

**RISE UP AND SHINE – Episode #72: Facing Big Life Changes**



**FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT**

**Ashley**

This is Episode 72. Facing Big Life Changes. You're listening to the rise up and shine podcast with Claudine and Ashley as an empty nester and a mom with young kids, we have both shared very similar and very real struggles. From chaos to coaches, we now help other women live an authentic and meaningful life. So tune in weekly for girl talk and tips on how you too can rise up and let your light shine bright. This is the rise up and shine podcast.

Welcome back everyone. Today we are going to talk about a topic that is very helpful for us to get back up on our feet, when we feel like life has kind of kicked us off, you know, off our feet and we stumbled and we feel stuck or we feel overwhelmed. Whatever have you. But today we're going to be talking about setbacks, growth opportunities. Now what I mean by this is it really is a mindset thing and Claudine and I talk a lot about our mindset on this podcast, right Claudine?

Hi everybody, welcome back. So I am super ecstatic today because I actually get to see Claudine face to face in person and look her in the eye and tell her how happy I am. She's back back in town.

**Claudine**

You get to look me in both eyes. They're both here.

**Ashley**

Yeah in three dimension. And I, sure our listeners are aware that you have been in Southern California, your house closed yesterday?

**Claudine**

Yes.

**Ashley**

So how does it feel?

**Claudine**

It feels amazing. It's been a very busy, very stressful few weeks. But it felt so good to wake up this morning in Northern California. But today we're talking about a topic that is clearly near and dear to my heart. But I know it affects all of us. It's just part of life. And we're talking about big life changes today. So we all go through it, I've just gone through a major one. moving back and forth from Northern California to Southern California in the last year. We've also our children are moving to different states.

So that's a big change. Like we're used to seeing them every day and our grandchildren. And now they're moving, we're not going to see them as much. Lots and lots of change in that is part of life, right? We have changes, good changes, and not so good changes. And so today we're going to talk about the practicals to help us persevere and do well and take care of our minds, our bodies and our souls while we're going through big life changes.

**Ashley**

Yes, because unfortunately, they are inevitable.

**Claudine**

Yes.

**Ashley**

I mean, I say unfortunately, but we also big changes does not have to be a negative experience or a very stressful it can also be a happy time, right? I mean, we could think of getting married. I remember after getting married and planning everything. And then once we had the big day, and then we got to the honeymoon. And then then I came back and I'm like, Well, now what? You spend so much time over the year for me planning some things so special, such a big event. And then it's like, well, now what that was a big part of my life for the last 12 months. Now what do I do with myself?

**Claudine**

With all that free time.

**Ashley**

Right? But big change is inevitable. It happens to us all and sometimes we just don't know how to navigate through it. Sometimes we know just push through or we have our own set ways of getting through stressful times or when we face a big change in life. So today we're going to talk about this. We're gonna focus on this because as Claudine said she is experiencing it all right now, coming back to Northern California. Her family moving out of town, her best friend's moving out of town out of state actually buying a new house selling their old home, you know where your children got? were mostly grew up in right?

**Claudine**

Our family home. Yeah, both our grandbabies were born. Yeah. Not on the property. But while they were living there.

**Ashley**

Which you got to spend so much time with over the last year. Yeah. So a lot of big changes. So that's why we wanted to focus on that today. Because we've all we've all been there in certain ways you know.

**Claudine**

This episode is just for me, that's what you're trying to tell me. You're here to help me.

**Ashley**

You have very great wisdom to share with us today.

**Claudine**

And I need all the help I can get. Well, the interesting thing is that the brain does not seem change differently. So good change or not so good change, our brain can't distinguish between the two. And so good changes, like you said, Ashley, like marriage or a baby having a baby is a big change or a new job that's changed. And the not so good changes can be a job loss. Certainly in the last year, a lot of people have lost their job or had job changes.

**Ashley**

Or switching to virtual school. I've talked about that enough have I?

