing  
people you can leverage really smart  
franchise development people and it's  
not all on you and so I will say like I  
feel like with unleash Brands right now  
I'm in a a really fortunate spot because  
I get to work with smaller footprint  
brands that we can still kind of move  
quicker but I have the support of all  
the talented smart people people that  
work across multiple departments and  
multiple brands that you know I have  
three other talented brand presidents  
that even today I'm like emailing them  
I'm like have you guys ever come across  
this and as someone who's worked alone  
in an emerging brand oh my gosh that  
feels so good you're like I don't have  
to just make the decision yeah you can  
drive that speedboat up to the cruise  
ship pick up resources and then like get  
going  
exactly yeah so if you were coaching a  
an entrepreneur who was looking to get  
into a franchise organization and and  
maybe looking at it still through the  
lens of like a big franchise or a small  
franchise or a Fitness franchise or a  
restaurant franchise like how do you  
advise entrepreneurs who are maybe  
looking at getting into the franchising

space that's a great question because I think franchising is a unique space for entrepreneurs because people who are attracted to entrepreneurship you know know they're naturally a little bit more um independent or they H they they're okay with taking risk they are okay with putting it all on the line you know they're they're willing to take the big leaps it's just kind of a little it's in their DNA right but as an entrepreneur coming into a franchise system you also have to operate within the systems and structure and kind of you know brand compliance of a larger Network because what you do as an entrepreneur in your one to two to three locations impacts the entire brand so it is definitely an entrepreneur who still wants to really take on the responsibility of owning the success in their business utilizing a toolkit that is provided that shouldn't be modified in too many ways you know so I think that sometimes entrepreneurs come to franchising because they see it as a quick fix they see it as an easy business they see it as something that oh well the system's already in place all I have to do is you know get the sign up open the doors and people will come right I'm sure you've seen this Jessica it's like oh the brand will sell itself you know I've got all the systems

in place I just have to put out these great flyers or digital ads that the marketing team has put together and everybody will show up but my my advice to entrepreneurs when they're coming in and looking at franchise systems is also to know that like the business doesn't work unless you do you know you still have to be the one that that grinds that goes out that has uncomfortable conversations with strangers at you know Chamber of Commerce events and you know all of those types of marketing events you still have to put yourself out there you still have the responsibility for activating on the system I think with franchising it's kind of like you know everybody gets the same Lego set and I'm sure you've seen this Jess like it's like everybody gets the same Lego set and there's like you know there's a little template of like what you could build with this Lego set right like here's the template and you will give that same Lego set to two different people and some people will build like the most glorious Lego skyscraper that you've ever seen in your entire life and some people will build like a parking lot you know you're like okay you guys have the same exact Lego set and some people will build incredible businesses

and some people will struggle and so I think at the end of the day the system only works to the extent that the entrepreneur in the business drives it right like the toolkit is there but what you build is up to you so you still you have to be someone who likes the the structure and likes to have some of those great resources and the toolkit available but who still has that passion and that drive to take risks and to uh carry it all on themselves and like really get things across the Finish Line

I think one of the things that I see that's kind of really underestimated in coming in as a franchise entrepreneur is you got to be a fantastic leader you know you a lot of I'm sure you see this a lot of franchisees kind of come with this kind of corporate background in in in some ways right they've worked professional corporate careers at some point and um I think we take for granted what it takes to build a team and build a culture because yes you have you're part of a brand but each individual little business has its own culture and it has its own people Dynamic and you're responsible really for kind of developing uh the next generation of leaders and that's pretty incredible yeah I had a phone call recently with with a club Pilates owner

and he was one of the better owners and he came from a Wall Street background and so you know had corporate background but then came into a franchise system and was successful in that franchise system multi-unit like four or five units and then exited and is kind of now looking at new Concepts and he wanted to know my thought of like what to look at what size to look at I I said you could go the whole the whole board is is able to be played by you because you can go into a big brand because you've been in a Big Brand and you know how that goes but you could also go take that Big Brand experience and you can go small brand and you could really be an impactful OG kind of owner um who comes in knowing that there's pieces missing but you know how those pieces should look so you have enough ability to still operate your business on a consistent kind of kind of level so I think it's a fun phase right now where um where there are a lot of big established systems but then there are also a lot of these brand new kind of Brands coming up and and conglomerates coming coming up and so I wanted to kind of talk to you about Unleashed Brands as a whole and then we can dive into your role a little bit more specifically about what you're doing but talk to me about like

