

**096: Running to Give Choice a Voice  
with Grace Van Cleave**



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**With Your Host**

**Rachel Rodgers**

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## 096: Running to Give Choice a Voice with Grace Van Cleave

There are people out there who are brilliant, who are geniuses with social media, with writing emails, with all of the different aspects. Let them do that so you can do what only you can do. Which is getting out there talking to voters, connecting with people, creating your platform, all of those things that help you to prepare to be this candidate and to succeed as a candidate. And that's exactly what we need to be doing as entrepreneurs as well, I love it so much.

You want to make more money? You are in the right place. Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*, that's seven as in seven figures. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers. On this show, it's all about you and your money. We talk about how to maximize your earning potential, how to make better financial decisions, and how to find your million-dollar idea, that genius business idea that's going to make you a whole lot more money. I'm here to show you how to expand your income and expand your confidence, power, and joy.

If you are a woman, a person of color, a queer person, if you're a person living with a disability, or you don't fit the stereotypical image of what a millionaire is "supposed" to look like, this show is for you. No matter who you are or what you do for a living, you could be earning a lot more than you currently do. Your journey to wealth starts right here.

Hello, hello and welcome everyone to the *Hello Seven* podcast. I am so delighted today to be introducing you to one of our longtime clients, Grace Van Cleave, yay! So Grace Van Cleave is a small business owner, a community advocate, and a candidate for Iowa Senate District 17. She was raised in a deep red district of Tennessee to a family of loyal Democrats, where her grandfather served in the state legislature.

After graduating with a degree in political science from Kenyon College, Grace dedicated her early professional life to helping elect Democrats in

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Iowa and across the country. She has worked for organizations such as Emily's List, yay, America Votes, the Democratic Governors Association, and served as a finance staffer for USDA Secretary and former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack.

After her political career, Grace at the time, became the youngest executive leader at Stella and Dot and founded her own personal styling company, Amazing Grace Styling, you will see from her fabulous styling always. She specializes in styling women entrepreneurs. She resides in Des Moines with her partner John and their two redheaded rescue dachshunds, Maggie and Molly. Yay, Grace. Welcome to the podcast.

Grace: Oh, I'm so happy to be here. Thank you, Rachel.

Rachel: I'm so excited. So I am so excited that you are running for office. Tell us why did you decide to run? What made you say, because I've thought about it myself at different times and I'm like, I don't got time for this, right? Or we have every excuse in the world right not to run. So what was your story? What led you to running for office?

Grace: Yes, you know, I was somebody, I grew up in a very political household. And when I was in like fifth, sixth, eighth grade I said I wanted to run for office. But as what happens to women, we start losing our confidence.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And for me at least it was like, oh, I could never do that. I'll just be a behind the scenes staffer for other people, who were almost all white men. And then I ended up just settling here in Des Moines unexpectedly and I went into business for myself. But it wasn't until I saw Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand, who would be here campaigning for the caucuses. And I

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realized, like I relate to these women. I see the way they are talking, that sounds like me talking about starting my business.

But I also thought I'll never get the chance to run. I mean, here in Iowa, people die in their seats, see Chuck Grassley as an example. And I was like, I'm never going to get the chance. And then it happened. I, during Covid, was screaming at the TV a lot, not just Donald Trump, but our Governor Kim Reynolds.

And also something I'm very passionate about is reproductive justice. And seeing that choice, I shouldn't say choice, that abortion access is in danger of being limited. So when we had redistricting I found out that I lived in a brand new safely Democratic seat, and it was open with no incumbent.

Rachel: Wow.

Grace: Yeah, and when I found out about it my first reaction was, well, why don't I run? And my partner said, I was hoping you would say that.

Rachel: Wow!

Grace: Yes, and the reason I was able, it just came out of my mouth was years, I've been working with Hello Seven, honestly, since 2019. It was years of learning to take risks, of learning it's okay to invest a lot of money and you don't know if it's coming back. It's okay to put yourself out there, it is safe to be seen.

And I don't think if I had started with Hello Seven in 2019 no way would I have said I would do it. I would have come up with all these excuses. I would have been scared to say my truth and what I believe because wouldn't I scare away clients or customers? It really is, like I wasn't

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expecting to get that when I first signed up for Glow Up in 2019 and then did Million Dollar Badass, and now I'm in The Club.

That was not my goal, but it is being around such badass women that makes me go, yeah, I'm going to go do something completely badass. And I'm going to go and I'm going to be successful.