**Claudine**

Yeah. It's been difficult for you Ashley? Has that been a change? Yeah, absolutely, though, a change in our schedule, a divorce, a death moving, which I'm going through right now. Those are all changes, but the brain can't distinguish between the good or the bad. It just it says, oh, warning, warning, warning something is different because the brain loves the old familiar patterns. And our brain is challenged when we're facing unfamiliarity, or uncertainty. And that causes a stress it causes a lot of physical and emotional effects of stress and mental anguish, right? Yeah. lots lots to talk about.

**Ashley**

Yeah, Claudine do you even think about when you travel to the grocery store, you know, somewhere that's a familiar place. But we tend to take the same route every time. And we can actually help improve our memory and our mental function. If we take different routes, just by that tiny little challenge. I've looked this up, because I've like, how do I improve my memory? Have you ever done that Google? How can I improve my memory?

**Claudine**

No. Maybe I should. I'm quite a bit older than you are. Maybe I shouldn't be googling that.

**Ashley**

But a lot of its, you know, the stress that we endure our memory just doesn't function very well. So but a lot of it is simple little changes that challenges your brain, it could be brushing your teeth with the opposite hand eating with the opposite hand, you know, you go to the grocery store, or school or work take a different route. But we don't always want to do that. Because our brain does like the familiarity. Yeah. And it takes less brain power. It's just, it's easier. And we like what's easy and comfortable. And you don't have to think about it, right?

**Claudine**

Yeah, the brain absolutely loves to save time and energy. It's highly efficient, energy efficient. And it loves familiarity.

**Ashley**

It's, you know, energy efficient. I like that I was just thinking mine's solar powered.

**Claudine**

We were just sitting in the sun for a while. So maybe we're running off- I do, I do feel that's where that energy is coming. We're solar powered. So when your body identifies something as a stress, like change, it triggers the fight or flight response. And that can release adrenaline, and it prepares the body to have strength to protect us in the face of danger. And so that's the thing with all these changes, it feels like danger to our primitive brain, we can process it know that it's not, but yet the primitive brain is fighting and saying, protect, protect, save, save, save yourself. And we can feel this stress when the sympathetic nervous system is activated, which is what big life changes will do.

## **Ashley**

Well, and here's a little example, that was real for my family yesterday. So the kids were back in school after spring break, and we change things up a little to have the kids ride home from school on their bikes, right. And so I thought, well, this is the first day we're doing this, I will meet them at the school when it's dismissal time, and I will run but alongside them home, and one of my children, I'm going to keep it anonymous, one of my favorite, they had a challenging time and was upset the whole ride home is a little less than a mile. And was really, it was challenging for this child. And so they didn't want to do it. And they, you know, kept saying I can't, I can't I can't part of it felt like their backpack was heavy, which it was, but I believe that they could really do it if they push through. And I later had asked, Do you think if you would tell yourself, I can do it, I can do it that you would have made it home? Yes, I'm like, Okay, so then that tells me the backpack wasn't too heavy, that you really believe you can do it. So let's try to get.

## **Claudine**

The thoughts were heavy.

## **Ashley**

Thoughts were heavy, which happens to us. But this is what we do when something is new, when it's different. When it feels hard and uncomfortable, which all changes then our brain is like, no, we're not going to do this. We don't want to have this. It's just too much work too much mental power. It's scary. There's uncertainty. I just want to avoid it, or I'm just, you know, going to numb out I'm going to cope, I'm gonna, you know, deal with it, then our behavior follows suit. So this child complained the entire way home, that was fun. But we do that we can cope, we can, you know, just whatever behavior we typically go to that is our neural pathway, right that we've been conditioned, yeah, handle stress, we tend to do the same things, we have that old pattern. So the point is that when we deal with a stress, our brain will resist it. And that's why a lot of times, we just go with what our brain tells us. So it's really hard. I don't want to do it. Yeah, it's uncomfortable, which change is uncomfortable, right? To have this big transition in your life.