conglomerate life because because you  
and I again we were like twin flames  
like we both are kind of we've played in  
that space But it is a little bit  
different so Unleashed Brands like how  
what has your experience been uh so far  
with working in that conglomerate I  
think it's a really fun Dynamic and this  
isn't the first time you know you and I  
have been through a couple different  
kind of multi-brand um platforms and one  
of the things that's really great about  
Unleashed Brands is is that they're able  
to serve kids at any age throughout  
their Journey with the seven now seven  
different brands that they own so we can  
help kids all the way through The Little  
Gym up to what we do at class which  
is preparing them for their High School  
journey and then all the other brands  
kind of fit on this really great candy  
you know Candy Land kind of map of how  
we can serve all all of the kids at the  
different ages throughout their growth  
um so I think that's something that's  
really unique and the the CEO Michael  
Browning has this great vision about how  
even for franchisees how incredibly  
helpful that is because you can own  
multiple Brands inside of the same you  
know platform and so you could be you  
know diversifying your own revenue and  
diversifying your own portfolio by you

know helping kids when they start off young in their Journey all the way up through group class helping them get into college um so it's it's definitely um a it's a fun environment to be around all those different brands because selfishly as someone who works inside of the brands you get to ideate with a lot of other really smart people and hear about what the other brands are doing um you know so if someone's innovating with one of our Brands snapology I can figure out a way to make something like that that model work for XP league for example um and so it's really great because you get to ideate and learn from each other as well as you know as the as the business owner I mean we have you know what thousands and thousands and thousands of kids inside of our system that we can help filter through multiple Brands throughout their kind of their lifetime um so it's beneficial for us you know internally to leverage the great resources and talent that exists within the brand but also for the franchisees to come in and be able to you know diversify their own portfolio based on what their interests are and how they want to help serve kids in their Community yeah I think a a traditional

franchise model you know I'm here in Dallas so let's say you buy three territories in Dallas you really are either adjacent or you're kind of peppered you own mckin and then you also own Frisco and you also own Plano or something like that's a little bit peppered or spread out and I think what's interesting about buying into or investing in a conglomerate kind of franchise is you could have Unleashed Brands mckin you know and you can have three concepts in a very um high density but also High income area and then your marketing efforts all can Echo each other because you are not just following the consumer as you said kind of through their age as they age through your Brands but you also just have such rich data on everybody that is within all the different brands that you that you have so there's there's so many like interesting economies of scale that happen when you when you do start in a in a conglomerate and I think those benefits start earlier when you're in a conglomerate as opposed to th those benefits start to kick in when you're in a large franchise also but it's maybe farther down the road when when your locations are six miles apart as opposed to you know all the way across

across the dma do you guys think about  
it in that same way absolutely  
absolutely and you know speaking of  
economies of scale I mean with with the  
the great brands that unleash brands has  
I mean you could have them Under One  
Roof and pay one rent you know and in  
some cases many of your skilled you know  
employees could help across multiple  
Brands if you've hired an educator to  
help with act or SAT test prep guess  
what they probably also know some stem  
and they help with snapology and so you  
can leverage you know your resources  
across multiple brands in the same  
location not even your same territory  
right but in your same literal building  
um which I think is really great is you  
know we have Urban airs that have XP  
leagues and snap allies inside of them  
because they already have the real  
estate you might as well leverage again  
kids coming and being exposed to your  
brands at different ages with different  
interest and you can really meet a much  
Broad broader kind of client base with  
what you were saying Jessica that was  
your marketer hat like all of the  
consumer Trends and data right that you  
have that goes along to like how do you  
speak to that customer through out like  
you're able to leverage all of that data  
to make the best decisions that you can