Rachel: Wow, that is absolutely amazing and so inspiring. I love hearing that, that it inspired that, because that is the full circle mission of Hello Seven, of my book *We Should All Be Millionaires*. It's all about like we need to have financial power so that we can have political power, they go hand in hand. And I want women to feel empowered.

So I just love that. I mean, overcoming the excuses to not run for office, there are many that I can think of off the top of my head right now, right? There are so many, and there's so many of us who I'm sure think about it, or think I could do better, or scream at the TV. But we never get to, okay, I'm going to be the solution. I have a solution and I'm going to run and I'm going to put myself out there.

That is so badass. So I just want to applaud you for doing that. I know you are inspiring so many people by running. So yay, I'm so excited for you.

Grace: Well thank you. If I can say, you know, I've been asked, by women especially, will be like did somebody ask you to do this? I'm like, no, no one asked me. I decided to go for it. But you're absolutely right, that it goes hand in hand with financial freedom and making an impact financially in what we want for structural change in our society. And as women, it's time to come to the table. It's just time to show up.

Rachel: Yes, I love it. So tell us what has your experience been like running as a progressive woman for office?

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Grace: Oh, well, let's see.

Rachel: We can only imagine, so tell us.

Grace: Oh, yeah, I want to know. I'm like, yes, of course I think, let's just say Tracey Liv is my mindset coach and I say a lot of times it is safe to be seen. Because not only my being, here I am, I'm a progressive woman, I'm also running staunchly on a reproductive, social and economic justice platform. And I'll tell you right now, the patriarchy is not happy about that. But it doesn't matter.

What I did, is that I knew, number one, if I wanted to do this I had to raise money. And we can talk all about the campaign finance reform, and I'm 100% in favor of that. But the way the game is now, I can have the best message in the world, but if I don't have the money to get it out there, I lose.

Rachel: Right.

Grace: So my first thing was I made a decision, because I've learned in *We Should All Be Millionaires*, you make quick decisions. They're thought through, but you got to decide. And so, I mean, I got in early, November 15th I filed and I immediately started raising money. My goal was to raise \$50,000 by the end of the year. And in Iowa that's what some people, it takes them two years to raise.

Rachel: Wow.

Grace: And so I went and I just called, if I've met you on planet Earth, you have heard from me asking for money.

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Rachel: Hey listen, this is the same kind of energy that I want entrepreneurs to have. I am calling you and I'm shaking you down, hire me. I'm asking for money because look, we have to scream from the rooftops. Otherwise people don't notice, they're busy, and you got to ask for what you need.

Grace: You have to ask for what you need and what I've learned from you is you got to ask for high amounts. Like I don't have time to make a million calls. I appreciate every dollar that comes in, but yeah, it might be more comfortable to ask for \$100, but it's going to save me a lot more time if I ask for 500 or 1000.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And so that is my biggest, I mean I was asking for whatever made me feel uncomfortable, is what I was asking for.

Rachel: Yes, I love it.

Grace: And guess what? I raised almost 55,000 in 49 days with two major holidays.

Rachel: Amazing, Grace. I love that. So good.

Grace: And people were kind of like, well, you've probably run out of people to call and I'm like, money is abundant, there's always people to call.

Rachel: And I will keep calling them.

Grace: That's right. So guess what? So now I've got this little nest egg whereas nobody else has gotten in the race yet, and if they do they're

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starting behind me. So now I get to go hire the people who know how to do this well.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: I hired a team that when I told people, they're like—

Rachel: First of all, wait a minute, this is like a masterclass in entrepreneurship. First of all, I hollered from the rooftops and asked for help. And then I went and hired the people who know what they're doing so that I can figure it out and not be doing this by just, you know, flailing, but have someone guiding me. I mean, this is brilliant. I'm so proud.

Grace: Oh yeah. Well, so most people, honestly, this is the other thing that people get stuck on is they think, well, it's only the state Senate. This is a small race, I can't ask for a lot of money and I can't hire people. I have to do this all myself and with like asking people to donate time and money to like do my graphic design.

And I was like, heck no. I want to win, I'm hiring professionals to do all of this. I am not asking people to do emotional labor, or I'm not going to people and saying, "Can you do my graphic design for free?" No, I'm going to go pay the queer woman to do it. And I paid her a lot of money because I wanted it done right. I did not ask for a discount because I'm a candidate.

Rachel: Yes, I love it. So good.

