

## Ep. 105: How Storytelling Helped Pauleanna Reid Become a Millionaire CEO



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Rachel Rodgers**

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Rachel: Even when you have an audience online, it's a relationship. And what are you doing to foster that relationship? Because people are like, "Well, I launched and it was crickets." Okay, well, where were you? Are you crickets every day?

Pauleanna: Yeah, right.

Rachel: Do you talk to them? Do you connect with them? Do you add value? If you don't, then they're going elsewhere where they're getting value, right? They're not just giving you their time for no reason.

Pauleanna: Yeah, they're going to keep scrolling.

Rachel: Exactly, they're going to keep scrolling. So those relationships, I think, are so critical. And you should always treat it like a relationship and real people instead of just, I have 10,000 followers or I have this many followers. I don't even like the phrase followers.

Pauleanna: Right.

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.

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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.

Rachel: Hello, hello. Welcome to another episode of the Hello Seven podcast. You are in for a treat because I am here with the magnificent celebrity ghost writer, Pauleanna Reid.

Pauleanna: I'm happy to be here.

Rachel: Yeah, I'm happy you're here. Welcome to Rodger's ranch.

Pauleanna: It's been quite an experience.

Rachel: I know, I overheard a conversation earlier and it was just like something about horses and mosquitoes. It looks glamorous but there's also mosquitoes, and dirt, and bugs.

Pauleanna: Exactly. There's the Instagram and there's the reality. It's nature, right? And things come with nature. But it's great.

Rachel: Yeah, things come with nature.

Pauleanna: As soon as I landed, honestly, I felt at ease.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: It's much different than the concrete jungle of New York, right?

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Rachel: Absolutely. And that's exactly why I left New York, because I didn't want that concrete jungle anymore. But sometimes I'm exiting my office, this is my office, y'all. So sometimes I'm leaving my office and especially if it's late at night and I hear things rustling in the woods and I'm like running.

Pauleanna: Girl, no. Nope, I watch too much CSI, First 48, I don't want to hear no sounds, no nothing.

Rachel: Well, it's never people.

Pauleanna: Okay.

Rachel: It's always creatures of some kind. And it's usually not like things that will kill you, but things that are just like I don't want them to touch me.

Pauleanna: Right.

Rachel: I'm like, why? I don't like bugs, so why do I live in the woods?

Pauleanna: Oh my God, but it's very beautiful. Like your property is absolutely amazing.

Rachel: Thank you so much. Yes, I love it. And it's so fun to invite entrepreneurs here and just like hang out and have chill vibes. It's a whole thing.

Pauleanna: It is. It really is. She's not lying, it's a vibe. I love it.

Rachel: I love it. Okay, so tell us how did you get into this work? Celebrity ghostwriting, that is such a specific, fascinating, and it's an agency as well. So I want to hear the whole journey. Because first of all people tell me all

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the time, “Well I can’t scale my work. I’m a special unicorn of one, no one else can do this work but me.”

Pauleanna: That’s impossible, yeah.

Rachel: I know.

Pauleanna: Well, you're going to hit your ceiling very early on, that's the thing.

Rachel: Exactly. Exactly. Your revenue ceiling, your time ceiling.

Pauleanna: You’re going to be burnt out quickly.

Rachel: Correct. Exactly. So if something as, I would imagine, meticulous and specialized as celebrity ghostwriting and can be scaled, truly anything can be scaled.

Pauleanna: Absolutely, absolutely.

Rachel: I love it.

Pauleanna: So the first thing I want to say is that it's important to allow your dreams to evolve.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: I actually thought that I was going to be a novelist. I thought I was going to be a songwriter. I thought I was going to be a spoken word artist, a poet. There are so many different types of writing that I tried before I landed on celebrity ghostwriting. I am also widely known as a journalist. I've been a freelance senior reporter at Forbes Women for seven years. I'm

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in the top 1% of the global writing network. But I believe that there are also jobs and there are life assignments.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And so even though I love my work as a journalist, it's very fulfilling, I get to amplify Black voices, voices of color, my calling is supporting world leaders, business leaders, and really helping them deliver their messages to their audience.

So my former life I was a corporate executive assistant for 10 years. And I was ghostwriting before I even realized what a ghostwriter was.

Rachel: Yeah. Well, first of all, can we just back that up? Being a corporate executive assistant for 10 years, like that's so impressive.

Pauleanna: Yeah, thank you.

Rachel: That is not a job I could hold on for very long because I'm completely unorganized and a hot mess express. That tells me a lot about you, that you like have a system for things.

Pauleanna: Right. And so I supported multiple C-level executives and presidents. And every day when I walked into my corporate environment I looked at it as if I was going to business school. That's really where the seed was planted.

Rachel: I love that.

Pauleanna: I'm a big believer in if you want to operate a multi-million dollar company, you really should gain the experience to see how one is run.

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Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Right? You ask questions, you raise hands, you sit in meetings that you may not even have any business sitting in, you take notes. I used to tell my boss, "Teach me how to read the sales reports. Teach me what these acronyms mean." And they were very open to having those conversations, and they knew that I wasn't going to be a lifer.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And I think from the jump I was also very honest in the interview process, because it's also a reverse interview. I'm trying to figure out if this is the right environment for me. And so if you ever make me choose between your corporate environment and the shit I got going on, it'll never be you.

Rachel: Right.

Pauleanna: So as long as you know that and you know I'm here to learn for a period of time, like we were on the same page. And many of the jobs that I entered, I was very strategic, every single corporate job I've had, I entered at my salary cap. That's because there were so many other things that were far more important to me because I knew where I was going and I knew where I wanted my life to go.