about you and your business's growth  
yeah I I of course think about it  
through a marketing lens and even like  
what events are you going to and you can  
basically show up as you know three  
brands to one event but you're really  
one brand but you're right like you  
could think about it as as real estate  
you can think about it as you know all  
of the things really like you're hiring  
all of it really um Can can hit  
economies of scale if you are running  
this like conglomerate kind of model  
yeah absolutely absolutely so it's  
advantageous also for us as the  
franchise War because you already have  
someone who's who's in a way inducted  
into your culture right you know they go  
to the same conference every single year  
across multiple Brands they interact  
with the same people across shared  
services um you know so they they're  
people who already have bought into your  
mission and your vision and now they can  
help share that Mission Vision and our  
core values through different brands and  
our own  
portfolio yeah and and I love that you  
look at it through that lens of like  
here's our here's our overall  
conglomerate mission and vision and  
values but then it's also super  
important to have each brand have its

own identity and its own culture and its own Vibe of course it's going to always sit under the umbrella company or the parent company but you have to have space you know especially if you're going to be in a conglomerate that's that's playing in similar spaces like Unleashed Brands is in kids spaces like I work with goaga which is in you know Fitness and Wellness spaces or extraordinary Brands which is in like Fitness and Wellness spaces so if you're all in the same spaces you have to have very clear guardrails around like who is this brand as opposed to this other brand that's in our portfolio and and make sure each one of them has enough like room to breathe and room to grow well and to like piggyback off of that I've I've been in a a unique space that I'm grateful for is that I came into both of the brands that I work with at unleash through Founders so the founders exited the business and now Unleashed is you know kind of running those businesses and you talk about like culture like that's a great way of trying to take what was established in in one of the brands they've been around for years you know so you talk about a brand that already has an established culture and was very much a reflection of the founder and trying to find that

balance of you know how do you keep that culture intact and maintain those positive franchisee relationships when all of a sudden now you're a part of an organization whose whose mission vision and values may be similar but they are inherently a little bit different um and so how do you take one culture and you know interject it into another culture while keeping like what you were saying Jessica like a balance of the good of both um and so I feel very fortunate because again I I'm someone who's always just trying to think of how do I put myself in the franchisees shoes and understand how does the change of a Founder leaving a bigger organization coming in and I always try to remind myself like at the end of the day like we're people organizations are built on people mission statements Visions values they're all executed on a daily basis by people and and just keeping ourselves aligned and really focused on the people who are are a part of our brand and that they feel heard and that you know um there's great relationships that are built and they have all the tools that they need to be successful yeah it's % true and and I it's a good transition cuz I wanted to talk to you about like you with people and like your leadership role in your

organizations but then also like your coaching role outside of organizations and so maybe like the first part of this would be like as you're onboarding someone or maybe interviewing someone to sit in a support role at either a franchise organization or a franchise within a conglomerate organization what do you what are you looking for in individuals who are who are applying to jobs to work with you in franchising yeah I I love that because I just recently went through it and I will tell you that um my I had a candidate who said one thing that got her the job and it was that she cared so much about the students that she worked with that she was she was really going to be sad to step away from them and in that moment I saw this you know new team member or potential team member who would come and sit on the headquarters side share and express such similar values to what I see our franchisees Express in their daily business every day so for me I think it's one thing to have the you know check all the criteria boxes but at the end of the day in this type of organization and in this type of industry how you can relate to people and how you think about building relationships and building trust and how you treat people you know those things

are way more important than what degree  
you got to me you know I think that I I  
I personally as a leader want to build a  
team who put franchises first and I I  
personally am the type of leader that I  
say if if you have two calls coming in  
at the exact same time and one of them  
is is a franchisee and one of them is me  
your boss you better answer that  
franchisees phone calls right like I'm  
at the bottom of the pyramid do not  
reschedule anything with a franchisee to  
be on a meeting that I've requested you  
know and so I want a team that also  
reflects those  
values yeah I I always talk to people  
about like the the the soft skills of  
franchising and on the marketing side  
it's a little bit like always be  
presenting or always be pitching or  
always have a you know like I have to be  
able to sell in like what are what are  
we doing and why but then on the you  
know your side of things like I know you  
spent a lot of time in training roles  
and coaching roles and there's a there's  
a mix of so many things that have to  
come to life in that role and it's like  
LED with empathy maybe like a little bit  
of support and psychology what are the  
what are the soft skills that you always  
kind of like pull from as you've been in  
training roles in the franchising World