Grace: And it's because I had the money to do that. I hired a campaign manager and she's paid a very, she's paid very well because that's what you do. And she's a single mom. I didn't sit there and go, "Oh, I'm sorry, I can't hire you because you have children and you're not going to be able to

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work all day and night for me.” It was literally, I was going if I'm advocating for this kind of world in my campaign, I have follow it.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: I mean, I have my mail vendors, and these are people who've worked on presidential campaigns. And guess what? I can afford them. I can afford it so I'm going to do it. And it was always like, well, we'll just have the money, you know, like our team, I very much said, I was like we are never getting in a mindset that there's no money. Never.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: There's always money coming in. And we just had our, I just had my finance report, I out raised my opponent almost two to one total. And some people might say, “Oh, you spent a lot of money, though.” Because this is this other weird thing that politics does, and I think there are entrepreneurs who do this too, is we have to file and you have to see, like here's all the people who gave me money and here's how I spent it.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And before there's this thing where there will be like it's a burn rate. You know, like, oh, but she spent all of her money. She doesn't have any money left. And it's like, yeah, I spent it to win.

Rachel: Hello. I don't get it.

Grace: So why are people holding onto their last dollar?

Rachel: Exactly. If people donated money so that you could win, right, and that you could get this seat, why would you sit on it? Why wouldn't you use

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that money to help you win? Like that's why people are funding this campaign.

Grace: That's right. I'm like, I've raised over \$100,000. And if those people found out that I was like, "Oh, I didn't win because I wanted to show I had a lot of money that I didn't use." No, I've spent a lot and I raised a lot and it's because I wasn't spending my time doing stupid things. I wasn't writing my own emails. I wasn't doing my own social media. I wasn't doing my own finance reports. No, hire people who can do that and hire the best people.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And not only that, because I had money I didn't have to listen to anybody's, pardon my language, bullshit. When the party wanted me to sign a thing that said, yes, I'll give you all of my donor's information and yes, I'll ask you for permission if I ever want to rent a list, or somebody wants to rent mine. I'm like, nope, I'm not doing that because I'm going to protect my data, because that's what I've learned in Hello Seven. And two, you're not giving me any money, I can raise my own. I don't care.

Rachel: Right. So good. I mean, that's what it is, right? Money is empowering. So now you don't have to kowtow to what the party is saying or what somebody is saying you should be doing. You get to do it your own way, which I absolutely love. It's so empowering.

And you're so right, there are people out there who are brilliant, who are geniuses with social media, with writing emails, with all of the different aspects. Let them do that so you can do what only you can do. Which is getting out there talking to voters, connecting with people, creating your platform, all of those things that help you to prepare to be this candidate and to succeed as a candidate. And that's exactly what we need to be doing as entrepreneurs as well. I love it so much.

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Do you feel, I already know the answer to this but I'm going to give you an opportunity to answer it anyway. Do you feel women candidates are held to a different standard when it comes to running for office?

Grace: Y-E-S, yes. Look, I'll be honest because our society, as we all know, is a patriarchy, we can also say a racist patriarchy. But it is so, you know, and I've been there where I've been like, "I like her, I want women in office but I don't want that woman." It is so subconsciously ingrained, the misogyny. And I get it from other women.

I think that there are things, like I raised all this money, if I had been a man they would have cleared the field. They wouldn't be talking about how amazing I am. As a woman, it's well, Emily's List gave her all that money. Emily's List has not given me a dime. There's no way I could have worked hard and done it, somebody else did it.

Rachel: Yes, there's an assumption. Right, there's an assumption somebody's back there pulling the strings, doing you a favor, there's something unethical going on. There's always an assumption of something negative, it's never that you get the credit, right? Meanwhile, sometimes when men are running, that's exactly what's going on but they are given all the credit in the world and a throne to sit upon, right?

Grace: That's exactly right. And I sit there and I have to go, you know, if I go to any interview, any policy forum, anything, I have to be four times as prepared as I think a man would have to be because I'm held to such a different standard. And I realize for women of color it's even worse. That I have to sit there and I have to know all these little policies because if not, it's like so she doesn't know anything.

And I also realize that it's like I can't be as forceful as I want to be, although I certainly have gotten lately because it's becomes off putting. Think about

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Kamala Harris in her debate with Mike Pence. She couldn't just say like, you're an idiot. She had to still be genteel because it becomes off putting for women, not men.

