Corey Andrew Powell ([00:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hello everyone. I am Corey Andrew Powell, and I am so happy to welcome today's guest, Laura Gassner Otting. Now, Laura is a renowned life coach, bestselling author of the 2019 book, "Limitless: How to Ignore Everybody, Carve your Own Path, and Live Your Best Life." And her newly published book is called, I have it here, "Wonderhell: Why Success Doesn't Feel Like It Should . . . and What to Do About It." Now, Laura's been featured on The Today Show. Good Morning America, Oprah Daily, Harvard Business Review, and that's just a few cause we don't have, you know, 10 years to get into all her amazing credits. But, uh, those are a few of them. So Laura, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

Laura Gassner Otting ([00:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, thank you. I'm so glad to be here. When you held up the book, had all these like post-it notes and bookmarks, I'm like, that's amazing.

Corey Andrew Powell ([00:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, we're gonna get into it. No, I'm so glad, <laugh>, I was trying like, not to even show that, but that means I was really like getting into this book. But, so yeah, well first, as I just told you off camera, I feel seen by this book because so much of what we tell ourselves will dictate if we're successful or not. And so what I wanted to first say to you is your first book, Limitless that I mentioned, it's, it is really interesting because it's almost like that's one side of the coin, Limitless talks about the influence that others may have on you, how they may derail you if you let their quote unquote bs we'll call it infiltrate your confidence, right? And, um, and then Wonderhell seemingly for me is the bookend. It's like, now let's deal with what we tell ourselves, how we can derail ourselves. Now, that's my perception, but I'd love for you to talk about what is Wonderhell and why'd you write this book?

Laura Gassner Otting ([01:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, I love that perception of it actually. So I've wrote Wonderhell, because I found myself in Wonderhell. So Wonderhell is the space between who you were yesterday and who you just realized you can become tomorrow. And when I launched Limitless, it debuted at number two on the Washington Post bestseller list right behind Michelle Obama. And I was on a plane on the way home from an event where I was keynoting, opening up for Malala, like Malala Malala. Wow. Yeah. And in that moment I thought to myself, I only wrote this book because I'm starting to get booked to do keynotes and the people who are making real money have books. So maybe I should get me one of them <laugh>. Hmm. Yeah. And honestly, I thought three people would buy this book, my mom, my dad, my sister, and maybe my dad was gonna buy it, used for my sister.

Laura Gassner Otting ([02:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like I really did not. And then all of a sudden I, I had this success and in that moment I thought, this is amazing. It's exciting, it's humbling, it's wonderful. But also I got the Washington Post, could I get the Wall Street Journal? And wrote about the New York Times and someone gotta talk to Oprah under the oak tree. Why not me? And I had this like, because I was so exhausted from the book launch, the place in my brain that normally dictates my humility was like nowhere to be seen. And I heard this voice inside my head, whisper, this thing has legs, you can do more. And I saw this vision of myself, like who I could be if I just did a little bit more or approached things a little bit differently or embraced my ambition. And suddenly I was struck with anxiety. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

Laura Gassner Otting ([03:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

and uncertainty and doubt and imposter syndrome. And it was like, it was wonderful, but it was also, hell, it was wonderhell <laugh>. So I wrote this book because in Limitless I talk about how do we find a definition of success that actually works for us, not dictated by our fourth grade teacher or our parents or our bosses, or like the Kardashians or whoever. Yeah. Yeah. But in Wonderhell, it's like if you go after a thing that actually means something to you than when you start to achieve it, you see even more versions of who else you can become mm-hmm. <affirmative> and then it gets real.

Corey Andrew Powell ([03:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, and you give good examples of that. I mean, I, I wanted to, I'll talk about one later, but there's an example of a gentleman named, uh, Chris, I believe in the book and, um, kind of living in the shadow of like the father and the and what

Laura Gassner Otting ([03:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, Chris Plow. Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell ([03:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right? And what success meant in the eyes of what his father would think is successful and how he almost burned himself out. You know, or he did burn himself out basically, um, until he sort of re reassessed and reflected on who he wanted to be. And it changes everything.