## **Claudine**

And it still won't be comfortable for the next two months as we wait for our new home. We're couchsurfing. We're traveling. We're doing a little bit of this and a little bit of that for the next two months, but we've really tried to reframe it, to change our perspective on it and say, well, we're just going to travel for two months. So that's the way we've changed. goes into look at it, so that we feel less stressed. Because who doesn't like to travel? Right? We both love to travel. So that's the way we're telling ourselves that it's all going to be okay. We've chosen to think of it as a two month long vacation. Although, you know, we both will still work and get things accomplished, because we still need to make a living. But fortunately, yeah, right to pay for the travel, right. But that's the way we've chosen to look

at otherwise, it could be really depressing, to be honest. I mean, there are moments where I'm like, Oh, my gosh, two more months out of living out of a suitcase, which is basically what we've done for a year. But I'm just like, no, we're traveling, we're gonna go see family and friends. And we are back in Northern California for some time. So right, and I'll share more of the practicals that help with change, but definitely changing our thoughts. I mean, that's a great example, the way we choose to look at things is gonna affect our emotions, and those emotions are gonna affect our behavior. So really it does start with our thoughts.

### **Ashley**

Well, Claudine, I want to share real quick, this great demonstration you did for our workshop last year. Remember, when you had a volunteer come up with they had their arms straight out? Yeah, no other side but a straight pointing straight out. And you would encourage them to think of something that saddened them or angered them. And then when you would push gently down on their arm, it felt there's a lot of give. Like they were, you were able to very gently push their arm down as they their body, their muscles were kind of weakened, then you encourage them to think of an empowering thought. something positive. And there, it was very difficult for you to push their eye down. Same pressure but because what their mind was thinking their body changed as like, Oh, I can do this, you know, they felt more empowered, and how how we can take that into our day to day life, to really help us get through challenges. Yeah, because I think the biggest question to ask our listeners is when you're faced with a challenge, any sort of challenge, what meaning do you give to it? What do you think about challenge about the specific situation? Maybe it's a person involved? Or just change? in general? Most of us don't like change? No, you know, we hear that we don't like change. We like to stick to what's familiar. But because that's what our brain wants, you know, maybe sometimes we have this inner conflict, because we actually kind of do want something different, or Oh, we really want to go for this goal, or, oh, gosh, I would really want to live into this house. And I think, my husband and I are not like we're planning on moving. But we have wrestled with that idea over the last few years. And he still looks at a different town that's nearby. And I, you know, anytime he might show me a house, even now, when it comes up, I get the alerts on my email. It kind of triggers me. I don't want to move. I don't want to move. Because I'm so comfortable here. There was a point where I was ready. But now I feel like no, I feel very comfortable.

### **Claudine**

Well, it's been a year, it's been a year, I've been saying that it has been a year. So more than ever, I think we're craving comfort and familiarity, because last year has been so unfamiliar and so uncomfortable.

### **Ashley**

I can't handle any more stress. Anything's that's quote unquote dangerous.

## **Claudine**

No, I mean, and that's part of the decision we made to buy a new house new construction, because the houses we're looking at needed an incredible amount of renovation for the the area we were looking at, the only thing that we could afford would need, you know, an enormous amount of like tearing down walls and.