Rachel: So I read a report that 97% of elected representatives in Iowa throughout the state's history have been held by men. Has that been a challenge in your run?

Grace: Absolutely. You know, I think that it's kind of making people aware, because folks are like, well, why should I vote for you? And I'm going right now we only have, there's 12 women in the Iowa Senate representing the state. Seven are pro-choice Democratic women, two of those are retiring. And do you think that that's enough to represent women's issues? No, it's not.

And I know that there are a lot of men who would say that they're pro reproductive rights, and I believe them, but that is different than a woman advocating for other women. And I also, like I understand that I'm coming into this with the experience of a white woman. So thanks to also working with Hello Seven I've made sure that I am doing my best to listen and de-center myself and that when I say women, it's all women of color. It's Black women, it's Latina women, it isn't just speaking from my experience.

Rachel: Yes. Yes, and that's so important because I think so many people don't realize that when they're speaking about issues that are from a feminist perspective, they're leaving out a lot of, a lot of Black women see the word feminism in a negative light, right? For good reason, right? There's a history there that isn't super positive and definitely didn't necessarily benefit us.

But I believe you, because I've known you for several years, when you say that you're advocating for this, you are doing so for all women and their

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experiences and making sure that we're all heard. And I agree with you. It's interesting to see, well not interesting, really the word is infuriating when we see rooms where reproductive rights or other women's issues are being discussed and it's nothing but older white men who are making these decisions.

It's like, what? And none of you have a problem with this? Right, because that is what patriarchy is, right? Old white men making decisions for everybody else, right? And that has to end. That cannot be how we continue.

Grace: That's exactly right. And kind of going back to the money piece, this is where we look at our society and the structures that need to come down, is that who has access to power? People with money. And usually that is white men, traditionally.

And what I have seen, you know, I look at our activism that women are coming into their own. But it can't just be that we, you know, especially I think of the group that I hang around with in We Should All Be Millionaires. Here we are creating this wealth, but then you still have folks who are like, I'll give you \$5, to a regular candidate.

And it's like, no, we need to show up. And you can give a lot of money and you can give, like even to a to a state candidate, especially a woman of color, Like the old boys network isn't coming for her. But if you give her money, that's how she can win.

I'm sorry that that's how it is. I'm sure people will fight me and be like, "It's not about money." And it's like guess what, this is the system we're in right now and it favors men. So this is where women need to learn to show up.

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Rachel: Yes, I 100% agree. And I've had that same conversation with people who are anti-capitalist. And trust me, I get it and I share some of the same sentiment. But I also live in a society where money is what is valued, money is what opens doors, money is what gives power. And so to me, I'm like let's come at it from all sides. Yes, let's march in the street. Yes, let's advocate for what is important to us and fight in all the ways that we can.

And part of the way that we can fight is with money, right? Earning more and then having more to be able to fund the candidates that we feel passionate about that represent our interests, that are going to get laws passed that affect us, right? And we're seeing it right now, needing to see, you know, there are definitely some amazing people in office that I'm excited about. But there's not enough of them, right?

And so it's still the old boys club and the old guard, and still corporate interest and all of that stuff and that matters a lot more than human beings. And it's ridiculous, there are solvable problems that we could just pass a law and solve it, but we refuse to, right?

And so I agree with you 100%, this is the society we live in, that we've inherited. And so we have to work with the rules that we have to gain the advantage that we need to create a society that is more equitable for all, not just straight white men, right? Straight cis white men, I should say.,

Grace: And I think if you notice, who are the women that people come after the most? You know, let's look at somebody that's a disruptor like Cori Bush, AOC, Ayanna Pressley.

Rachel: That's exactly who I was thinking of actually, is Cori Bush.

Grace: Cori Bush, exactly. And, you know, and she gets it, I think it's from men, it's from women. Like, why is she saying that? Why is she doing that?

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Because she's going, I am here to represent people and issues. I am not here to get the chairmanship of some committee. I am not here because I just want to be important.

And I think that, you know, she is so authentic and authentic to who she is, and is going like, no, I am going to go sleep outside the capitol, because this is the right thing to do. I don't care if people in my own party are angry.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And that is who we need, and I think voters are craving it.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: They want authenticity and they want people who they know are, they're there for the, like I say to folks, I'm like, I'm here to fight for you. I'm not here just to say I want to reach across the aisle and we're all going to be best friends. No, I am here to fight because we have things that I hear about every day when I'm talking to voters and I'm enraged at the end because, like you said, this is so simple. Let's just pass a law, let's fix this. And yet for some reason, we can't.