Laura Gassner Otting ([04:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And also it changes at every age and every stage. So like, the person who I thought I wanted to be when I was 22 is different than 32, different than 42. I just turned 52. Like the person who we are, like at some point when you're like 16, 17, 18 years old, somebody hands you a list and says, this is what makes a good job good. And you go, okay, I'm gonna pick a path, a major, a career plan, a college, a trade, whatever. But nobody ever says, Hey, why don't you prioritize this list in a way that makes the good job good for you. Yeah. And then nobody says, oh, and by the way, every seven years or so, you're gonna change. The world is gonna change. Maybe you should reassess. And so I think that's what happens is that we don't give ourselves that grace to change, even if we do get on the right track.

Corey Andrew Powell ([04:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It's very funny, I'm reminded when you tell that, when you, when you say that I'm reminded of being like in the second grade maybe, and already being primed by my family of like, you're gonna get a good job. I'm like, I'm nine, but okay. Yeah. <laugh>. Yeah. But that's already like the thing. So what does that mean? Well, that means, you know, you're gonna get a good job. Like your Uncle Paul. Well, my Uncle Paul was an undertaker and he, you know, he dealt with dead bodies all day and.

Laura Gassner Otting ([05:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right. But he had, he had a career and he had security and a paycheck.

Corey Andrew Powell ([05:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And he raised the family with that, with that good job. And so, uh, you know what second grade teacher asks all the kids what they want to be, and I say, an undertaker. Then I get a, my mom gets a phone call, <laugh>. So

Laura Gassner Otting ([05:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>, I wanna be a fireman, I wanna be an astronaut, I wanna be, I wanna involve dead people.

Corey Andrew Powell ([05:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right, at the age of nine. And I'm like, so looking back, I'm like, mom, you, you know, you guys did that to me. Like I didn't.

Laura Gassner Otting ([05:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

They opened a file on you that day, <laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell ([05:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

But yea, they totally had uhhuh me on speed dial. But I do wanna ask you though, when it comes to, there's this weird sort of di dichotomy though of the success that you had now said, oh wow, I've really achieved this thing and I want more. I want more. Is that a bad thing? I mean, is it a bad thing to say, okay, I have my, I have my foot in the door now, why not become, you know, Oprah's next protege Or what, like, like, you know, where's, where's the balance between saying, okay, it's okay to want more and appreciate what you have?

Laura Gassner Otting ([06:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So in this moment that I was on this airplane flying back, I was flying from Vancouver where as I mentioned, I opened for Malala to back to Boston where I live, where the very next morning was my God daughter's bat mitzvah. Hmm. Could've Miss Malala could've missed the bat mitzvah. I'm on this red eye and I'm sandwich amateur routine, these like two giant linebackers and I can't fall asleep. And I open up my laptop and I write this whole scream of a Facebook post about this moment I'm in right now, wonder hell. And, and I thought to myself, and I actually wrote this, and I start the book by talking about this, this moment. They say, if you can name it, you can tame it. Hmm. And in that moment I was like, I don't wanna tame it. I wanna claim it. Like, I wanna see what else is out there and not in this like bigger, better, faster, more.

Laura Gassner Otting ([07:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You gotta keep hustling and rise and grind. But in this, like, I didn't know I was capable of that. And now that I know I am, like the doors, the work I did opened more doors than I ever thought possible. And I, I looked through those doors. I saw even more doors that I never thought were possible for me. Like I knew they existed, but I didn't know that the people who achieve it are just humans. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like I thought they were super humans and it turns out they're just humans and they just worked smarter or they were luckier. Yeah. Or they were more connected, or they had more resources. And I thought that the chasm between where I sat and where they were was way bigger than it was. And once I was like, oh, I'm on the precipice. So it could be like, maybe you just sold your first business, maybe you just sold your first consulting contract.

Laura Gassner Otting ([07:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right? Maybe you just sold your first tube of lipstick. It could be a huge success. It can be a tiny success. All that matters is it's like something you didn't know if you could possibly do. And when you do it, you realize it. Like, I, um, ran my first mile of my life right. Uh, before I turned 40. And it took me six weeks to run that mile without literally stopping and like hurling literally. And at the end of that, I was all hopped up on endorphins. And I'm like, if I string three of those together, maybe I could do a 5k, 5k. And so, right. I did, it took me six more weeks and I signed up what, for like, the couch to 5k and I did it. And at the end of the 5k was like, you know, if I string two of those together, maybe I could do a 10k.

