

Episode 16: Living Life on Your Own Terms, with Christina Glickman

Mandy: Hello and welcome to Enough, the podcast. I'm your host, Mandy Lehto. This show is a mashup of inspiration and exploration around what gets in the way of us feeling good enough. If you're a leader whose life looks shiny and together from the outside, but inside your inner critic assures you that you are one hot mess, this podcast is for you. It's time to own your work, quirks, foibles, imperfections, and all. Welcome to Enough.

I've been thinking a lot about how we can use the wake-up call of the pandemic to quit doing so much, especially the things we've agreed to because our boundaries have been flabby or we've been stuck in good girl or nice guy conditioning. Today's short, radically practical conversation is about how we can use this pivotal moment in time as an opportunity not to slip back into those sucky old habits.

Our guide is my girl crush, Christina Glickman, a mom of four beautiful kids, who's also a TEDx speaker, a best selling author, and a new puppy owner of the ridiculously cute, Humphrey. When I asked Christina about what she wants these days, here's what she says.

Christina: I don't want the badge of business anymore. I come from the hustle culture thinking that in order for me to show value, you need to think I work 24 hours a day and I am saving the world. If I'm not doing that, then I'm not participating at the gold star-level.

Mandy: She's come to realize that by adhering to some key principles that she shares with us in this episode—lucky us—she's been able to step out of the hustle, the overwhelm, and her good girl conditioning.

Christina: Because I feel so liberated now that I don't need to show up for you, I show up for me. There's no pressure for me to be anyone else but me. Now I understand that sounds simple and it's hard, but if you put into practice every single day and you continue to ask yourself what your true north is, I will get back to that moment every time.

Mandy: In this episode, you will learn how to worry less about what people think about you. You'll learn Christina's Ick Test, a highly effective way to say no without feeling like a jerkwad. You'll learn her brilliant Sunday technique for creating more spaciousness in your diary. We're going to cannonball right in by Christina explaining what she means by reclaiming ourselves in the cluster suck of the pandemic. Ready? Let's dive in.

Christina: By reclaiming, specifically to the moment in time we are in a pandemic, the reclaiming is not about a job. If it were only that simple, the reclaiming here is the parts of us that we all lost and everybody lost something different in this pandemic. The reclaiming here is, maybe you need to identify again as a mother, maybe that was taken away from you a little bit because you are now forced to do 10 different jobs, maybe you need to reclaim this new moment in time that you are no longer a businesswoman because you can't work anymore, because you learn with your kids. Maybe you need to reclaim anything in your world of value that was lost. It doesn't have to necessarily be in a pandemic, but that's where we're at right now.

Everybody has had a new rebirth, a new awakening. My hope is that we get to reclaim the things that we lost that were important to us, but then forge a new path. Because a lot of the things, if we look at it, I don't want it back. I want to reclaim the good things, but I'd like to leave those other things in the past, whatever those might be for you.

Therefore, I think the definition of reclaiming is different now. Because usually when we say reclaim, it's like exactly what I lost before, I want to get that again. I actually don't want to get that again. But I want to dissect what parts of me that I lost that I would like to make a little bit better or repackaging. Again, we all lost something different.

I think our common ground is that we've experienced this swell of loss together and there is not a comparative or duality nature to it, but I think the awareness that we need to take a look at where we are today and reclaim some of these things will only help us as we move forward.

Mandy: I love that you say that. One of the things that I'm present to as you talk about this is not just things or decluttering, although that's also been part of it, but it's also starting to get rid of old ways of being, old ways of showing up in the world, old thought patterns, old belief systems. This time to really sit and steep in our murky feelings in all the fields that we felt during this pandemic has led me and so many of the powerful women who I coach as well to say, I want something different. I don't want to feel exhausted all the time. I don't want to push myself to this.

It's actually quite nice to have a little bit more whitespace in my diary, whatever. Even if it's filled with chores, you know that I get to decide what I'm doing in those times. That's not everybody's experience. I realized that. As you said, 2–3 million women have lost their jobs. The CNBC research that came out recently shows that well over 50% of American women are identified with feeling burnt out at the moment.