Rachel: Exactly and even that rhetoric of reach across the aisle, I don't know, across the aisle you got some really hardcore racist, sexist, scary, terrifying people. Don't reach across the aisle with them. Don't make nice with them. I think enough of that. And that's what the Democratic Party has been doing for so long, let's make nice, let's get on the same page. No, let's not get on the same page. Let's fight, right? Let's burn it down, okay, and start over.

Grace: This is exactly what I'm saying. And look, I understand why there are, especially with people of color, why they're not super happy with, yeah,

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they don't want to be Republicans but they're not happy with the Democratic Party either. I get it. But this is the system we're in, so it's one or the other. And I'm the same way, I literally say to voters if you are happy with how things are going here in the Democratic Party, do not vote for me. You will be sorely disappointed.

Rachel: I love it.

Grace: If you like the status quo, I am not your candidate. But I agree, there is this fantasy of like why can't they just work together? It's on both sides. I'm going this person doesn't believe in science, like this person doesn't believe that I should have access to birth control. So where do I compromise on abortion rights? Where's the compromise there? There is no compromise.

Rachel: Right, exactly. I mean, it's just so telling, right, with this formula shortage that we now have, which is so terrifying for so many parents of young, young infants and children. And it's like several members of the Republican party voted against doing something about it, like an actual solution to this problem.

How are you voting against this? You want to force us to have babies we don't want, but then you don't want to supply them with food. You don't care about them once they're actually born. You only care when they are inside of a woman so you can control her? Like what is this actually about, right? Like what is it actually about? Because it's not about children and people and families, it's not about that.

Grace: No. And you have to breastfeed. You have to breastfeed too.

Rachel: I breastfed three children for years and was delighted to do it. And there's no way, it would never ever come out of my mouth the suggestion

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that the solution to the formula shortage is for all women to breastfeed. First of all, you don't create a society that makes that realistic, right? Other countries women get months off, a year off from work when they have a baby. That's a reasonable situation where you might be able to breastfeed.

And also, if your body allows you to, right? Because that is a factor here, it's not just whether you feel like it or not. And also, why can't we make a decision because we fucking feel like it or not, right? Why do we have to be forced to do something we don't want to do, right? It's just, it's so outrageous.

Grace: And I think so much that now kind of being on this side of it, because every night, from four to eight every night I'm knocking on doors and talking to voters. And on the weekends it's all day. And I go to every neighborhood. I am not sitting there just going to like here are the neighborhoods I know vote a lot, or these are my people. No, I'm going everywhere to people that are like, nobody's ever knocked on my, no candidate has ever knocked on my door. And I'm like, yeah, because I'm here and I want to hear what you have to say.

And the other day I was sitting there, I knock on a woman's door and, you know, you wonder who are the people that live by the interstate? When you drive by and you see the houses that when they walk out the door they look at an interstate. And now I feel like it is a privilege that I've gotten to talk to the people, they've invited me into their home. You look and you're like, so this is how that person, this is their world.

And this woman said to me, first she almost started crying, she was like, "I've lived here 32 years, not a candidate has ever knocked on my door." And two, she starts to, this is what gets lost in the formula coverage, she says my daughter is on WIC and she has her allotment every month of eight formula cans.

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Well, you have to use them or lose them. Well, if she can't get the formula, she's losing the benefit that is rightfully hers. Or a family member is getting it, because she was just like we're dealing with like every family member looks at every store. Well, they're not going to reimburse the family member for her formula, so that isn't covered.

Instead they usually find, and it's not that all women, not that other women aren't suffering and they aren't allowed to. But it's more covered in the like, look at these white women who can't find it at Target.

Rachel: Right, exactly. You know, and it's because it's always covered from the perspective of a middle class woman, right? And we're forgetting that there's a lot of other kinds of women out there that are also suffering in a variety of ways. And usually, if you're a low income woman, you're suffering more than the middle class. The middle class woman has options.

I was ordering formula from Europe when my children were babies because my son wouldn't take the American formula. So I had to try other ones because I couldn't get him to take it when I tried to transition him. So I mean, I agree with you, here's the thing, right? Because women are not leading the conversation all the nuance is lost and it's just like these blanket statements that like, oh, the solution is close your legs, the solution is get your boobs out and breastfeed.