well one of the things that you know people always ask you is like well what makes that franchisee so successful right why am I struggling when this franchisee is doing so well and in every franchise business you know you have your top performers the people who just kill it it doesn't matter what challenge comes their way I mean they just learn how to Excel and then you have that population at the bottom that's always making excuses and nothing ever seems to work and they never have what they need when they need it and it's so interesting because it's almost a study in like human behavior more than it is business right because you have you log in the same training internet as everybody else and you have the same videos and resources Etc so I was always really fascinated by like okay well what does make these people tick the top performers what makes their businesses so special because being in the field and coaching and training I have a responsibility to help what I can translate what the high performers are doing to everybody else in the system right so I was really just watching High performers and personally as a as just a student a learner trying to learn about high performance and what makes any entrepreneur High performers While

others aren't and at the end of the day for me my assessment was it really is just the mindset of the people at the top because the franchise owner creates a culture that then the managers reinforce and replicate and that impacts every single person who works inside of that business no matter how large or small the organization is I mean we guys know like the leader sets the tone and the mindset of the leader and the mindset of the business owner is either going to drive that business forward or lead it to you know closure or whatever the next step is and and so I was really invested in kind of learning about these leadership principles and these mindset principles and i' done I I had done for years kind of very traditional leadership training where I teach you how to analyze a profit and loss statement and I teach you how to you know create an optimal schedule and I teach you how to create an operational Playbook but I realized my opportunity was to teach leaders especially like the manager levels you know or the the assistant managers the ones who were really working with all of the employees inside of a business on given day is to give them the mindset skills that it needs to be successful so I remember it was like right before covid we launched

a Leadership Academy at one of the brands that I was working with at the time and it was a three-day intensive leadership training where we we spent some time talking about your p&l and your your action plans and you know kind of where the marketing opportunities are inside of your community but a lot of it was these soft soft skills around influence like how do you influence people to you know get things done through you like you cannot do everything so how do you influence others it was teaching them like mental grit and perseverance and strategies to help manage stress like as as I remember what it was like to be a young managers I'm sure you do too it's like nobody really equips us with how to manage the type of stress that we come in contact with while we're also this same time everybody on the team is looking at us for like it's like you look at the flight attendant when there's turbulence right you're like are we going to be okay everybody's looking at the manager who also at that time in their career probably haven't been taught some of these soft skills like you're talking about like how do I manage stress how do I refocus my team how do I Inspire or motivate people outside of you better hit this number of sales or otherwise

you're going to be fired right you know  
so that was one of the things that I  
then translated into kind of my side  
business which is public speaking and  
Consulting and coaching people  
especially entrepreneurs in the  
franchising space on how do you develop  
the mindset to achieve greatness inside  
of your business because it's less about  
the the tools like we said and more  
about what you do with them and I think  
when you really start to examine people  
you realize there is something that is  
stopping them from picking up the hammer  
even though I've told them times grab  
the hammer and do this with the hammer  
right Jessica I mean how many times have  
you sat down with the franchisee and  
said all you have to do is these three  
things and then you call them in a week  
and they haven't done any of them you  
know and you're like what what is that  
block and so much of of of franchising  
again is like we're we're a people  
business and so people come with their  
own stories and their own limitations  
and their own previous  
experiences that kind of shape the  
action that they take on a daily basis  
and at the end of the day all we have is  
what we do every single day all we have  
is our habits and those small things  
that we repeat every single day is what

builds the business there is no magic wand yeah right there is no incredible marketing campaign that's going to turn a business around it is the small actions that you take the small habits that you set for yourself and so how do we equip entrepreneurs with the habits that they need to be great leaders be great business owners and overcome their own crap right their own stories and their own