These statistics are real. However, something is jiggling loose in this time that we've had to reflect because most of the time, unless you take a sabbatical or a soul-batical, like our friend Shelley Paxton talks about, or unless you're on maternity leave, or unless you've been made redundant, there's not usually this much reflection time.

Christina: I think that ultimately you can have the mindset that there are opportunities in this time and how can I do this so I can become a better version of myself. I think that's where the magic happens because instead of, what did this pandemic do to me, what can it do for me? And understanding there is dramatic loss and traumatic situations that have happened, but instead, being able to look at everything from stolen moments you might not have had with your family or treasured time with your kids to the ability and privilege to reimagine what you can become in this new normal.

That's a privilege and it's a luxury that if you can take the time to do it, you should. Otherwise, we're letting this moment in time really tell us how we should be either victims of it or sit in it, when instead, wow, this is probably the powerful pause most of us needed. It broke up humanity in such a way that isn't so beautiful, but there are other parts that aren't. I'm going to choose to see the beauty part so that I can actually just have hope and keep going.

Mandy: You've recently done a TEDx talk—I'm pretty excited; I can't wait for that to land—and you were talking in this TED talk about women needing constant reminding that they can change, they can continue to go for it. Tell us a little bit more about that.

Christina: Sure. I can really speak to the fact that it's really because in the past couple of years, I had such a wonderful opportunity to meet with so many women that felt like they were itching to do a little bit more in their life. They weren't really sure or seemed very common, I think. I'm 48 years old and it feels like something that a lot of women begin a new chapter and they're not sure where to go with it. Almost as if we need that whisper, that tap on the shoulder, that nudge, that, hey, you know what? You can do whatever you want to do.

I'm not talking about, like go save the world, write 10 books, or be the next president. I'm just talking about, how do you audit your day so that you have joy in it? Then you get up and you go to bed at night. Instead of saying, what did I do and check off that productive list, it's more of, how do I feel? Do I feel like I've had a successful day because the people I know love them? Do I feel like I was a successful part of the community in some way? That's all for any person to decide amongst themselves. I don't tell you what that might be. As a society, we seem to have a checklist of it. Therefore, a lot of times women feel stuck. Like I don't know what to do next because we want to identify it with a badge or a title.

I joke around, if I were only a dentist, my life would be a lot easier because I would know what I'm supposed to do. But a [...] teeth, very clear. I don't know what I do. I do so many things. Women can be so many ends and humans can be so many ends. But I think for me, the message that I keep hearing, at least within my community of people right now, is that we want to play back to each other.

You can do this too. You can do whatever you want to do. It's up to you. You have the agency to choose. That is a generic statement over time that we've heard over and over. If you are a parent, you tell your children that, but do we do it for ourselves? Do we really say, no, you get to do that. Do you want to make socks? Go make socks.

It's all available to us, but sometimes we need someone else. The biggest message, I think, in my TEDx talk was that, how do we do these things together? History has shown us the power of women coming together more than ever is when real change happens. We're not meant to do it alone. We've heard this millions of times, but when we actually walk in the heels of that, that's when we see things happen. For me, it is just this constant reminder. You can say whatever you want being a champion, doing all the things, but history has shown us that works.

Mandy: What's your experience with getting off the treadmill of shooting, and perhaps growing up with these expectations, and how you pushed the big red stop button and said, I now choose to seek joy instead of gold stars? How did you do that?

Christina: I will tell you, very intentional. I've worked on that in the past few years because number one, I don't want the badge of business anymore. I come from the hustle culture thinking that in order for me to show value, you need to think I work 24 hours a day and I am saving the world. If I'm not doing that, then I'm not participating at the gold star level.

What I've really come to realize is a few things. I have a choice over where I spend my time and my day and I no longer actually care what other people think in the sense of, I get to decide what's important to me. If I always go back to what is important to me, that's going to guide me.