And it's like that is not the solution and also it's so enraging that it's almost like that is a tactic, right? To have us be so angry that we can't even think sometimes because you're so incredibly enraged by the choices that are being made by the stupidity coming out of pundits, and even straight up politician's mouths on a regular basis. It is so frustrating.

So here's one question I have for you, obviously, we are in a climate where women's civil liberties are constantly under threat, as we've been talking

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about. As a legislator, what ideas are you bringing to the table to uplift women in your state?

Grace: Sure, here's something that I've learned from We Should All Be Millionaires and working with you for so many years, which is, when I decided to run, like this was a directive to my team. And it's why I hired the right people, because they were in agreement with me. I'm going to be 100% myself.

I'm going to be authentic to who I am and I'm going to talk about the issues I genuinely care about. I'm not going to do a poll and figure out what people like and then I'm going to pretend I care about those things. And so for me, and I remember my mail vendor, who is also a single mom, and she said to me, she goes, "What are your three, what are your three things?" And she's like, "And you better like them because you don't have to say them over and over and over again."

And it was reproductive freedom. It was childcare and family, expanded childcare and paid leave. And helping small businesses. And then we've also added education in there as we've had some issues here in Iowa. But those, I genuinely believe that. I genuinely believe that if we increase access to capital for small businesses, especially women and minorities, we are going to have a better state and we are going to have more profit, we're going to have better jobs.

I genuinely believe believe if we have childcare, we have subsidies that are accessible to more families, that we raise what we think the limit of poverty level is for this. That we have solutions that aren't, you know, here the Republicans are saying, well, you can just, we'll let 14 year olds watch 12 Children, that's how we'll fix this. Or we'll build a bunch of centers. We're going to build a bunch of centers that don't pay anyone who works there.

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You have no one to work there and no one who can afford them. That's how we'll fix this.

And it's like, you know what? If you get have childcare options for women, they're going to go back to work. That is how we increase productivity. It's not about creating robots, it's about making childcare available for families. And if you have, if a woman has a right to autonomy of her own body, to make decisions about when she is having children, that is when you have, like you can't have a society that is just and equal if they don't have that.

And when I came out and I said like, this is what I'm running on. And this was, I knew that your Roe v. Wade was going before the Supreme Court, I did not know there would be a leaked opinion in May. I had no idea. But I was like, this is who I am. My literature literally says running to give choice of voice.

I had people that are “powerful” I mean, actually they're very powerful Democrats where I live. Elected officials, major donors, people who were like, do not talk about abortion. Do not. You can put it on your website, but don't talk about it. People don't vote on that. Well, guess what? I'm now looking like this genius when I was here all along.

Rachel: Yes, listen, I can relate to something similar where I've been hollering about these same things all the time. But now that it's national news, now people are like, “Oh, you're an expert on this.” Or, “Oh, you care about this. You're a marketing mastermind.” And it's like, no, I'm not a marketing mastermind. I have been hollering it, y'all just have not been listening, okay? But glad I got your attention now. Great, let's talk about it.

Grace: That's exactly right. Like the night of the leak, of course I'm enraged and of course I was like, “I'm going to go on Facebook Live just like Rachel Rodgers did.” I'm just like, I'm enraged but I'm also like, we were kind of

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going, oh my gosh, we have mail pieces that were printed this past weekend that talk about reproductive, that are all about reproductive justice, that say running to give choice of voice. And people are going to think we just moved to do this. We're like, it's already printed and this happened.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: And that's the thing, is that people know, and I say that when people are like, I'm upset. And I'm like, "What are you most concerned about"? And they're like, abortion. And I'm going, "So here's this lit, I printed it in January." I made a video when I first started running for office, it was all about choice. I punched the governor in the nose when people were sitting there going like are you worried that Kim Reynolds will attack you? I'm like, I hope she does.

Rachel: Bring it on. Exactly. Listen, the thing is, one of the things you said earlier was I'm here to fight, right? I'm here to fight for you as voters, I'm here to fight for women's rights. If you're here to fight, then let's get scrapping, right? Like that's what you're doing and you're saying, "Governor, bring it on, I disagree with you. Let's talk about it." Right? And you're not afraid to get in there.

And I think that is so impressive and so powerful and important that you're putting yourself in that position where you have to fight. But I think it's easy, right? It feels easy when you feel so passionate. And when you feel like this is your calling, and this is your purpose, and this is your meaning, and this is what you have to do, there's no question. You don't even think about the alternative. You're just in there and you go. And I love that.