Laura Gassner Otting ([08:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm. And after I did that, I was like, you know, if I string two of those together plus another mile, like I could do a half marathon and I live in Boston, so you know where this is going. Fast forward a few years, I've now run five marathons. But if you had asked me the day that I first started running, will you be able to run a marathon? I would've been like, no way. No how. Never. That's for other people. Yeah. But each time I got a little closer, I saw like, the next step isn't as far, like the step from like never running a mile to running five marathons is a pretty wide chasm. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. But a step from one to five, from five to 10, from 10 to half, each one of those gets you closer and closer so that like the next finish line is in sight. And then as soon as you get through the next finish line, you're like, oh, there's another one. And, and I'm interested, there are also moments where you say, you know what? That's enough. I don't actually wanna do it. What I learned about myself in the process of this new victory is that the next victory on the line isn't actually as interesting to me. So I'm gonna go do something else now. Yeah. And that's okay too.

Corey Andrew Powell ([09:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I love that you talk about that because as a leadership podcast, we often discuss here the actionable steps. So Right. So you, so you definitely have these, you might wanna go from zero to 60, but people often don't strategize like those small incremental steps to getting there. Yes. And that's where I think the failure happens, where they just to like, to your point, it's a good thing you didn't say, just wake up, go, I'm gonna run a 5k. Having never run a mile in your life, that would've been disastrous. But people do that all the time. And that's where we talk about, I think in your book, where we're in this section of the book for Wonder Hell, when we're talking about the things that we do to self-sabotage, where we need to be a lot more, uh, intentional

Laura Gassner Otting ([10:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell ([10:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

With our actions.

Laura Gassner Otting ([10:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. And I think, you know, I I, I, I was listening to somebody at a podcast the other day saying that we overestimate what we can do in a day, but underestimate what we can do in a year. Right. And so it's not about the, like, the big giant actions. It's about these tiny little actions, like these little steps, these small habits each day, like being intentional about it. And so, you know, I'm right now in the midst of book launch, so like, my life is complete and total chaos. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like I, I haven't slept in the same bed for two nights in a row. I haven't slept for more than two hours a night. Like I'm just exhausted.

Corey Andrew Powell ([10:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hotels, hotels, hotels.

Laura Gassner Otting ([10:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hotels, right? And so I could say, well, everything's just going to crap right now. I'm just gonna like, you know, ride it out and eat a bunch of frozen pizza and funions and like comfort food, right?

Corey Andrew Powell ([10:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

One of my favorites, by the way,

Laura Gassner Otting ([10:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Sorry to the people on the plane next to me after I've had pizza. Fun, fun. But, um, but I could also say, look, I know that the pillars of good health are hydration, nutrition, sleep, and movement. Right? So like, maybe I'm not gonna be able to go out and, you know, row for an hour on the Charles River or run, you know, a a a 10 K tomorrow. But Right. I can stretch for an hour. I can decide while I'm waiting for the airplane to just do a couple extra loops around, you know, the airport. Like, I can move for an hour. I can make sure that I'm drinking enough water. I can, I can say, okay, I do wanna have the pop tart before I do that, I'm gonna have like a breast of chicken. Like I'm just gonna like, you know, try to make sure that I'm just doing the small things that I know will add up so that I'm not in this kind of energy debt later. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And I think we get ourselves in energy debt when we're not intentional about some of the better habits that we just know are good for us.

Corey Andrew Powell ([11:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah. Very true. I mean, very often it's like we just know, like for example, it's very clear that, and I'm guilty of this, but it's very clear that fitness will help you live a healthier life. Yes. Fitness may potentially help you live longer. There's a whole bunch of benefits that we know that we can gain from that. And yet most of us really are deficient in how well we take care of ourselves knowing exactly what the income is. But it's much easier to sit on the couch with remote control.

Laura Gassner Otting ([12:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Uh, it's much easier. And, you know, I try to think about like, what are the things that happen in my life that, that get me off track? And sometimes it's like really well-intentioned stuff. Like somebody wants to pick my brain, they're interested in me mentoring them about some particular thing. And so I say, great, no problem. Here's my calendar. Just pick an hour and they pick an hour. But what hour do they pick? They pick the hour that works for them. First of all, they don't need an hour. They probably need 40 minutes <laugh>, or maybe they need 20 minutes. But like, you just give people your time and they pick the hour that works for them and the hour that works for them. May the hour, maybe part of the block of the day where I am the most creative. So now I'm giving somebody, if I'm the most creative between nine and 12 every morning and I'm giving somebody the hour from 10 to 11, I'm not only giving away my gold of that one hour.