## **Ashley**

Which in the past you want, you want to do that

## **Claudine**

We've done it and have wanted to do it but after this year. I'm like, I just need simple, I need done. Like, I do need comfort, I'm choosing comfort, that's what I'm gonna choose. But there's many ways that we, we have practicals, so let us start sharing some of the practicals. But I love one thing you said I want to bring up because I do believe this is your word of it. Yeah. You know, we say this a lot to each other. And you've been saying to your children, but I can do hard things. There's something about us that I mean, who wants to do hard things, right? We don't choose to do hard things, mostly like in my in my nature. I'm not like, I can't wait today to do something really challenging and hard. No, I mean, I want to be comfortable. I want things to be easy. But you and I have been in the habit of this last year to saying I can do hard things. We can do hard things. So when hard things pop up. I'm like I can do this. I am capable doing this. And certainly as a Christian woman, we know that any hard thing that we are choosing or accepting to do, we're not doing it alone. And I love that scripture. It says I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength, so I know where my strength comes from. Even these next few months, I know I'm not doing it on my own power. I know I have a power far greater than me to depend on to infuse me with the strength I need to do these hard things. But the truth is, we can all do hard things. We are capable. We are built to do hard things and God in His mercy and holiness, he decided to give us the ability even to calm our nervous system when things are going hard. He's given us the parasympathetic nervous system Say that three times faster. But he's given that to be able to calm our nervous system so that we don't constantly feel all this adrenaline and anxiety and stress. There are coping mechanisms that are healthy and godly. Okay, so overeating chocolate and sugar, although it feels so good ships and ships, watches TV and watching binge watching Netflix. Can I say that? If I said that too many times on our podcast? Do you guys all know what my coping mechanism is? Anyway, so let's share. So let me share some of mine since I'm in the midst of it, and then I can't wait to hear yours. But one of my practicals is to really slow down just really practice some self care because I can feel it. I've certainly felt it in this last week or two last few weeks actually, because we moved my daughter and her husband and her two kids, we moved them to Idaho. So that was a process. Then we came back that we packed up our house and then even yesterday, we were helping our son pack up his tiny house and fit everything into a car which of course it did not fit. So then that created some more challenges of trying to figure out how we're going to do this. So which we did, but slow down just take the time even if it's five or 10 minutes to go outside. sit in the sun as you and I did this morning. Listen to the birds we for some reason we had an enormous amount of birds that are property this year more than ever like to

the point that we were all commenting on it like where are all these birds coming from? Interesting. We even did have a woodpecker. Yeah, probably cross the street. It was so cool. My first my grandson neighborhood. One morning we heard it okay. And he says it's so cute. He's like, Woodpecker Woodpecker. I like you. That's a woodpecker. Anyway, slow down, take a few minutes to sit in the sun take a few minutes to just still your mind. Even though you've got a lot going on. We certainly we surely had a lot going on the last few weeks. I just took a few minutes every day just to sit in the sun just to calm my mind just to think of things I was grateful for we walked the property, we walked the house several times, and just gave thanks for all the wonderful memories we had there. All the blessings we had there. And that was just really helpful. Another one which comes into this is the breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system. So breathe deeply. I can forget to breathe. I know you and I've talked about this before. But when I get stressed, I stopped breathing deeply. And I start shallow breathing. And then I'll even catch myself. I'm like, right, yeah, breathe. I find myself holding my breath, which I do when I'm stressful. And then my shoulders and my chest hurt. So I have to remind myself to breathe. I mean, I'm breathing enough to live clearly, because I'm still here, but my breathing is not healthy. And so when we slow down and breathe deeply and slowly, especially focusing on the exhale really exhaling. It calms the whole system down and that helps our heart rate, yes, lowers our heart rate helps. What else does it do? It deactivates the stress centers. There's many, many good things about breathing deeply.