Rachel: Yes. First of all, I love so much about what you're saying because I think people, they don't recognize the journey is a beautiful thing. And there's so much to be learned even in whatever position you're in right now if it's not the position, it's not the dream. Like a career is built over time. Everybody wants everything yesterday, they want to put their career in a microwave and have it pop out with a multi-million dollar company, and it don't work that way, friends. It's going to take effort.

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And that effort that you're talking about of showing up to your corporate job and saying, what can I learn here? How can I treat this like business school? How can I get as much out of it as possible? First of all, I know for myself, if I'm working with somebody, and they are hungry, and they are interested in learning, and they're excited and they're willing to put effort in, then I'm going to pour into that person. You just want to.

Pauleanna: Absolutely. Yeah.

Rachel: That person, that former boss can become somebody who refers you and gets you one of your first clients, right? Or whatever, even if they don't, they could be somebody that teaches you things that then you can take into the next thing.

Y'all, I am so excited to tell you about ROI: The Millionaire Summit. This is my first big annual conference. Over 1,000 diverse entrepreneurs heading to San Juan, Puerto Rico, January 24th through the 26th. We are going to have a good time, y'all. We're going to dance, we're going to party, you will see amazing speakers that will teach you how they made their first million, and they're going to show you how to make your next million.

You're going to learn from the best and have diversity, right? You're going to see yourself and your identity reflected on the stage. Join us for ROI, get your ticket now. Trust me, there's going to be so much FOMO, you don't want to be mad in January when you're watching us having a good time on Instagram. So go to [ROI.helloseven.co](https://ROI.helloseven.co) and get your ticket right now.

Rachel: So I love that and I think that is so important not to miss, that even if you're not in the thing that you ultimately want to be in, how can you make the most of it right now? How can you turn it into something that is a great opportunity and a learning opportunity?



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Pauleanna: I also think it's really important to shift your perspective. So I remember when my boss handed me my offer letter, it said \$65,000 and he was so geeked. Like he was so excited and I'm like, "Okay, player, okay." And I knew from jump like a job may determine your salary, but you have complete control over your total income.

Rachel: Hello.

Pauleanna: Right? The number that's on the offer letter is what the company can afford. It doesn't amount to your true value.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: I always knew I was going to be a million dollar woman. Like the energy that he brought to the table was like, this is your cap. This is the number we see you as. But I always knew that there was more in store for me.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Because I had read autobiographies, books, watched documentaries, so I had known that this was going to be a long game. And the other thing that I wanted to say is that I really think that it's important to, you know, you can't hope for a championship ring if you never go to practice.

Rachel: Hello.

Pauleanna: So like your developmental season is absolutely critical. You can't skip over it. You can't dismiss it. You can't operate without intention. Your developmental season is where you really build your creative muscles. And so I took full advantage of the opportunity in the corporate

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arena. And before I left I actually built my company to six figures from my cubicle.

Rachel: Yes. I love that so much. And I did something, I mean, I didn't think I got to, I might have gotten. No, I didn't get to six figures, I got close to it while working a part time job in the early days because that's what was necessary, right? And I think people just have this expectation that it's supposed to be easy or it's supposed to be fast.

Pauleanna: It's not. Many days I cried my eyes out, right? Just out of frustration.

Rachel: Yes, you're like, "Why am I not on the cover of Forbes yet? What is it happening? Hello?"

Pauleanna: For real. But also too workplace trauma is a real thing, the politics.

Rachel: That too, yes.

Pauleanna: Like you have to ask for vacation. I have to ask for vacation? First of all, I operated very differently in my corporate environment. I made the vacation plans and then I told you I was going on vacation. I just don't like the politics of it all. And honestly, eventually, I just grew very frustrated.

But the two things that were very important to me before I made my transition was number one, I wanted to make sure I had a proven track record of sales. That was very important to me. So like, prove to myself that I could sell something.

Rachel: Yes.

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Pauleanna: And the second thing, I paid off as much debt as possible. So I went through a period where I was in mountains of debt and had collections agencies calling me constantly. And I knew that if I was going to make a transition, that was one thing I really didn't want to worry about.

Rachel: Yeah. I've definitely had that phase in my life. It is like hilarious to me sometimes. I wake up and I'm like, "How? How did you do this?"

Pauleanna: Girl, like it's a lot. I started building my team early and my whole entire paycheck, I would walk away with sometimes \$20 because my paycheck would go to the expenses of the company, the assistant I had at the time. Like whatever I needed to do to scale and grow. But again, it's sacrifice, right?

Rachel: Totally.

Pauleanna: Like, so you do what you got to do now, so that you can do what you want to do later.

Rachel: Hello.

Pauleanna: And you just keep your mind and your eyes on the prize. And sometimes it seems so out of reach, but a lot of this has to do with confidence. I don't think people understand that like you can be good at what you do, of course, but you have to really have that belief in yourself.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And when you come from an underdog past like I do, like, I grew up with a learning difference. I failed grade 11 and 12 English, actually I failed many of my high school classes, I was not a scholar. I have a processing deficiency. My parents, they never believed that I could do it

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because there was no blueprint. I mean, we're talking like 08, 2010 when I graduated from college, and my parents were like, "How are you going to make a living as a writer?"

There wasn't really a blueprint or an example for them to follow. But my belief is that if you want to change your parent's mind, you have to change their reality. Because my mom's whipping around in her new Range, and so when you're able to help them out with the bills or put a couple stacks in their bank account, they'll get quiet real quick. So I didn't really allow people to cripple me.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: I mean, honestly, and that was a big transition in itself. But eventually, when I gained the strength to kind of step out with confidence in my capabilities, that's when things really shifted for me. Another thing I think is really important, when you talk about dreams and goals, I feel like you can't have that conversation without talking about mental health.