limitations I was just at Aspire yesterday and I was listening to Jeff Fenster talk about how he's vertically integrated across several so you're familiar with with Everol and they have the franchising aspect of their business but then they have the product sourcing aspect of their business they source directly from Brazil and then they also construct their own locations so they have a level of um things that are vertically integrated about their business model that makes their business model like less expensive to open but then like less expensive to operate and therefore more profitable and as you're talking I'm thinking and you can take this idea to unleash Brands and you can claim it as your own why wouldn't we have like you have how many brands in Unleashed Brands like eight now seven seven so like take your seven Brands and

we have seven Brands and then you have Unleashed brands at the top but like put a put a leadership and education layer in between and have it be to those soft skills that apply to every single brand because I think you're so right that like we go into GM training like general manager training and we're like here's all the operational things that you need to do to run a successful business and we skip over the most important part of you know how to be a leader we have year olds in leadership roles and we're not giving them leadership training like we just have an operations manual and here's how to you know track the payroll for your team meanwhile they've never run a team and I think about my own experience and how my leadership even at was still lacking and and we're asking them to do so much and not training to those things but it is something that is scalable across all of the brands because it is skills that like apply across everything in anything so you can you can take that that's that's free of charge for you and and Michael at unleash friends thank you I will take it and you know what I think that one thing that we can never neglect is I think again as franchisors we get so focused on the franchisees business and we go we need to create leadership

training for you and we need to train  
your you as a franchise owner in your  
GMS and I think sometimes also we got to  
put a mirror up to ourselves and train  
ourselves

absolutely just like it starts with the  
franchise owner inside of the franchise  
business it starts with us and our  
leadership team on the franchisor level  
that creates the culture um and sets the  
expectations and builds the  
relationships that I think it's so easy  
for both parties to point the finger at  
each other right well you need to do  
more of this no you need to do more of  
this that I think anything that we put  
out for the franchisees we need to be  
willing to train ourselves on as well  
yeah absolutely absolutely so it can be  
all of of the above and and I just give  
you tons of like kudos for all of the  
work you do in that space not just  
helping others but also just pushing  
yourself and not being not being static  
and just continuing to learn and to grow  
and be the best that that you can be as  
a as a franchise support resource and  
just as as a as an amazing person so  
um all the positive aside you know I'm  
big on like comeback season and and I  
think in a way like a lot of My  
Brightest moments are fueled by a lot of  
my darkest moments and I want you to

take us to like a point where you were low and when was it where was it like why was it and then what did you do to get out of that point to get back to like doing amazing things and feeling amazing well uh every day is a journey if you don't feel amazing every day that's okay um I'm glad that you asked that because it is so oftentimes we just share the success stories and the wins that we've had in our career and that's what we want to highlight uh when someone asks us you know we just want to talk about the good but as you know Jessica like so much of who we are gets shaped in those moments when things don't go well so I left a a company and took on a role as a president it was the first president role and it was for a small emerging brand and I relocated from Denver out to North Carolina so I like moved my life for this role that lasted a whopping six months and then I was out of the role and the company kind of they they they the company they stopped franchising it and they they hit some roadblocks and so then I had you know I was sitting there and i' had been in this role for six months and I I loved the role and that was what was hard too is I loved my team and I loved the concept and then I was sitting there in North Carolina and you have these

moments where you're like why did I do this right like why did I you know did I try to reach too big and was the was I not ready for the role or um was it not the right move right you regret every single decision that you've made because now you're sitting unemployed in a state I didn't want to be in I'd only been there for for six months and the worst part was is like every time I would come and go from the house I had to drive by the old office you know right so it was like a constant daily reminder what felt like of my failure yeah and so I was um I was luckily for me like and this is how I I feel like we're always so supported is is that you know you're trying to find these jobs and you feel like in the thousands of applications that you submit you're like no I'm never going to find a job but people who have been a part of your life like come out of the woodwork to support you you know I know that you've experienced this and one of the blessings of of really the last couple years was you know I had a former boss from my time at extend bar her name is Andrea Rogers and she was one of those people that I feel like as a leader has had one of the most positive impacts on my life if you were to interview me for a job and you'd be like what was your fa favorite job and