### **Claudine**

So another practical for me is familiarity. So I keep certain things familiar. Even though there's all this change. I've kept my schedule to a certain degree familiar in that. When I wake up in the morning, I spend some time reading my Bible or reading something empowering, some kind of spiritual soul refreshment. So I do that still every morning and time of prayer and gratitude. And then what I found, which was interesting, as I was preparing for this, I'm like, Oh, I instinctually do this is what I've noticed is that I go to bed every night, I watch my little iPad, my little Netflix shows or whatever. I watched for an hour and I fall asleep to it, which I know is really unhealthy. But hey, I've had a stressful year. So this is what I do. But what I've noticed is I've picked shows I've already watched before. Yeah, so I think it's the familiarity that I already know the characters and I know the storylines, although because I usually fall asleep. I almost never complete a show entirely because I have the timer and I fall asleep in it. But just watching shows that I've already watched, there's a familiarity about that and that has really helped me in times have changed. And then my last one is really fixing my eyes on the goal. I think even with all this change in moving and the kids and everything, I keep my eyes fixed on the goal, which for us now at this point is the new house. So I just I'm like I know the next few months are going to be difficult, but I just keep my eyes fixed on that. And it reminds me of that scripture in Hebrews what says, We fix our eyes on Jesus. And he said for the joy set before him, he endured the cross scorning its shame. And I think that sometimes, if we fix our eyes on the end goal, it helps us get through those tough times, because we know where we're going right? In this world, my goal is the new house. But spiritually, my goal is heaven. And sometimes I just need to. And sometimes I just need to keep my eyes fixed on the greater goal, which is heaven. Sometimes a new house is enough or vacation. That can be enough. Of course, we're going back to Mexico for 12 days, again, familiarity and a true vacation. that's helping us we're like, well, we got to live somewhere. We might as well stay there for 12 days, but there's

familiarity there as well, but we fix our eyes on the goal. And that helps certainly for me get through those difficult times and through times of upheaval and change.

### **Ashley**

Okay, so yeah, I'm going to share my practicals. Now, slow down, like you said breathe, that's a big one to slow down. Because what happens is our mind can be racing, just unfiltered, raw, even subconscious thoughts. You know, yeah, slowing down just being still is really important. I like to just sit in the backyard for a little bit and just be you know, just be and not worry about things. Just like you said, listen to the birds, watch. We have geese that goes in the water, you know, behind our house, just relax. The next one is leaning into our emotions. Because I know for myself, and most of us do this is we cope, we try to just numb ourselves out because we don't want to feel the uncomfortable feeling. We don't want to feel the sadness or the frustration or the stress, you know? So we try to do the quick fix. And that coping is it's basically a quick fix, so we can feel better for a little bit. And I know I got into really bad habits recently. It was just drinking too much coffee. That was like my snack, right? Or I'd snack on goldfish or cheese. It's and I felt like it's just little tiny amount. But I was not filling my body with good stuff. Yeah. So I recently decided I'm going to try and eat clean. I'm going to try and go gluten free, somewhat dairy free, but I need to get more greens and vegetables because I'm not getting any vegetables in my body. And that contributes to not feeling well. Adding more physical stress on bodies. So that's a big one. Just letting yourself feel those emotions. Don't deny them. Don't ignore them. Don't push them away. You have to feel them because they will come and go. And this is something recently I'm sharing with my son too. And we talked about we started listening to a kid's podcast. And it was like feelings come and feelings go and we both talked about we're going to use that we're going to use it all the time because it's okay to feel your feeling. But just know that they're not going to stay forever they will go they will come and they will go.

### **Claudine**

Eight seconds. I think right? We've talked about that.

### **Ashley**

90 seconds-ish. But that is if we just sit and feel it and allow us what happens is our thoughts keep reinforcing what's frustrating us or causing us to be sad. So we keep feeling that emotion over and over hence depression, your anxiety, fear, shame. we reinforce it by constantly focusing on it so we have to be very careful like what you said fix our eyes on Jesus fix our eyes even on things that are positive things that you're looking forward to like, vacation, and you know, reframe those thoughts in our mind. The next one is just trusting in God. This was a big one and I found this scripture that I want to share because we all want more peace in our life, right? Yeah. Especially when you're going through something.

## **Claudine**

Especially through big changes, peace.

## **Ashley**

Right? And Claudine I've said it before, I think I've said it to you that you have been a great model for me and how you trust God because you have this is not the first time you experience hardships with your home. Right or selling the home or just you know in your Life. Moves, you know, you've moved multiple times. So you have been there, but you have always had just trusting God and trusting in God. And there's so much power to that. And in Isaiah 26, verse three, it says, You will keep in perfect peace, those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in you. And I've really liked that, because my mind will go to all the worry, the fear things I'm irritated about. And so it keeps reinforcing those emotions, then I cope. And then I just don't feel good, right? So trusting in God being still, those are so important. So I like to just lean into Jesus during those stressful times and make better choices that will serve me, then that's going to make me feel more shame. And like, oh, man, I shouldn't have eaten that or I shouldn't have had a cup of coffee or why or watch TV for nine straight hours.