I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. I'm a high functioning CEO with crippling depression and anxiety. And I have managed my mental illness for over 20 years. And, I mean, I fight voices inside my head that most people will never understand. Every single day that I'm here, Rachel, is because I made an active decision to be here.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: That is really what I want people to understand, that like fuck what you see on the internet, every single person is fighting their own private battles behind closed doors.

Rachel: Absolutely.

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Pauleanna: And so I think that everyone's recovery process looks different, right? And so the question that I get asked a lot is, how are you able to manage teams, you know, still show up while you're managing a mental illness? Because it is very crippling. And honestly the only way I know how to climb out of any hole that I'm in is gradually, right? One foot in front of the other.

And you just have to really know inside your heart that God has more plans for a life that really don't include crying at night or believing that we're broken. And that shit, like I know a lot of conversations really focus on scaling and growth and revenue, but you and I both know those moments when you are having those tough conversations with yourself.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: You feel me? You're having those tough conversations with yourself and you're like, "What the fuck? Can I actually do this?" You know what I mean? I have so many people depending on me, my team got to pay their bills, you feel me?

Rachel: Your mom, you're paying her Range. You know what I mean? Mom has got to keep riding in her Range.

Pauleanna: Exactly.

Rachel: She done got used to the Range now, can't put her back in a Honda.

Pauleanna: Exactly. But also you're a public figure, the world is also watching.

Rachel: Yes.

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Pauleanna: And so you're so many things to so many people. And you have those moments where you're like, "All right, I'll cry for five minutes but then I got to be gangsta." But I do allow myself to cry.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: But then once I get it out of my system, it's time to go baby. Like I'm ready to like, pick up and go again. But I want founders and CEOs to know that it's okay to feel.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: You know what I mean? Like business is personal and it's okay. It's okay to take a second to breathe.

Rachel: It's part of the journey. I had a good cry in the car yesterday, y'all.

Pauleanna: Okay.

Rachel: On the way to the hair stylist. Why? Because I over scheduled myself as per usual. That's what I always do.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: And so then, you know, it's like you have those moments where you feel like a failure or you feel like why do I have to keep learning this lesson the hard way again, and again, and again? Like this is my journey, right? So I love that you're talking about all of this because there's so many ways in which we count ourselves out or we think like, oh, I can't do these other things or I can't handle it.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

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Rachel: Or it looks so easy for them, it looks so pretty on Instagram. Like, why is it so hard for me? Oh no, it's hard for them too, they're just not showing you that part, right?

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: They're just not talking about it. And that's why we're talking about it, right? And I love that you're sharing so much about your journey, because then that helps people know like, okay, I can do it. Oh, this is normal, right? It is normal to experience this kind of anxiety or to have a learning difference and still be able to have a writing agency.

Pauleanna: Yeah, which is so crazy when I think about it, to be honest. Because, listen, like I failed all of my high school classes. But if you really look at CEOs and founders across the board, a lot of them who are really making bank and are doing exceptionally well, they didn't graduate from college, they don't necessarily have a degree, they're very street smart.

Rachel: Yep.

Pauleanna: And if you want something badly enough, you will teach yourself.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: I was bullied and tormented in school. And when I was hanging out by myself in the library, the girls washroom, the cafeteria, I would doodle in my notebook and I would write about what life looked like outside of the four walls of this hell hole.

Rachel: Yes.

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Pauleanna: And that's where I got my practice, you feel me?

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Like perhaps you don't adhere to or perhaps the traditional school system failed you like it failed me, right? I fell through the cracks. But if I didn't fight for what I wanted, I would have been a statistic.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And so you have to find that place inside your heart where nothing is impossible, you feel me?

Rachel: Yes, I agree.

Pauleanna: Like I could have literally been, honestly, who knows. But this was my only option. It was option A and it was my only option and I figured it the hell out.

Rachel: Yes. Listen, I feel you on that completely. That's exactly where I was too, where it's just like being poor is not an option for me. I'm going to figure this out, I'm going to figure money out because I don't want to be poor anymore and I don't want my parents to be poor. So that, I have to fix, right?

Whatever it is, it's like whatever those challenges are, I can overcome them. And to me it was just like I'm going to be successful and I'm not going to stop until I find a way. Period, end of story.

Pauleanna: Yeah, exactly, that's it.



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Rachel: And you just have to have some level of tenacity and determination. And you just have to want it.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: And when people come to me with an entitled energy of like, “Well, I tried this thing, and it didn't work.” And it's like, okay, well try it again for two more years. I mean like try some more, Put some more effort in.

Pauleanna: Exactly.

Rachel: You are not entitled.

Pauleanna: Don't even come talk to me under two years. We shouldn't even be having this conversation.

Rachel: I don't even want to hear your story yet, okay?

Pauleanna: Exactly.

Rachel: And the thing is sometimes I think people are looking for sympathy. Like, “Well, I tried it and it's not working and this launch failed.” And it's like, yeah, exactly.

Pauleanna: Of course it did.

Rachel: That's the journey. That is the journey, my friend, collect some more failures, right? That's what we're doing here, we're collecting failures and on the other side of that is success.

Pauleanna: But you learn so much in the failure, that the thing.

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Rachel: You learn so much.

Pauleanna: You're able to really tighten up your processes and your systems. You're able to reevaluate how you move in business from your failure. So you want to fail fast and you want to move on.

Rachel: Exactly, make moves so that you can find out does it work? Does it not work? And then from that you have data and you can make different decisions.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: And I have so many friends and peers who have similar sized businesses, maybe a little smaller, maybe a little bigger. And for some of them it happened faster than it happened for me. But I can tell the difference. Like I know how to manage a team and lead a team now because I've been trying it and failing at it so many times for 12 years. Now I have it figured out and now I know what I'm doing, right?

Like there's an entrepreneurial maturity that comes from being on the journey for some series of years. And don't eschew that, don't think that that's a bad thing. That's a beautiful thing, it's an exciting thing because experience is so valuable. Like nothing replaces experience.