Laura Gassner Otting ([13:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I've probably given away all three because I'm really not gonna be focused. I won't have that big work block. And so what I think to myself is, okay, well if I, if I'm sacrificing that, then what happens? Maybe I'm waking up earlier, maybe I'm working later and I'm, then I'm skipping my workout. So now instead of like meet and eat, I do a meet and move. So I literally, we say to people like, I'd love to help you with that problem. If you're an early riser, I'm awake every day at 6:00 AM on my treadmill. You can walk, you can sit at your desk. Doesn't matter to me, but we can meet and move. So if you don't mind a little, like a little heavy breathing <laugh>. Yeah. Yeah. And the person sometimes will say like, well, I don't know if I can walk and talk.

Laura Gassner Otting ([13:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And I'm like, well, that's fine cuz you're asking me for advice. Right. So I'll be doing most of the talking. Right. <laugh>. Right. You'll be okay. Yeah. But so, so I try to think of like, what are the things that I'm sacrificing and what are the things that I still like wanna do for free for other people and how can I combine those so that it's more intentional and I get to like start my day by feeling good physically. Cause I'm moving, feeling good emotionally cuz I've helped somebody and feeling good mentally. Because their best way to get out of imposter syndrome is to help somebody else do something you've already done because it reminds you that you actually know something. Yeah. Yeah. So I end up starting the day in a much better place. And then that creative block is way more efficient.

Corey Andrew Powell ([14:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I mean, the mentoring aspect is wonderful. I mean, I to your point, I mean, when we feel like we can maybe help someone avoid the pitfalls that we, uh, encountered or help the help it be a little easier for them because we have knowledge to gain. But I love that you bring up that it can really be at the detriment of our own success and our own ability to thrive. And I had to learn that. And I'm still, I'm a yes person. I wanna say yes to everybody and everything. So I'm a helper and I love people to be, I want people to like me <laugh>. And you know.

Laura Gassner Otting ([14:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes, and there's nothing wrong with that. Uh, to a point.

Corey Andrew Powell ([14:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

To a point where, um, what I'm learning now, thanks to, uh, another guest I have in the show named Rob Shuter, who was a publicist to a lot of celebrities. He was like, there's a point where you have to don't say yes first, actually say, I'll get back to you. Assess your bandwidth. You don't have to like, the word yes doesn't have to fly outta outta your mouth. Say, I'll, I'll let you know if I can do that. And you literally step back and go, can I do this or not right now? And then just be honest about it. So I'm trying to do that.

Laura Gassner Otting ([15:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I think there's better questions actually. Hmm. I think there's better questions. Okay. I ask myself four questions every time anybody asks me something, I ask myself, and this is so selfish, but all charity begins at home and you gotta start somewhere. There you go. <laugh>, will this thing help me? Will this thing help me on the other side of this? Pick your brain call. Can we just check in call? Can you be the chair of my kids'? You know, the PTA bake sale. Like whatever the thing is, do I see myself on the other side of this meeting? This call, this request is ask, getting closer to my goals are farther from my goals. And if you're getting farther from your goals, if you're doing it, then you need to ask yourself, you know, whether or not is it worth it? Makes sense?

Laura Gassner Otting ([15:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. Right. Is it worth it? Number one, will this thing help me? Number two, will this thing help someone else? So if I can't see how it's gonna help me, but I can see very clearly how it's going to help someone else. And the can I pick your brain doesn't necessarily help them if they sent that email to 15 people and you're just the first one to respond. Right? Right. Right. Are you the person who makes sense? Does this thing help me? Does this thing help someone up? If it's not gonna help me, but I can see how it clearly helps somebody else and I care about that person, then I'll still say yes. Number three, will this thing cause me joy? It may not help me, it may not help somebody else, but if it's gonna be fun and I'm gonna enjoy it, then I'm gonna say yes every day of the week and I'll figure everything else out.

Laura Gassner Otting ([16:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hmm. Fine. Yeah. And number four, and I think this is a better question than a can I help this person is am I the best qualified to help this person? Should I be the one to help this person? Right? Yeah. Yeah. So is there somebody else who is better suited, better connected, better knowledgeable, more knowledgeable to help this person than me? And in that case, you know, because I think what happens sometimes is like, take the PTA example, right? Like you're running to pick up your kid from school and the head of the PTA comes running out and they're like, oh my god, Corey, we just lost the guy who was gonna chair the PTA. He, he had an emergency, he can't do it. Can you do it? Are you the most qualified person to do that? Or we're just the, just the body most proximate body in that moment, you were the most proximate heartbeat.

