

Hard Times & Hope

Episode 21: Jule Q&A

Jule Kucera

Hi, I'm Jule. And this is *Hard Times and Hope*, a place for real conversations with regular people about a real hard time. We talk about what it was, how they got through it, and something good that came from it.

Jule Kucera 00:29

My guest today is Jule Kucera. That's right. It's me again.

Jule Kucera 00:34

I haven't been back since we did Episode Number 11, which was quite the reveal for me. And I wanted to take this episode for myself, I thought I might do this every 10 episodes or so.

So, Episode 11, Episode 21, Episode 31. Because podcasting is such a unidirectional communication tool. It's not really collaborative, with the exception of the guest if there is a guest.

And I've gotten some questions, and I couldn't figure out how to answer them. And I just thought, oh, I'll take over an episode. So I'm taking over this episode. I'm going to do it the same way I did before where I wrote the questions down on cards, they are in front of me one question per card. That way, I'm freed from remembering the questions. They just look at the question, ask it of myself, and then answer it. So that's the plan. Here we go.

Oh, what will I say? Let's find out.

Q: Why did you start a podcast?

Yeah, me and a gazillion other people in 2020. That's what we did during the pandemic, we started podcasts.

I did it because I like to make things. I really like to make things. And something else. There's a phrase that I read in one of Seth Godin books, I think it was *Linchpin*, but I'm not positive, where he wrote, "the tools of production are in our hands."

And that is such a gift that people human beings, for most of our time on this planet have not had 50 years ago, if you wanted to write a newspaper, or a newspaper article, you had to be accepted by the newspaper or hired by the newspaper. Well, now if you have something you want to say in print, you can just write a blog post start blog.

I used to listen to a radio storyteller on Saturday nights. His name was Jean Shepherd, he broadcast out of New York City. And as far as I know, he was the only one. There were DJs, who did music, but there was one slot for Jean Shepherd. But now, if you want to tell a story, you can have a podcast.

So that's really why I wanted to learn this medium to see what I thought about it. See if I liked it, see if I thought it was fun or interesting. And it has been.

Jule Kucera 03:08

Q: Why did you pick hard times and hope for your podcast topic?

Yeah, that's a good question.

Jule Kucera 03:10

I think in some ways, I'm kind of drawn to hard times, maybe because I grew up with them like somebody other people, most other people. But I really think it's because what drew me for for podcasts is we don't normally talk about our hard times.

And for the longest time, I had a very ego centric view of life. And I thought, Oh, I'm the only one who goes through these things. And as I grew up, I realized that wasn't true. But especially after this podcast, I realized it's really not true.

Everybody has a hard time. Everybody has something you can talk about. And one of the things I've said to my friends, if, if the person is four years older or older, they have a hard time they can talk about and it's really opened my eyes to that.

And it's also I believe, created a space where it's safe to talk about that, so that we can learn from one another and so that we can realize we're not alone.

One of my bigger a-ha's was episode six with Rob Slater. Rob is a very successful orthodontist. He lives in England, he competes in Ironman triathlons, he's married with three kids. His life just seems lovely. Just like, oh, a lovely life.

And I didn't know what he would talk about for a hard time and I kind of thought maybe it wouldn't be that difficult. And I was so wrong. And it really changed my perception. Not so much of Rob but just of Yes, partly of Rob but more. So Jule, you just don't know. You have no idea what's on the other side of that person's skin, what they've gone through what they're going through what they're going to go through. You have no clue. So that's been interesting.

The other reason I wanted to do this podcast is I thought it might help, I just thought it might help with interpersonal understanding. We're so divided these days. Are we red? Are we blue? Are we pro? Are we against? --al kinds of divisions. At the time I started my podcast, I did not know the research, but I've since listened to a podcast by Celeste Headley. She was on Politicology (<https://politicology.com/episodes/celeste-headlee-having-better-conversations/>). About 50 minutes into it, she talks about the value of the human voice, and how it's

a means toward empathy. And she cited some research, where people read a position paper, and it was a position in conflict with their own. And when they read it, their response after reading it was Yeah, that person's, you know, ill-informed, doesn't know what they're talking about, blah, blah, blah.