So number one for me will always be the people that I love are safe and they're loved by me. If that is the case, I have no fear of failing on a podcast, not going to a meeting being the smartest one. All of that comes down to me as a basis of confidence because I feel so liberated now that I don't need to show up for you, I show up for me. There's no pressure for me to be anyone else but me. Now I understand that sounds simple and it's hard, but if you put into practice every single day and you continue to ask yourself what your true north is, I will get back to that moment every time.

If I'm going to attend something, and I don't feel prepared, and I'm not feeling comfortable because I think I'm like, are they going to really see me, and if they really see me, will they not like me? Then I think, no, because I'm showing up with pure intention and pure heart of who I am. You can't take me down because I'm not trying to be something I'm not. Whereas I spent years in that 'fake it until you make it' culture.

Years of I want to show up to the table to be the smartest. Now I love to show up and say, oh, I don't know, that sounds like a great idea. I've never done that before, share with me. I have no fear because I know at the end of the day, the people that matter will still love me.

Again, I've done a book and it's all fun and games until the book is in other people's hands and then you're going to get comments. But then I kept saying, guess what, at the end of the day, friends and family will buy it. They'll tell me they loved it because they have to, but nobody else is thinking about me, no one cares about me. Their lives will move on. Even if it was the worst thing they've ever heard, read, who cares?

There's nothing that is quite as important to me as the people I love. Other than that, that gives me ultimate freedom to pursue anything because the failure and the consequences of that action isn't anything I can't handle. I can handle it. What, I feel bad about myself, I'm embarrassed.

To me, at this stage in life, after experiencing a lot of loss and death, it's not that big of a deal. Holding weight to that is again, so suffocating and exhausting. Whereas instead, if I can get up every day,

understand that my intention is to feel joy for myself and the people I love that just guides me. I think it takes practice. I don't think you just wake up and you're that way because life is messy.

What happens when you're behind, and you're stressed, and you've got all these things? It's like, take a beat. Just take a beat because I don't want to end up at the end of the road and say, what was I doing? I know that when I lay my head down at night, I'm leading the life I want to lead. By that I don't mean successful and amazing. I mean, it's on my terms.

It's what I want to do. I spent years, years performing, being the good girl, doing all the things I should be doing. But I never ever felt the way I feel today, which is fully whole and that there is no space that I don't belong in. That's only because I reclaimed myself.

Monique: Hey, everyone. I'm Monique Debose from the previous episode. What Christina Glickman is talking about here is the freedom on the other side of owning all the parts of ourselves. Like she says, you can't take me down because I'm not trying to be anything that I'm not. It's so powerful.

I really relate to her message of getting clear on what you want, on what really matters to you, and then consciously living from that awareness. I call it stepping into your sovereign woman. Episode 15 is all about the shift from the good girl to the sovereign woman. Join us and listen if you haven't already. Please check out my new album, *You Are The Sovereign One*. Okay, let's get back to Christina.

Mandy: For someone who is fist-pumping the air right now saying, heck, yes to what you're saying and they don't know how to do that because it sounds so straightforward and so logical what you've just said, can you take us into the mess of where you were still performing and hustling, but you knew intuitively that something needed to change? Take us there.

Christina: Start simple, which is get very clear on what your priorities are or your values, whatever you want to call them. Get very clear. You could do a little brain dump. What, at the end of the day, makes you feel like a successful human person feeling. I don't really mean a checklist of, I'm going to launch or whatever. I really mean by, is it so I will take you through mine?

Mine is that every day, my family—my four children and my husband—understand that when I look at them, they are the most special people in my world. For me, that's a non negotiable. I want you to understand that. That doesn't mean I do that every day. Some days, I'm not so good at it. The next day like, oh there, look me in the eyes. You're important to me. Sorry I sucked yesterday. I know that to be true.

Number one, get clear on what is important to you, because I'll tell you what, if you audit your day, you'll find what's important to you. Do you work 12 hours, but work isn't what you actually want to end your life with? Well, then you should probably do a little balancing because it's not going to lie to you. It's going to point out to you where your priorities lie. There's no right or wrong. But if that's out of alignment, start slow.