Pauleanna: Absolutely.

Rachel: Experience is where so much of that confidence can come from.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

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Rachel: So trying things as fast as possible, having those failures, then overcoming it. Then you know like, oh, if this don't work, I'll figure something else out.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: I ain't worried, I got this.

Pauleanna: Exactly. When you're an entrepreneur, I feel like you are an idea generator.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And so if something doesn't work, you should be able to apply those skills to something else, right?

Rachel: Exactly.

Pauleanna: And so it's just about trial and error. And like you said, experience.

Rachel: Yes. So tell us like, so now you're at your corporate job, you're working on your stuff on the side. How did you come upon celebrity ghostwriting? Because you were a journalist at one point, like how did you get there? How did you choose that from being a spoken word poet?

Pauleanna: Okay. So yes, it's important to allow your dreams to evolve. So I tried my hands at many different things and I came across an article in 2014 about a ghostwriter. That was my first exposure to ghost writing.

Rachel: First of all can we just talk about seeds? I think it's so important. I watched some show on Netflix, it's not even important, but it was a woman

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entrepreneur and she was talking about how she had a team of 90 employees. And I was like, “I’m going to have 90 employees.”

Pauleanna: I’m telling you, you just have to stay curious.

Rachel: This is why that visibility is so key. This is why this conversation is important, because people just need to see it. And as soon as they see it, they're like, “Oh, that's what I need to do.”

Pauleanna: This conversation is important to me because I want more Black and brown women to know that ghostwriting is a viable career.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Often times when students sign up for communications, they're thinking public relations or marketing. They're not thinking speech writing, they're not thinking ghostwriting. I am a content ninja, I am a secret weapon on many high profile teams. And I want people to know that we need more color and more flavor in this lane.

Rachel: Let me tell you something, as somebody who has written a book and the only editors available to me at these big publishing houses are white people, right? And so but they don't understand, like I was saying earlier, one of the lines in my book was about something being a whole blood clot lot, right? They were like, “What is this? You have to edit it.” I'm like, “I’m not editing it. Are you kidding me? No, my people know, okay?”

Pauleanna: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: And if they don't know, like the people who don't know, they should look it up and they should find out. But I have to speak like me. I don't talk

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in the Queen's English in my regular life, so why would I do it in my book, right?

Pauleanna: Exactly.

Rachel: And so yes, having more people of color and Black women especially to help us, to edit us.

Pauleanna: To support Black leaders.

Rachel: Yes, exactly, it's very important.

Pauleanna: Very important. So okay, so I'm in my cubicle, I decide to quit. And as I'm transitioning, so one of the things that were really important to me when I chose my corporate job was to have unlimited PTO, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So unlimited PTO just means as long as you get your manager's approval, you can do whatever you need to do.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So during my PTO I would fly to New York. And literally, I'm in corporate making 65K, but all of my money is going elsewhere, right? So I'm scraping my pennies together, I'm flying to New York and I'm scheduling meetings from 9am to 9pm.

I'm literally, sometimes I couldn't even afford to stay at a hotel. So I'm bumming it and sleeping at the airport floor, I'm sitting on couches. I'm hustling because I know that before I leave corporate I need to build networks in all the major cities in the states.

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The other thing I want people to understand is that you will not go further than you think. Location is very important. So I'm born and raised in Toronto, Canada. And in Canada you hit your ceiling very, very early. If you look at Tory Lanez, Drake, The Weekend, Shania Twain, Bieber, Shawn Mendes, if you look at the trend many people, they establish themselves in Toronto but then they move on because they know that you have to spread your wings elsewhere to hit your tipping point.

So I knew that very, very early on. I built pockets of networks in LA, New York, DC, Atlanta. And that gave me a lot of leverage because I planted seeds.

Rachel: Yes. Wait, I want to pause you there for a second because I just want to talk about like, I think about sometimes what people say to me when I say, "Oh, I'm having this event, like buy a ticket and come." And they're like, "Well, I can't buy a flight and book a hotel."

Pauleanna: Yeah, you figure it out.

Rachel: Yes. But the thing is I feel like it takes overcoming that fear and really believing in yourself to be like, I'm going to take this risk of booking—

Pauleanna: Put pride aside.

Rachel: Yes, because you're spending money on a flight, right? You're finding a way to get yourself into a city where you don't have a home, you don't have even a place to stay.

Pauleanna: You may not even know anybody, so you don't have a couch, maybe.

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Rachel: Exactly. But you're like, "No, I'm going to spend this money and I'm going to spend this time, and I believe in myself enough to get on this plane." I think that that is a very bold act and I just want to commend you for that.

Pauleanna: Thank you.

Rachel: And I think that it's important to be willing to take those kinds of risks, be willing to get on a plane to go meet somebody, right? Like, sometimes they're like, "Well, am I going to 10X my return?"

Pauleanna: Oh my God.

Rachel: Am I going to get a 10X return on investment like within 24 hours?

Pauleanna: No, that's not the point.

Rachel: It's like, no, baby, you not, okay. Maybe in a year or two or three, right?

Pauleanna: Or 10.

Rachel: But you might meet somebody that creates some opportunity for you later. And you've got to be willing to take those risks. And sometimes you don't see the whole staircase, you see the first step and you got to take it, right?

That's the difference of the people who make it and have success, and the people who don't are the people who are too afraid to take that step without seeing all the other steps. None of us ever see all the other steps. We're just doing it and saying let's see where it takes us.

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Pauleanna: Yeah, and you have to understand that where you're at today isn't where you have to stay, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So I slept on LaGuardia's floor. And I took a picture and I said, "I know it's not going to be like this forever." You feel me? Like the dusty ass floor.