why I would always refer back to that job at extend bar um and working with Andrea because I had so much respect for her as a leader and in that team it was like five women just like rolling up our sleeves and getting things done and trying to help people build this business and I loved it and I hadn't really connected with Andrea for years and she kind of just reached out out of the blue and said hey I've got this project and I needed some help and I I just I you were the first person who came to mind because I loved working with you and I love how you could help us with this project and so over the course of the year I had more people step up who I'd built relationships with say hey I'm looking for a consultant who could build out this curriculum hey I'm we're looking for a public speaker to come and speak at our conference can you do that and so I had all of these opportunities that came from from the relationships that I had built with people and so I think it was you know such a great reminder that again your life doesn't happen in these big swoops or you know there there isn't a magic wand that that makes your career prosperous and always prosperous and there's never just like one wand that knocks you off your feet and you're

permanently gone like it's never like that there's the highs and the lows of the journey and it is ultimately about the relationships that you built with people in your life and how you showed up every single day and how you you know you busted your butt you worked late you got things done that really has an impact on people to the point that you know I started working for unleash during the year and um my my partner Nate and I were kind of reflecting at the end of the year and we were saying like Okay what are you grateful for this year and you would think on the outside looking in I'd be grateful that I got a job and I love what I do and after you know uh nine months of not being employed full-time that I'd be like the best thing was I got a job and it's all going to be okay but that was not the thing I was grateful for I was more grateful as I reflected on that I had gone through what I had gone through that I had the loss of the job but that I was okay and that people supported me and that what I learned about myself during that time was like I'm strong I'm tough like I could do things and and I needed to almost be reminded that I can do hard things and I can get through things and just what I've given out to people is ultimately

in my time of need what people gave back  
to me um and so I think that's it's not  
all about the times that you've been on  
the pedestal that are the most you know  
um like just reflective for you or that  
you have those strongest takeaways it  
really is just about the work that you  
put in and how you manage the hard times  
that ultimately build you up to  
celebrate the good  
times amen like that's where the  
learning is for sure and kudos to you  
for for powering through it and and I  
just want to highlight our timeline  
because I think as you talk about being  
able to call upon your network in your  
low time you know to think that like  
years ago you and I connected because I  
was interviewing at extend bar and to  
this day haven't worked together at all  
but you've just been such an amazing  
part of my network and I feel like our  
paths have been like crisscrossed  
intertwined this whole time and to be  
able to have a sounding board when  
something was going on has just been so  
invaluable and um I think people connect  
always you know for like an immediate  
what's the immediate value ad that  
Carissa is gonna add to my life and I  
can just say like you and I have played  
this long game and I love it for us I  
love it for both of us I love it for me

especially but I love it for both of us I agree and I think it's like of all the places around the world like we all we we kind of always always end up in each other's bubble and I think there's a reason for that right it's like we we need this network of people that you know again it's not like an immediate we could help each other out or we got a win from each other the benefit of our relationship has been the nights of grabbing drinks and talking and sharing about our insecurities and fears and what we want to accomplish and what's holding us back and that relationship that builds over time is what's special and honestly what what makes us show up for for people in a better way is because we have people who show up for that way so I'm grateful for you for being that person in my life yeah and then and then you pay it forward it's a tough thing to to try to do anything big so um I appreciate you holding me accountable to starting the podcast because that was the last thing we talked about when we met up for drinks two months ago and here you are showing up for me today so I appreciate you so much and congratulations on everything that you've done so far I'm so excited to see what you and Michael end up building at Unleashed Brands we will put

all of your socials and website in the  
show notes um so if anybody wants to  
connect with you they can they can reach  
out but thank you so much Carissa for  
being on today's episode of the society  
pod thanks Jessica loved it love  
spending time with you we hope you  
enjoyed this episode of the society  
pod