The second thing is, figure out where you get your energy from. Who do you surround yourself with? Maybe it's just yourself, maybe you actually need more positive energy in your life, maybe you need to get rid of the toxic energy and ask yourself. Because again, this reawakening and a pandemic allows us to decide, maybe I don't need all those people in my life. Maybe I don't need to be giving them their time because I'll tell you something I learned in the pandemic. I will not give you my love if you don't deserve it. I will not say yes to a coffee if you're not filling my cup too.

Christina, the good girl, says yes to everybody. I'm so nice, let me help you. I don't do that anymore. Guess what that does? That's free space. We all need space, that free space for you to do what makes you come alive. Is it creating? Is it gardening? Is it writing love letters?

Whatever it might be, if you're clear on what you want to identify as these are my values, if I surround myself in environments that give me the right kind of energy, it gives me more time in my day. I think those things are things to think about. Maybe try to do one. It doesn't just happen.

Like I said, this has been a year's journey for me of doing it. Now what I've realized is, every Sunday, I look at my calendar and think, what do I get to get rid of? I know if it gives me an ick feeling or I don't want to

do it, I no longer say yes. Even if I know it's a good business opportunity, it's a good networking thing. Whatever it is, if I don't fully feel I want to do it, I don't do it anymore.

That takes work. That's not easy. It's not easy to say no to a dinner party—don't forget we have Covid—because you think you should and you've been with these people. That's not the right energy for me. If I don't protect that energy, I'm kind of screwed. Does that help?

Mandy: That helps immensely. Just because we have space, it also doesn't mean that we have energetic capacity. That doesn't mean that you have to be knackered in order to say no. I love what you just said about the Ick Test. Can you tell us what that means for you?

Christina: That's a guiding principle for me, that very fancy word of the Ick Test, which is, you look at your calendar and you're like, oh, I just got to get through Thursday, like I got to get through that. Listen, I understand we all have to work. We have to do things. I'm not the [...] here. But in general, I have been known to schedule things because I don't want to say no, I want to be nice, or I want to do this.

Now, if I get that, oh, I don't want to go, even if it's as silly as like, I don't want to find parking because that's like really difficult in the city and that whole thing, then I got to get ready, and I got a shower, and I got a cue for you, whatever it might be, I say no now, and I take it away. Because you know when you wake up and you're excited. I knew today, I was going to talk to you, that fuels my soul.

That's what I'm doing. We're talking because I adore you. It makes me feel like I come alive. I will not participate in things that I have the choice and that don't make me feel like this because I'm not going to chase that energy anymore. I'm only chasing energy that fuels me.

Mandy: The Ick Test, totally brill. Still, some things can end up slipping through the net if there's a lot of time between the ask and the actual event, dinner party, book signing, cover your door cleaning, party, whatever it is that you've been invited to that you're not sure if you really want to go. The Ick Test can be super useful, but I'm going to layer on another tool in case you're prone to over-yessing for things farther out in your diary.

It's something I learned from Tim Ferriss. I call it the no sevens rule. I can't remember what he called it. Plot out a 1–10 scale. One is I would rather eat cold dirty worms than do that thing, and 10 is jazz hands, jazz hands, I can't wait to go.

Most things will fall at a seven which is how they end up parked in our diary on a Thursday afternoon. Then we ended up facepalming and having ragey thoughts thinking, why the heck did I agree to do that thing? Grrr. So put the seven aside. If the thing turns out to be an eight or above, well, then it's worth a contemplation. This could be an exciting thing to look forward to that will bring me joy. If it's a six or less, be ruthless. You know what to do.

I hope that works beautifully in alignment with the Ick Test to give you more whitespace in your life. It's not always easy to do this stuff, cut yourself some slack. Okay, let's get back to the episode.