Rachel: Yes. You're like, "Let me document this moment because I know when I'm driving around in my 'rari I'm going to need this pic."

Pauleanna: Exactly. So I built these pockets of networks. I nurtured, I added sunlight, I watered these relationships. And really that's how things began. I also think that one thing that helped me was I was able to articulate my value.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: When you're talking to so many people and you're having these conversations, baby, you got to get to the point. Don't waste their time.

Rachel: Listen, listen, please tell everybody that. Say it again. Get to the point, my friend. Send me a two sentence email, I will absolutely read it. If it is two essays long, I'm never going to get to it.

Pauleanna: But you know in New York people don't, like they don't have time. They're on their way to the next thing.

Rachel: Everybody, okay?

Pauleanna: Exactly.

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Rachel: Stand in front of them for two seconds, you're going to see what happens.

Pauleanna: But they're not even saying hello, it's what do you do? Like there's no hello, there's no greeting.

Rachel: Get to the point, friend.

Pauleanna: Yes.

Rachel: Listen, a New York minute is real, it's really four seconds is what you have.

Pauleanna: I was in the lobby of a building with my friend Shawn and a gentleman walked into the building, a Caucasian gentleman. And Shawn was like, "Oh, I want you to meet Jason." So Jason asked, "What do you do?" Like straight faced. I'm like, "Okay, shit. All right, you about it." So I then articulated my value.

And, again, I think you also have to, so I love chess so that's my analogy for life and business. So when you are networking I think it's really important to read the room, understand the key player, and then identify what problem you want to solve for them. I could have led with multiple different hats because I have multiple skills.

Rachel: Listen, okay, let's just pause right there for a second because this is what people do. What do you do? Well, I do a little of this, and then I do that, and then sometimes I do this. And I'm thinking about getting into that. And it's like, you've lost me.

Pauleanna: Absolutely.

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Rachel: I'm gone.

Pauleanna: Yes.

Rachel: Because now I don't know where to place you.

Pauleanna: Thank you.

Rachel: If you say here's what I do and here's who I do it for, then I'm like, "Oh, you need to meet my friend over here." Right?

Pauleanna: Thank you.

Rachel: Immediate there's a connection and there's an opportunity created. But if you can't get your thoughts together and you can't pick one thing, listen, that's a problem, right? You're missing out on so much connection and opportunity when you can't articulate, "Here's how I can add value."

Pauleanna: But you shouldn't wait. Here's the thing, are you prepared to receive the very thing that you prayed for? You should not wait until, I should not wait until I get in front of Rachel to then practice umming and ahing. I should be practicing in my bathroom. I should be practicing when I'm doing my chores around the house.

Rachel: Use this moment.

Pauleanna: Absolutely.

Rachel: Ask million dollar questions, right?

Pauleanna: Yeah. When I got in front of him I knew who I was talking to, I knew what I was saying. And so right then and there, like you just said, he

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was like, “Shit, I need someone like you.” And I closed my first \$20,000 contract.

Rachel: I love it.

Pauleanna: In literally less than 30 seconds.

Rachel: Listen, I say it all the time, making money is actually not necessarily hard. What makes it hard is all the thoughts in our head about how possible it is or isn't.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: That's what makes it hard. Like I was just telling them I got 500 new clients a week ago with four emails, right? Like it was very easy, right? But I could also get in my head about what should the email say? I don't know, should I send them? What are they going to think? And then I could never send those emails and never get those clients, right?

So stop making it hard on yourself, believe. That's such a big part of it, is just believing.

Pauleanna: Yeah, and stepping up to the plate.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And a lot of these things, you know, you're going to get tested along the way. And so that was a test and I passed.

Rachel: \$20,000 says you passed.

Pauleanna: And at the time that was really big money for me.

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Rachel: That's big money. What is that, a third of your salary at the time?

Pauleanna: Yes, at the time it was really big money. So I just, I kind of bottled up this formula to articulating my value. And I, again, sending emails, meeting for coffee, dinners, planting those seeds. And eventually I had to hire a team to take on the expanded vision, right?

Rachel: Wait, but you weren't just on Instagram posting about what you have for lunch every day?

Pauleanna: No.

Rachel: That didn't lead to the \$20,000 clients?

Pauleanna: I have real life relationships.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: I don't have fake social media relationships. If you know me from social media, we're not real friends.

Rachel: Yeah, like you don't know me.

Pauleanna: Absolutely. Real friends, to me, requires a level of intimacy.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And so I have real life relationships. And I feel like when you exchange synergy and energy and chemistry with someone, there's an established trust there. And so they're willing to, like I don't actually market myself. A lot of my business comes from referrals. It comes from incredible

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SEO, like if you Google ghost writing agency, I come up. If you Google Black ghostwriter, I come up, right? So my SEO is phenomenal.

And then I double down on my storytelling abilities because I feel like that's where you gain trust and influence from your community.

Rachel: Yes. I love it, so good. Because I feel like everybody's just like, "I just need to fiddle around on social media every day." And I'm like, is that the fastest path as your first few clients?

Pauleanna: It's actually not.

Rachel: Absolutely not, it takes up so much time and energy, it's going to take you a very long time to build an audience there, it requires a ton of consistency. And it's like yes, you can do that. I'm not saying it's necessarily a bad marketing strategy, but if you're looking for the path to cash the quickest, that ain't it.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: Just have conversations. Actually talk to people, actually connect with people who need you.

Pauleanna: Start in your phone.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Start with the contacts in your phone if you don't know where to look. I think that people don't spend enough time building in public.

Rachel: Yes.

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Pauleanna: I think that's the other thing too because we want to, you know, hit the world with cyber glitter. We want everything to be perfect on the internet. I'm not going to publish my website until it's perfect. Like for me I've always started broke, started scrappy, started ugly, right?

Rachel: Yes, launch at ugly.