## **Claudine**

Eight straight hours is okay, right? Well, you know, I love that too. Because as we continue to build our trust in God and continue to think more positive thoughts, or fix our brains and our minds on Jesus or positive things, we're actually transforming our neural pathways, and then that becomes the default mode of thinking becomes easier and easier. So yeah, I have moved, I think this isn't move 28 or 29. Honestly, I've lost count, I'm probably gonna have to sit with paper and pencil. It's a lot. But I've done it so many times. And I've told myself, I can do it, I can pack and I can unpack. I've done it so many times, it's become my default halfway like moving. It's not a big deal for me. There are many other things like friendships, relationships, all that certainly that's still stressful, but the actual moving part is not a challenge for me, because I've done it so many times, and whatever our thoughts continue to think about that is going to become the default line of thinking. So great, great points.

## **Ashley**

So the next one is keep routine. Now this is one of the first things that go out the window right you know, I know for myself over the last year is especially with the kids school seems to every day is different. And from week to week, it's are they in school longer what's going on and, and my brain is having a really hard time trying to keep track of everything. As much as I can, at least my morning routine I know that I can control to be consistent. And so keeping routine is one of the best things you can do for yourself, your mind, your mental health. And that was even I remember watching that on the news. They were asking, in the beginning of this pandemic, well, what can people do, you know, to help with this? And that was one of the first things they said as much as you can control keep to a routine and there's so much power in that for yourself. And then the last one is just moving body, you know,

moving your body, making sure you're making wise choices. And I don't always like to say healthy choices, because sometimes I'm like, Oh, that's no fun. That's kind of boring. But wise choices. make wise choices. What am I going to eat? What am I going snack on? Maybe I shouldn't snack right now. Maybe I'm really not hungry. Maybe I need a glass of water. Maybe you just go on a walk, you know, something like that. But moving your body is something that is just it gives you that peace you something you can do outside. It helps you even just to be in nature and be with God for a little bit. I like to listen to my worship music while I'm walking around or praying or listening to podcasts. But if you can be in a consistent habit of moving and I know one thing that was challenging for me is I was exercising like five days a week. Yeah. And then I feel like I can't really keep up with that. That was almost unrealistic. So then I went to nothing. But and then I have to ask myself, Well, why can I just go on a walk? It doesn't have to be I need to do this exercise or nothing at all. Well, I can go on a 10-15 minute walk. You know, I could Yeah, that I can squeeze into my day. Maybe not an hour workout. But I can squeeze in in 10 to 15 minute walk. So just keeping in those patterns will be super, super helpful with dealing with big change, big life change.

### **Claudine**

Yeah. And I love this quote, it says Change is hard at first messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end. And that's what I'm hoping for. I'm in the I think I'm in the messy middle right now. We're in the changing of homes and right cities and children moving out of state. So I'm kind of in the messy middle, but I'm counting on the gorgeous end. So until next time listeners thanks for stopping by and we'll catch you the next time. Take care.

### **Ashley**

Alright everyone, thank you for joining in on our conversation here on the Rise Up and Shine podcast. If you haven't already, please take a second to hit that subscribe so you'll never miss an episode and while you're at it, share this episode with a friend who you know it can bless today. If you wanna visit us as well on our websites, you can catch Claudine over at [claudinesweeney.com](http://claudinesweeney.com) and Ashley at [mindoverchaos.com](http://mindoverchaos.com) our links are at the description. We also have some free resources there for you as well. So remember ladies, no matter what you are facing in life, it is never too late to rise up and shine and live your best life.