But when they heard the exact same words spoken--they didn't read it, but they heard it--their response at the end was very different. It was, yeah, that person has a different perspective than I do. I don't agree with them. But they got their own perspective. Very different reaction.

There is something about the human voice. Celeste Headley said, it's the voice that helps us recognize another human. The voice tells us, here's someone like me, this is a human. I just thought that was interesting.

Q: I heard you made a commitment that you would podcast for a year, and then decide whether or not to keep going. Do you know yet what you'll decide?

Well, I like to keep my options open. So I'm not going to decide until the year is up. And the year is up on October 9, that would be my one year anniversary. And I've been leaning towards keeping going. But honestly, there's days and times I go, really Jule? Is this how you want to spend your time? You know, you don't have to work this hard.

And it is a fair amount of hard work. It takes me about 12 hours, sometimes longer to produce each episode. And we'll see. We'll find out. Will I still be here on October 9 or not? Stay tuned.

Q: Where do you get your podcast guests?

Be very careful if you are a friend of mine. My guests are mainly friends or people that I've met who are podcasters. So they're in the podcasting community. The exception to that is episode two, who is a man who worked in my building. It was early on in my podcast experience of learning to podcast. And I thought this will be

easy. Michael should be easy. We'll just have a talk, and it won't matter that I don't really know what I'm doing.

So guests tend to be either people I know or people I've met through podcasting. However, if you have said to yourself, oh, I would love to be on hard times and hope.

Jule Kucera 07:59

Well, then, please just send me an email and let me know and we'll have a conversation about that. Because I really want to branch out and I'm going to run out friends. that's gonna happen. My email address is Jule at Jule kucera.com. That's JULEKUC era.com.

Q: What lessons have you learned from podcasting?

Oh, this is like a lesson that I learned not during the conversation, but afterwards in the Edit. It sort of happens in the conversation, but I really hear it in the edit. And the lesson is Jule, listen without trying to come to a conclusion about how the person is going to finish their sentence or what they're trying to say. Listen as if you were a blank slate. Because every time I've asked a question that when I heard it later, I just winced, it was because there was an underlying assumption that turned out to be false.

And so my big lesson is, Close your mouth. Open your ears. And listen. My other lesson is probably not to say 'uh-huh' so much. But that's kind of what, I mean, in the conversation it just happens.

Q: What's been surprising?

Oh, I had a big surprise. So the little surprises were not so much surprises, but things that I kind of expected that turned out to be true. For example, I thought the

podcast would be beneficial to listeners, because mainly they would hear somebody else's experience and they would go Uh huh. Yep. Other people have hard times too. I'm not the only one. And that's been borne out. I thought it might help me become a better speaker.

Jule Kucera 09:50

I have changed a bit how I speak for podcasting, but it's definitely helped me become a better listener. The big surprise is the guests.

Jule Kucera 10:00

I thought there would be benefit for the listeners and benefit for me. But I didn't know what the benefit for the guests would be. But now I know. What guests have told me is that being on the podcast, this podcast, has been a unique experience.

Because it isn't often that they revisit a time that was very difficult. And they just get to talk about it--in depth. They don't have to worry about what I think about it. They don't have to shorten up what they say about it, because they have to share time in the conversation. No, the podcast is all about them and their hard time. And some have said it's been something like a healing experience. It kind of brought closure or it was, it felt good to come back to it with some distance.

So that really made me happy because I don't want it to be one sided. I don't want listeners and me to have the benefit. I want there to be a benefit to guests also. And there is and that makes me happy.

Q: Anything else you'd like to say?

Yes. Thank you for listening. I appreciate it.