Pauleanna: Right. And I've evolved and my tribe, my audience, they appreciate that. Playing in traffic, Sallie Krawcheck Ellevest says that all the time, it's important to play in traffic. And how I interpret that is building in public. When you build in public people grow an appreciation for what you've built. They want to rally. What is the point of building a community if you're not going to take them along for the ride, if you're not going to get them involved?

Rachel: If you're not going to ask for help?

Pauleanna: Absolutely. And so when you build in public, you bridge that language gap and they're able to really like ride for you in a really authentic way.

Rachel: 100%. I mean my first million dollar month was because my community rallied around me and helped me make it happen.

Pauleanna: Yes, you get it, you get the code. Yeah, you have to, it's a family affair.

Rachel: It's a family affair. Even when you have an audience online, it's a relationship, and what are you doing to foster that relationship? Because people are like, "Well, I launched and it was crickets." Okay, well, where were you? Are you crickets every day?

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Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: Do you talk to them? Do you connect with them? Do you add value? If you don't, then they're going elsewhere where they're getting value, right? They're not just giving you their time for no reason.

Pauleanna: Yeah, they're going to keep scrolling.

Rachel: Exactly, they're going to keep scrolling. So those relationships, I think, are so critical and you should always treat it like a relationship and real people instead of just, I have 10,000 followers, or I have this many followers. I don't even like the phrase followers, right?

Pauleanna: Right.

Rachel: It's like, no, no, we're in community together. Like we're a community of peers in one way or another, right? You know, here's what I'm doing and here's how it might help you. And I just want to share my story and it inspire somebody.

Pauleanna: And then it becomes a blessing to them.

Rachel: Exactly.

Pauleanna: And then you start dialoguing the comments and dialoguing the DMs. And then a lot of my tribe, we feel like we very much know each other because over the years they've messaged me so much like I recognize Alicia, I recognize Nicole. You know what I mean?

Rachel: yes.

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Pauleanna: And sometimes Nicole will be like, “Hey, can I job shadow you? I saw that you're going to Arizona.” Yeah, come on. Like open up opportunities and open up conversation with your audience, I think that's really important. And also understanding that storytelling, great storytellers are intentional. It doesn't happen by accident. Storytelling is also interactive, right?

So if you are a great storyteller online, people will engage and that will have a ripple effect in how they talk to you. Your name will come up in rooms and conversations that you haven't even set foot in.

Rachel: Yes, because storytelling is a form of, it's our form of communication as humans, right? Like, this is what we do, we share stories.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: And I think if you can share your story and tell your clients stories, or tell a story that inspires someone or that helps someone, like the best Twitter threads are like, wait, where is this going? And then you're like scroll, scroll, scroll forever, right? Because you're like, I've got to see how this ends. It has no relevance to your life, but you're entertained. Like stories are how we communicate, it draws us in.

Pauleanna: Exactly.

Rachel: And I think people are so busy just wanting to put everything on social media or wanting to stunt.

Pauleanna: Or drop a Drake caption. It's like we don't need any more lyrics. Like we don't care.



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Rachel: Drop a Drake caption.

Pauleanna: We don't need any more lyrics. I think it's so silly, that was such a wasted opportunity where you could have opened up to your audience.

Rachel: And connected.

Pauleanna: And connected. And so I think when people think of your brand, when people think of your business, what is the narrative that you're telling, right? If we think of Colin Kaepernick we think of to stand up for something means sacrificing everything.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: If we think of Serena, we think of the ball is in your court.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: Stories can either ignite wars or create peace, right? If we look at Demi Lovato and her road to sobriety, we look at Paris Hilton and her fight to change bills around the troubled teen industry. Or we look at the chaos that ignited this year when Kim Kardashian was like, "Women are lazy, get up and work." You know what I mean? Or we saw Daniel Cesar, back in 2020 he said Black people are too sensitive.

How you tell your story, how you framework your story, how you tell your speech, how you write your book, how you produce your captions, your content, like it has to be with intention. And so my job as a ghostwriter, my job is not just to put pen to paper. My job as a ghostwriter, my team's job is to be your confidant, to be your human diary, to be your architect, to be a

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structural thinker. To help you read the room, navigate cultural, societal, generational sensitivities, right?

It's so much more than just we're just ghostwriting this copy for you. We are actually helping you build community. We're helping you not just monetize your genius, but we're creating a safe space so that you can exercise boundless creativity. We're creating a safe space where you can really share your message with a whole heart and 10 toes down.

Rachel: yes.

Pauleanna: And so that's the biggest difference between copywriters and ghost writers. We are narrative therapists, you know what I mean?

Rachel: Yes, I love that.

Pauleanna: So there's a lot that goes into it, and it's literally like the greatest calling of my life.

Rachel: Yes. And you're helping build brands, right? Because brand is really just a story, right?

Pauleanna: It is.

Rachel: What is the story that you're telling and retelling all the time? Whether it's with how you look, right, like all the different pieces of your brand, right? And the story is a big part of it. So I agree and it needs to be intentional.

If you were to share a tip or two about how to tell a good story, because I think some people think like, well, I'm just not good at telling stories, right?

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Or I don't have stories to tell, which is never true. What would be your tips to people for connecting better on social media or telling better stories?

Pauleanna: That's a really great question. I personally think everything is a story. Like I could tell you a story about how I got ready this morning. I can tell you a story about these long ass braids, girl. I can literally share a story, so like, don't overthink it.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: The simplest thing in your life could be relatable to someone else. I think that a lot of people of influence are now recognizing their power, their unique power. The one thing that happened in 2020, and it's having a ripple effect, is the fact that people now don't know who to turn to and where to find good information.

So we now have a very great opportunity for all of us to be a part of this collective awakening across societal systems and industries. So people want to hear from you because they don't know where to turn. So I think that you need to really check yourself and really understand that.