Grace: That's exactly right. And when I first, like I literally was seeing the last draft of my business website when my partner walked in and he's like,

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“Do you want any coffee?” And he shows me this map. And I was like, “I want to do this.”

But then I have come from, I'll be honest, from hustle culture, of which most Americans are. But I was in direct sales, like I've had this mindset of like you can only do one thing and you have to do it all the time. And I did have this fear of if I do this, then I'm not going to have a business or I'm not going to be able to do this. And I, you know, it was shared with me this is the fullest expression of yourself.

And being a state senator personal stylist, like that is, it's empowering women. This is who I am and I don't have to pick. Just like you have lots of different interests. You're not just like I only do We Should All Be Millionaires and that is it. We're allowed, like that is the beauty of having your own business, is that I can work around my schedule, I can do what I see.

And the whole time I've looked at this and been like, this feels so natural. I love being a candidate. I love talking to people. I love asking for money. And that's when you know you're doing the right thing. That's when I know I'm doing something that is much greater than myself.

And so I think people have wondered like, why are you so confident? And I'm like because I just know. Even if I don't win, my life is great. But I'm going to do this, I have one shot and I'm not wasting it trying to please other people. I'm going to be who I am and attract the right people to me. And it's working so far, I'll tell you that.

Rachel: Yay, I love hearing that. And that was my question, what has the community's response been to your run?

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Grace: Well, it's really interesting because when I first announced I think, there were people who knew me. And I used to work in democratic politics, I worked at the national level, like you mentioned, for many years. And that's how I moved to Iowa, was for a campaign. And so people who knew me and people who were very involved with politics were like, amazing, like, you're going to be fantastic.

But there's all these people that don't know me. And there are people that they consider themselves they're the deciders, they are the influencers, they are the gatekeepers. So no, there was a lot, I had many dismissive things said about me.

I was referred to as some girl you've never heard of, which is so dismissive especially if I compared my resume to other people. Like you would never, like I would never say, "Oh, it's just some Black person you've never heard of." There are things that, it's not okay to dismiss somebody on their race, on their sex. But it's still accepted. Like if I said anything similar, I would be asked to leave the race, and for good reason.

But it's funny, it's just like starting a business, at first you're like, okay, I've got like my three friends. And then you just, but it's like literally one door at a time asking people for their vote, listening to them. I'm now going around a second time and talking to people I've talked to before and they're saying, like, "I've done all the research and I'm voting for you."

Rachel: Yay!

Grace: And it's an honor every single time. But it's because they can tell if I'm fake or if I'm being genuine. So I think that, and now I'm starting to see people who are like, you know, we're excited. It's weird to me when other people are saying they're like, oh I was at a door and they were like, "Oh, I love her. I'm with her." And I'm like, they know me? Like really?

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Rachel: Yes.

Grace: Yeah, and you know, and there are people who are not with me and that's okay. There is a contrast with me and my opponent and that's okay. That doesn't mean that they are bad and I'm great. It's just what are you looking for? The woman I talked to this weekend who said to me, because I said, I'm like, "I'm here to fight for you and your neighborhood." And she was like, "Why don't you say work for?"

And I just said, I was like, "Ma'am, I just heard about a man who was at the public library with duct taped shoes, evicted, hungry, and sitting there trying to navigate the computer system to get the unemployment he rightfully deserved that was keeping him from paying his rent, and that's why he was evicted. I'm going to fight for that person. I'm not here to work and play nice." And she was like, "Well, I've had enough talking to you." That is fine.

I'm going to be, like I have to be who I am all the time. And there's going to be people who aren't with me, but there's going to be people who are. And that's just how we have to be in our business. Like this is it, and if you like me, great. If not, there are plenty of other people who are your flavor that you're looking for.

Rachel: Yes, I love it so much. Please tell us how can we support you? When is the election? Tell us how we can support you from now until then.

Grace: The election is Tuesday, June 7th. And I'm going to tell you right now, people ask like what can I do? Money, like you can contribute.

Rachel: Yes.

Grace: Because like that is the single best way. Yes, Facebook posts are nice, you know, sending me a comment, that's nice. Giving money is how

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people win. And so not only can you, you can go to [graceforiowa.com](http://graceforiowa.com) and donate. You can also, I would suggest looking where you live and in other states, this fight for reproductive freedom, we are so used to looking at the federal level and the courts for help with this, this is about to go to the states.