Christina: It's not easy to just change overnight, but now I'm getting really good at it. I think there's a lot of anxiety that comes when we don't make a decision on something. It's a lot easier to be able to say, if you know when the upfront, you've been invited to something that you kind of don't want to go, shut it down then. The back, the forth, the worry. I've become so clear on what I want in my life. I don't look to fill the space.

I think the most beautiful thing we can give ourselves is space. Otherwise, we will always be full. There's no competition here. No one's busier than anybody else. I don't want to prescribe to that way of living. Usually when you talk to a friend or something, your initial reaction is to say all the things that are going on. It's almost like a laundry list of how busy I am. It's like, I don't want any of that anymore. That takes work.

Mandy: I have one final question as we start to wrap this up. For people who find it hard to say no—I know this is like the real velcro part of some of this good girl conditioning, like I don't want to make it awkward, I don't want to be confrontational, I don't want to upset someone or disappoint someone—can you take us behind the curtain in your life of how you say no to something?

Christina: Yes. Number one, the courage I get to say no to something is what I play in my head all the time. I want to honor the commitment to myself first. That's going to help me overcome feeling bad about saying no. I've learned a couple of things. One, I used to be a big explainer. I'm going to tell you 10 reasons why I can't make something and give you every detail so that you know I'm being honest.

I no longer do that and I make a very simple statement. No, I'm sorry, I can't make it. Have a great time, I won't be able to attend. I don't make up an excuse or a lie. I get the sentence in my head that won't make me feel that I have to tell you more. I'm sorry, I can't make it. That's very simple. But especially, I think that we look to explain why.

I'm going to give you 10 reasons why. Instead, I did it last night, there was an event and there wasn't a reason I couldn't go. I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay home, and I wanted to watch TV with my kids, and I wanted to eat ice cream. I didn't want to go. I didn't cancel, but I said, I'm sorry, I can't attend.

Mandy: I asked every guest at the end of an episode to lay a brick of wisdom for somebody who's listening, who's on this path and you would like to leave, it could be a word, it could be a quote, it could be some pearls of wisdom, something succinct that you just want to leave with them in this moment, what would you say?

Christina: Again, because I'm a good girl, I'm going to tell you what's on my heart at the moment, right now. For me, it's that I trust myself, I trust the universe, and they're both going to show up. If I believe that, good things are going to happen for me.

Mandy: Thank you for playing with us. That was super fun. Where can people hang out with you?

Christina: You can hang out with me on Instagram because that's where I do a lot of my communicating. For now, that's usually the best place to find me. I've got a community and all the good things, but you can find me there.

Mandy: Plus, your absolutely adorable dog.

Christina: Plus my absolutely adorable dog, because who doesn't need a puppy when you already have four kids? Let's do it.

Mandy: Absolutely. Thank you, Christina.

Christina: Thank you.

Mandy: I hope that you are fired up and excited to live life on your own terms with some of the tips that Christina has shared. It is time to step out of those habits that you know no longer serve you and to set tighter boundaries to protect your time and energy. As she said, it gets easier the more you do it, so start small. I'm going to invite you to share this episode with a friend that you might check in on each other during your journey and see how you're both getting on.

Who do you know who would like to have tighter boundaries, who would like to step into living a life on their own terms, and how you can use this pandemic and make something good of it, use it as a watershed, use it as a catalyst? I would love it if you would share it with that person who pops into mind and discusses it. Use this practically. That's the whole point of this podcast. It's not just ear candy, it's doing something with it. Thank you for that.

Next week, we're talking about motherhood and why we don't feel good enough as mothers in the ways that we ruminate on all of our inadequacies. Where does that come from and what can we do about it? Because enough is enough. I have Dr. Sophie Brock in the house. We geek out a little bit, but don't worry, it's practical as well. Here's a tiny little wee tidbit of what you can expect.

Sophie: When you say things to yourself, like I am not a good enough mom, I'm not doing a good enough job, good enough according to whom, good enough according to what?

Mandy: Thank you so much for your support of Enough, the podcast. This is Mandy Lehto signing out. Until more goodies come your way next week. Thanks for being here.