The one thing I heard that was so instrumental to me is Van Jones says that in order to change policy in business, you have to change minds and hearts. It really doesn't take a lot to resonate with someone. Start from your personal lived experience. Speak to what you know.

When we talk to clients, when we vet them, we always consider like what is their proximity to the topic? Because I don't believe everyone should talk on everything.

Rachel: I agree.

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Pauleanna: We've seen a lot of chaotic—

Rachel: Oh, we've seen it. And then people, you know, I feel like sometimes there's pressure to comment on every public thing. I don't do that because some things are not my areas of expertise.

Pauleanna: Absolutely.

Rachel: I don't have anything brilliant to share, you know what I mean? And it's just like, no, no, no, I'm going to stay in my lane and talk about what I need to talk about, right? There are things that absolutely I need to address, but not everything needs to be addressed. Like you're not an expert on everything and sometimes it's a really good choice to be silent.

Pauleanna: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: Just stop talking, amplify those who are experts in those situations.

Pauleanna: Thank you, share their content. You don't want to add to noise, you want to bring a new, fresh perspective to the conversation.

Rachel: Exactly.

Pauleanna: And I think that people are just not willing to have those tough conversations with themselves. When we're vetting clients, we like to whiteboard and we like to think about and challenge them to think about, what are you standing on? What are your morals, your values, your belief system? What are you fighting for? What conversations do you want to contribute to?

Like check yourself and really assess your IQ, your EQ, and your AQ, right? So like managing what you know. Managing your emotions and

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feelings. And managing your ability to adapt. And sometimes when you attain new information about a topic, maybe you have to shift your perspective.

Rachel: You got to change your mind.

Pauleanna: Be flexible.

Rachel: Like one small example of this is like I used to hate memberships. And I'd be like, don't start a membership. Membership is the worst business model ever, never start a membership. Like this is what I used to always say because people just wanted to do it because it's \$29 a month. And they're like, oh, it's cheap so I don't have to really sell.

Oh, no, you have to sell. You got to sell if it's 50 cents, right? It don't matter. So I'm like, stop doing that and actually charge more, right? But then, of course, what happened? I launched a membership, right?

Pauleanna: Because you probably acquired new information about the it, yeah.

Rachel: The pandemic happened and my high-end services were not being purchased. And so then I went to my audience and said, "What is it that you need from me?" And the answer wasn't a membership, but like all the information that came back was like clearly the right thing to do would be to create a membership. And that's what I did.

Pauleanna: You were flexible.

Rachel: It exponentially grew my business.

Pauleanna: You adapted, yeah.

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Rachel: Yes. And it's like it's okay to change your mind in public. You don't have to dig in your heels when you don't really believe that anymore. It's like authenticity, right? Like, we evolve, we change as people. You can do that publicly, it's okay.

Pauleanna: You got it.

Rachel: People going to hate on you no matter what you do, right? So you might as well just be who you are, and be happy.

Pauleanna: And honestly they'll fall off, they'll drop off. They weren't your clients anyways, move on, that's it.

Rachel: Exactly, let them go.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: So I want to ask you specifically about scaling, right, scaling your writing agency.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: I imagine you did it very intentionally, you obviously didn't seem to wait. A lot of, and there are studies that support that a lot of women, especially women of color, but women in general as entrepreneurs, that we are scared to hire. That we have this sort of philosophy that we need to do everything.

Pauleanna: Definitely not, not over here.

Rachel: Not over here either. Listen, never, okay? Never ever. But that's what we, you know, so many people, so many of my clients, so many of

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people in my audience who write to me, talk about how afraid they are to hire and how they feel they need to do everything and how only I can do it this way. No one else can do it.

Pauleanna: That's a complex, and that's the ego that needs to be checked.

Rachel: Yes, I agree, it is ego. And it's like, I know you're a special unicorn. And you are, you are a special unicorn, I promise you. But you are not so special that nobody else can do what you do. Because if that was the case, you would have zero competition. There would be nobody else doing this work.

Like you work with an A list celebrity clients, right? How did you overcome that fear of assigning it to somebody else on your team?

Pauleanna: First of all, I think that real leaders build other leaders.

Rachel: Absolutely.

Pauleanna: So I like to take the time to build my team. And a mentor once told me, "Pauleanna, you don't want employees, you want mission partners."

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So that was the first thing that was really important to me, is understanding, number one, what motivates everyone individually and play to their strengths. And number two, I feel like if you don't have a diverse team, because when people call Writers Blok, like we have to be ready for anything. And so I need to have a diverse team so that we don't have any blind spots.

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And so we have diversity across geography, language, religion, experience, background, et cetera. And so I need clients to know that they're going to get white glove service regardless of who's on their projects. But also in our contracts it does say outside of me there are multiple people touching your project, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So whether we're ghost writing a book, a speech, an article, a text, a presentation, I have a designated research team, I have transcribers, I have consultants. Like there are multiple people touching, but I'm one of a few people that are point people for the client.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And so you kind of have to rock with my lead or we can't really work with you. That's really how it goes. Like you're not in charge here, you hired us because we have expertise and it's really important that you really trust that we have your back. And we want you to feel confident and comfortable, of course, but you really have to trust that we have a special process in order to cross the finish line.

Rachel: Yes. And I have to say, I have a personal policy that, I may have shared this before, that when I hire someone I do it their way and I actually listen to them at least once. At least do it their way, if you trusted them enough to give them your money, right? Then trust them enough to let them do it since they have far more experience than you. Because I think so often we hire experts and then we're like, "No, I don't want to do it that way. It's this way." And it's like, is it?

Pauleanna: It's a red flag.