Laura Gassner Otting ([17:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And so a lot of times we get asked to do something, not because we have been well researched as the most qualified person to do the thing, but because we're the most proximate heartbeat. So number one, will this thing help me? Number two, will it help someone else? Number three, will it cause me joy? And number four, is there somebody else better suited to help? And if the answer to number four is yes, then the response is, I don't have the bandwidth to do this right now, but give me a minute to think about somebody else who might be better off. And then you've helped by passing them along, right? You've still helped, you've still said yes, but you haven't said yes. Take everything you've said. Yes. Let me get you closer to your goal. Mm. By helping you get there.

Corey Andrew Powell ([17:41](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I love that. So I hope everyone who's, who's listening and watching will take note of those four steps because it is a very difficult thing for many of us to, to say no. But if we say no with some sort of methodical process, or we've really thought about it before arriving at, no, I think it makes us feel better. Like we're not letting someone down as well. So it has a, there's a twofold, but that's also accepting. There is that one little part in the beginning. It's okay to be, I don't wanna call it selfish, but self, self directed Self, okay. Yeah. Self-directed. Yes.

Laura Gassner Otting ([18:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes. Here's the thing. So like when I, when I was looking for blurbs for, for Wonderhell, my book, Wonderhell, I reached out to somebody who is a very, very well known business strategy thinker. Now Wonderhell is for leaders. It's about career development, it's about personal life development, but it's more of like personal development in that sort of, you know, leadership space. And like, here's business strategy for managers. Right? And she's really like in that latter group. And I reached out to her cuz she's super well respected and super well known. And I was like, Hey, would you blurb my book? And she wrote back and she was like, yeah, I'd be happy to, but why don't you reach back out to me when you're in the stage of actually like looking for blurbs and if it strategically makes sense for me to be one of the four blurbs that you put on the cover of the book mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Laura Gassner Otting ([18:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Cause I know that space is limited, then I'm more than happy to do it. But if in the meantime you decide there's somebody else who's better and you think I may know them, I'd be happy to connect you to them. Wow. What an amazing way for her to say no. Because what she was saying to me was, Laura, at the end of the day, it doesn't make sense for me to be one of the four people on your, like, you need to have Mel Robbins and Amy Cuddy and Jonathan Fields and Marshall Goldsmith and other people that are closer to your demographic than me. She was just like the bright, shiny name who I was, happened to be emailing at the time, six months ahead of needing blurbs. And she said no to me in a way that was like, no, and let me help you get closer to your goal. And I took careful note on that. And now every time somebody emails me to blurb their book and it doesn't make sense, I send them back a very similar answer. So I think in addition to thinking before we say yes or say no, pay attention to how people say no to you and adopt some of the ways that they do it. If those are, if those ways make you feel pretty good

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know, in a way it's a different situation. But it reminds me of a lesson I learned when I had my first role in management, uh, managing copy, other copywriters. And I had never been a manager before. But you know, you made me think there are these processes in which we can communicate with people so it doesn't come off as we're rejecting them. And you can still make it a positive, uh, situation for all of you. And one of the things I learned, which is kind of another lesson, is when you have to critique someone about something they can improve upon, you lead in with the positive mm-hmm. <affirmative>, when you want to talk to them about something they could do better, lead in with something that they do well already and congratulate them under, you know, tell them that they're doing good, commend them on it, and then be like, but you can work on this a little bit. So there's these lessons that we can learn just in leadership that really go across all situations. I think.

Laura Gassner Otting ([20:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes. I, um, there's a, there's a woman by the name of Tampson Webster who, uh, does a lot of, uh, coaching for speakers. And I watched her coach some speakers once and she, uh, started off with the positives and then she went to the, and it would be even better if mm-hmm. <affirmative> you mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. And I was like, oh, that's a great phrase. Would be even better if, well I can I tell you my worst management story ever <laugh>. Please do. Yes. So when I first started managing, I had no idea how to manage. I had no idea what to do. And I was growing my executive search firm so fast that I just needed somebody who I could say, I'm super busy President Laura, have you met my VP so and so? Mm-hmm. Right? Mm-hmm. We'll call her Jane. Right. Have you met my VP Jane?