So look for the women of color, look for the women who are fighting because they don't have an old boys network that's supporting him. Like 90% of the time they're doing this themselves. And they're seen as the spoiler. Like we had a chosen person, why are you here? And it's like because. So if we want to be heard, we have to support each other. And so give, give, give.

Rachel: I 100% agree. And tell us, tell us what towns are in your district, what cities, so that folks who live in Iowa, they know whether they can vote for you.

Grace: Yep. So I'm in a very urban district, it's in Des Moines, Iowa in the capitol. And it is actually extremely diverse, both economically, both demographically. If I were to describe the neighborhoods I'd say it's like five small towns strung together.

And I have everything from like middle class white urban liberals to we have, you know, a Hispanic population, a Black population, an Asian population. And I also have very working class white, you know, white, blue collar workers in another part of town. And so I could, it would be really easy for me to kind of like change my message to every person to hear what they want to hear. They're going to figure that out, so I say my message and guess what? I have support in all of these places.

Rachel: Yes, I love that.

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Grace: Yeah, so yeah, so this is an urban district. There are only 50 senators in the state of Iowa. So yes, while I am representing them directly, I'm representing, I'm there to fight for women, and children, and minorities and underrepresented folks all across the state. And there's lots of issues that affect those communities.

Rachel: Yes, awesome. So listen, if you are in Des Moines, Iowa, check out your ballot and see if Grace Van Cleave is on it. And if she is, make sure you vote for her. And then also give to her campaign at [graceforiowa.com](http://graceforiowa.com), right?

Grace: Yes, that's right. Thank you, Rachel.

Rachel: Awesome. And then one last thing, what would you say to any woman who's out there, or any person who's out there listening right now and considering maybe running for office? What would you say to them?

Grace: Run. Like do not let anything scare you. Number one, I'm going to say this, I have never once had anybody say like, "Are you qualified for this?" You know, I would say one out of 20 people ask me about my background. They don't even know anything about my background, they just know that I believe the things they believe and I'm listening to them and asking them what they think.

So don't feel like you have to have a certain degree, or a certain background, or a certain income level. Make your voices heard, be as genuine as you can, and really, don't be afraid to ask for money. Don't assume that people don't have it or they won't give it. They're not giving it to you, they're giving it to the causes they believe in.

Rachel: Yes.

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Grace: And so if we want to disrupt and dismantle what is happening in our society, it's going to have to be because people decide to run. Nobody's going to come ask you. If you are a woman, and especially a woman of color, very rarely are they like that's the person we need to have. You're going to have to make people uncomfortable, you're going to have to run in a primary because that's the only way we make change happen.

Rachel: Yes, thank you. Thank you so much for inspiring us, Grace. We'll be watching your race, we'll be supporting you and donating. I'm so excited to have a Schmillie running for office, that's incredible. And we wish you the best of luck.

Grace: Well, Rachel, thank you from the bottom of my heart because the person that I was in 2019 before I came into the Hello Seven world, she never would have said she could do this, never. And it's because of years of being a part of this community that has changed me for the better. I have grown so much, I have friends that I, that's a whole nother podcast of all the ways that this has helped me, not just with business but in my life.

And I want to thank you for giving me this platform today and just for being such a fighter. And you also are a disruptor, and thank you. But, you know, we can be who we see, and you've shown me how to do it and so that's why it's not as scary for me to do it. And I hope somebody listening feels the same way.

Rachel: Yes, I hope so too. Thank you so much, I'm so delighted to have been part of your journey.

Grace: 100%, absolutely. You know, Hello Seven is a big part of it, and thank you, and your team too. Absolutely thank you, thank you, thank you.

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How come you're not a millionaire yet? What is standing in between you and having seven figures in the bank? Well, a lot of things might be getting in the way. Maybe you need to work on your mindset. Maybe you're trying to build a business but you honestly have no clue what you're doing. Maybe you don't have the right support network or you never go a basic financial education.

You're leaving easy money on the table and you don't even realize you're doing it. Whatever is standing in between you and having more money, I want to help you clear those blocks out of the way. So here's what you need to do, go to [helloseven.co/club](https://helloseven.co/club) and join The Club. Once you join The Club you get education, you get coaching, you get a community, you get everything you need to remove those roadblocks and start making more money today.

If you feel like you're not earning as much money as you could, then you need to join The Club, go to [helloseven.co/club](https://helloseven.co/club) and join us. That is [helloseven.co/club](https://helloseven.co/club).