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Rachel: Is it that way? Or are you hard-headed and in your ego and not allowing the people who are the experts to be the experts and you be the expert at what you are the expert at, right? Nobody's the expert on everything. And I think some people are just so hard-headed for some reason.

Pauleanna: Very much so.

Rachel: They just don't listen to the expertise that they hire. I used to run into this as a lawyer, I've definitely run into it as a business coach. And I have definitely fired clients because I'm like, "You don't listen. You wanted to do it the hard way, so do it the hard way without me." I'm not the hard way, okay? So you can go do it the hard way by yourself.

Pauleanna: I love that you said fired clients, because I want to free people who watch this episode of feeling like they have to put up with bullshit.

Rachel: Oh yeah.

Pauleanna: You can fire clients, you should be identifying red flags very, very early.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And if the client does not trust you, if the scope of work always changes, like identify what red flags are to you, right?

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: And it's okay to walk away. And sometimes I know when you're in a place of desperation, you need that money, you have to cover payroll

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expenses. But I promise you, when you walk away or fire a client, you create space, you create room for something bigger and better.

Rachel: Yes, and so much better, yes.

Pauleanna: Let it happen, let it flow.

Rachel: It's a million dollar boundary to be like, "Here's your money back, goodbye. Please go away. Please never call me, lose my number."

Pauleanna: Exactly. Yeah.

Rachel: It's so true. It's like you cannot pay me enough to stress me out in this way and make me miserable. I love my job.

Pauleanna: Same.

Rachel: So if I'm showing up to work and I'm very unhappy because working with you is a nightmare, then that nightmare has got to go.

Pauleanna: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: Goodbye. Next. Thank you, next.

Pauleanna: Exactly. And something bigger and better is always around the corner, so just make room on your plate for it.

Rachel: So true. And I love what you said about scaling a team and really pouring into them. I think that comes with entrepreneurial maturity that we talked about earlier, right? Like not thinking that like, oh, I just told this person once and they're not doing it perfectly. Okay, did you learn it perfectly with one person telling you one time? Or does it require constant

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communication, over communication, making mistakes, learning from those mistakes? And then now you know how to do it the right way, right?

It takes time. We think people should just jump when we say jump and just instantly become experts. And then we're like, well, let's fire them because they're not perfect. And then I'll find somebody else imperfect and then fire them too.

Pauleanna: No, it starts from the top down. It says something about you as a leader if there's pure chaos in your business.

Rachel: Correct.

Pauleanna: You know what I mean? So maybe the employee is not the problem. And I have, you know, in my group chats and among friends people complain, you know, my coordinator is not doing it. What are you doing? Like what structure and infrastructure do you have, the system do you have in place?

Because as CEO sometimes you're moving so fast, you may send a cryptic email or text message that misses words, misses the point.

Rachel: They don't understand.

Pauleanna: Take a self-assessment, yeah.

Rachel: And if people are afraid to tell you the truth in your business, to me, I think that's very important.

Pauleanna: That says a lot.

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Rachel: Exactly, like I want people to be able to say, I don't think we should do that, and here's why. I love that idea. But I think it's a no and here's why.

Pauleanna: Push back, yeah.

Rachel: Yes, I want people to push back.

Pauleanna: And feel good to do that, don't feel scared.

Rachel: Yes, exactly. And I think if you are walking around in a way where people are scared, then you have to ask yourself, well, how am I creating an environment where people are scared to tell the truth? And my leaders, if they complain about their team members, I'm like, "Okay, well, what you doing?" Like how are you solving this problem? Because this is your problem, it's for you to solve.

And I have to ask myself that as well, like what am I doing that's allowing this leader to not lead their team the way that I expect them to? So always look within. You got to really drop the ego, period. I think that's one of the keys to success, is dropping the ego. And that's so much of what I heard you say.

Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: I love it so much. So any parting words that you want to leave people with?

Pauleanna: Parting words that I want to leave people with, I think that you should, I have so much to say.

Rachel: And you've said so much already.

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Pauleanna: I know.

Rachel: You've dropped a lot of gems.

Pauleanna: You know what, I just want people to reconsider and just really think about the lane they're in.

Rachel: Yeah.

Pauleanna: I was able to thrive in a very unique space because I was able to research and really foreshadow what was coming as a journalist, right? So I knew that most journalists don't necessarily make their money in journalism, they make it doing all the other things, the side hustles all the things outside of journalism. So that was a red flag for me, right?

I think the other thing was like paying attention to the clues that success leaves behind. Had I not looked at that article, had I not put a pin in it and told myself, let me circle back to this because there could be something here, I wouldn't have the agency that I have today.

Rachel: Yes.

Pauleanna: So I think just paying attention and I think being able to identify opportunities around you is a skill that is an absolute must have. Because a lot of times when you don't feel like you're successful, you don't feel like things are happening for you, it's because you missed your moment. Because you missed the opportunity. It doesn't mean it didn't exist, you just weren't paying attention.

Rachel: Yes. And so then just start paying attention now so you don't miss the next one.

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Pauleanna: Yeah.

Rachel: Because there will be more and you can even manufacture more of those moments, like you were saying, right? Like getting on a plane and going to connect and meet people.

Pauleanna: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: I love it. So tell people where can they find you and connect with you.

Pauleanna: Girl, I'm all over Google.

Rachel: That SEO is poppin, okay?

Pauleanna: Exactly, exactly. And I have a very unique name, so I'm on the first 10 pages. But you can find me at thewritersblok, without the C, .com and pauleannareid.com.

Rachel: I love it. I love it. And that's P-A-U-L-E-A-N-N-A-R-E-I-D.com.

Pauleanna: Thank you, yep.

Rachel: Okay, because I want to make sure people get it right.

Pauleanna: Thank you. This was so fun.

Rachel: Thank you so much for coming.

Pauleanna: You're very welcome.

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Rachel: Awesome.

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 got 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).