Laura Gassner Otting ([21:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And so she could slot in for me right now. Okay. I made the mistake by hiring somebody who was not actually senior enough, but who was like, close enough. And I figured if I gave her the VP title, then I could just, here you go. Now what happened is, because I gave her the VP title, she thought she was a VP. Mm. Oh yeah. She wasn't a VP. Right. But she thought I gave her the title and I kind of had to tea unteach her everything she thought she knew before I could teach her how to do things the way we did it at, at, at this firm. So I'm Gen X, she's a millennial. She went to business school. I did not, she lived in New York City one day I was in New York. Things were not going. This, this is, we, I ran a virtual company.

Laura Gassner Otting ([21:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So we were, we were remote before it was COVIDS. Cool. Hmm. So I'm down in de I'm down in, in, in New York City and I'm meeting with a client and I decided we're gonna, we're gonna have coffee cause I need to like, have a conversation with Jane directly and be like, yeah, okay. Things are not working. So I sit down and I start to like, give her some feedback, which admittedly I was not doing very well because I was n I didn't know how to manage people. And she leans across the table and puts her hand on my arm and she goes, Laura, let me talk to you about how to manage people of my generation. Oh, <laugh>. Okay. First of all, like, how'd you take that? Don't do that. <laugh>. Right? I was like, uh, okay. And I'm thinking of myself, like, I'm trying basically not just not to fire you right in this moment.

Laura Gassner Otting ([22:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like, okay, please, please illuminate me. So she goes, let me teach you about how to, how to talk to people might like manage people of my generation. I was like, okay. And she goes, have you heard of this thing called a compliment sandwich? And she's literally using this tone of voice with me. Now, if you've been listening to this podcast for the last 20 minutes, you know that like, that's not a tone of voice that I've probably like wanna have a conversation? No. And, and I'm thinking to myself like a compliment sandwich. Like, nobody ever, like nobody says, I want a, you know, a Rye bread sandwiches, I want a roast beef sandwich. It's not compliments it's crap. Right. It's a crap sandwich. I'm like, no, no, do tell. So she goes, well, and exactly this tone of voice, well first you have to tell me something really good about my work.

Laura Gassner Otting ([23:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So I walk in open and wanting to hear what you have to say, then you need to give me some criticism. And then she wags your finger at me. Oh, walk it last night. I do that. It needs to be constructive. And then the other side of the sandwich, you need to tell me a second nice thing to say about my work. So I leave wanting to put in practice your criticism and I kid you not, I'm thinking to myself, I pay your paycheck. That should be enough for you to want to put my criticism into effect. But what came out of my mouth, and I'm not proud of this, was you see the problem with that, Jane, is that I can't think of a second nice thing to say about your work.

Corey Andrew Powell ([23:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>

Laura Gassner Otting ([23:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Corey. It might have been the worst, most horrible, most cruel thing I've ever said. Oh yeah. Out loud in my life. It was terrible in that moment I realized I need to learn how to manage people because I can never do that again to another human being. I mean, it wasn't, it wasn't factually incorrect, but it, but it was, yeah. Not kind. No, it was not good. And so learning how to help people, learning how to talk to them, learning how to teach them how to be better became, I mean, I'm one of the top executive coaches in the world now. Like, learning how to give people feedback became a Yeah. A a passion of mine mm-hmm. <affirmative> after that moment. But I think we all have to learn how to use language in a way that is better for all involved.

Corey Andrew Powell ([24:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, I love that. Oh, and that remind Okay, well two things there. One, it's so funny you brought up that example because I was asked to just do a contributing, uh, quote to an article that's coming up and it's about, you know, what not to do in leadership. And I, and I, um,

Laura Gassner Otting ([24:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You are welcome to use that story. Well listen, it's not one that makes me look very good. I probably shouldn't tell that story out loud, but I kind of feel like, you know?

Corey Andrew Powell ([24:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, well you learn from it. But I just thought it was kind of funny because I used, it was about, uh, fictional characters and film or TV that are, and I used Miranda Priestley from <laugh>. Yes. So it was Yes, yes. It was very that I, all I saw when you told that story, I saw you as like Meryl Streep as Miranda going, well the problem with that dear.

Laura Gassner Otting ([25:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes. Yes.

Corey Andrew Powell ([25:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>. So, but you learned from it. That's all. That's all, move on. That's all. Yes. But the, but there's a leadership lesson there, which I wanna bring back to assessing our mistakes, learning from them. You knew in that moment that you had to make something, uh, make a difference so that you could then progress and be who you are today. Yes. Which is a highly respected leader in that space. But yeah. So if you don't learn from those mistakes and lead with humility, then it's all that I think that means you're a bad person and that's not who you are. You know what I mean? So, yes.

Laura Gassner Otting ([25:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. And, and, and you know, I think it's funny because in the moment, I mean, I remember leaving there and just being like, I got, and I called my mentor at that point and I was like, dude, I just did something cruel and possibly, uh, uh, inhumane. Like I, I need to learn how to manage. And he said, uh, you actually don't need to learn how to manage. You need to hire a COO who's gonna manage your people for you. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, because the highest invest of your use of your time is being out, selling your firm. Like being out there talking up the, the, the, the new way that you're doing executive search so that the entire sector can understand it and get it and wanna hire you. Then you need somebody inside who's gonna manage your people. Like you need to like tell people about the incredible quality of the work you're doing and then somebody inside who's gonna make sure that quality is delivered.

Laura Gassner Otting ([26:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hmm. It's like you can't do both. And it became, you know, and, and, and I thought, well, I could do both. Like I can, I can both learn how to give better feedback, but also not have to be the day-to-day manager and quality improvement of all of my people. Cuz that just makes me wanna, you know, pluck my eyelashes out one by one. <laugh>. Right. But it was that moment in time. I think a lot of people who are entrepreneurs, they start a business, they do the work really well. So they get offered more work, they do that work really well, they get offered more work, and suddenly they find themselves doing a lot of work and they have to bring somebody in to help them. And so they go from doer to manager mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And then from manager to leader, sometimes they go from doer to leader, skipping the manager part, which is what I did.

Laura Gassner Otting ([27:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I went from doer to leader and I never learned how to manage along the way. And because of it, my company didn't grow as fast as it should have in the beginning. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> because I wasn't putting into, uh, into effect the systems and the structures and the, the quality expectations and the training and all of those things. And, and I think sometimes we have to stop and say, is this the highest and best use of my time? Are there better people who should be doing some of these things? Like what is the role that I should be playing? And in the book I talk about this. So the book, uh, as as you know, is it's organized like an an amusement park. Yes. Success is supposed to feel fun just like an amusement park. And then you get there and you're like, I don't know, man.

Laura Gassner Otting ([27:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like, um, <laugh> hot. I'm like a hot, I'm sunburn the corn dog on my stomach doesn't feel so good. I thought this was gonna be fun. So there's Imposter Town, Doubtsville and Burnout City. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And in each one of the sections there are rides like the hall of mirrors or the roller coaster that evoke the feelings we have. So in the Burnout City chapter, there's one that I call the, the whack-a-Mole game. And in it I talk about two people who are entrepreneurs, one in the nonprofit space, one in the for-profit space, who as their nonprofits or their companies grew, found themselves stretched in so many different directions that they were still like fulfilling orders, you know, um, for like individual purchases. Mm-hmm. While also talking to banks about like million dollar lines of credit. And we really have to decide if we're being intentional about our leadership, what are the things that nobody else but us can do and how do we delegate everything else.

Corey Andrew Powell ([28:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Laura Gassner Otting, author of Limitless, but also author of the new book, Wonderhell, which is a terrific read that we all can benefit from. Thanks for being here today. It's really been a pleasure. And I think I'm gonna go run a marathon, maybe.

Laura Gassner Otting ([28:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh> let me know.

Corey Andrew Powell ([29:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>. I will do.

Laura Gassner Otting ([29:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

We can train together.

Corey Andrew Powell ([29:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you. All right. I'll keep you, I'm gonna put you put that in my note in pencil though. No, well, we'll see. We'll see. You never know. Thanks so much.

Laura Gassner Otting ([29:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you Corey.

Corey Andrew Powell ([29:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/20lrMIbVpUeASUx0e4a8GKfpS8G1bldIZ2e9JP6eGd_1dNsiSd21C9V3srETr5kGA9t9YQ_C6e5nKq0DCVE3g5CD_bE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by The National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.