

Kathryn: Welcome to episode 17 of compass, I'm your host Kathryn Hunter. Do you have a difficult time calculating what your rates should be? In today's episode Anna Lundberg and I talk about that and more when we discuss becoming a business coach. You're listening to Compass, where we talk with location independent womxn about their work and the paths that got them there. We get into their stories of struggle and success, finding clients, figuring out what to charge, and of course we talk money. Join us and take the next step in finding your direction.

Anna: Thank you, Kathryn. Thank you for having me.

Kathryn: So, I like to start with your early life and see where that influences you later on. What did you want to be when you were five?

Anna: Oh, I like to start with my early life too, I think it explains a lot of things. Um, I was just putting lots of new photos from my childhood into um, order as well the other day, so it's fresh in my mind. And career wise I think I wanted to be an astronaut. Um, I've always loved staring at the stars and somehow I thought that, um, yeah that would be an appropriate career. Late lately I've realized that I'm claustrophobic and not that fit and don't speak Russian. And so I think maybe it wasn't such an ideal career, but um, I definitely had big visions I think of being a scientist, inventor, or astronaut or something like that.

Kathryn: And how had that changed by the time you left high school?

Anna: Well, by high school I think it changed many times. I mean, the one common theme I think I had, and probably I didn't have that when I was five, but definitely quite young, was wanting to be a writer. Um, whatever that meant. So again, going through my old things, I did all of these pre Microsoft Word and I did these fake newspapers and newsletters and I wrote sort of really bad Sweet Valley High type fiction when I was younger. Um, and so I think I had this kind of dream of being a writer. However, um, I was good at lots of different subjects, um, sort of equally so it wasn't so easy to choose one thing. And I think I was very easily swayed by what other people said. So lots of people said, oh, you'll never make money being a writer. Um, so I didn't do that. My, um, career guidance at school for what it's worth, got me applying to astrophysics actually and the medicine at university. And luckily I didn't do that. I took a year out and instead I studied politics and international relations. So yeah, all a bit of a hodgepodge, but then I had a lot of different ideas and I must admit I didn't really follow any of them very intentionally. I was quite jealous of those people who knew that they wanted to be, you know, a politician or a veterinarian or a lawyer or whatever it was.

Kathryn: Is there anything from your university years that you use now?

Anna: Ooh, that's a good question. So I studied politics, philosophy, and economics and then I started a master's as well. I did international relations and you know, the subject matter I'd say definitely not. Um, you know, I guess it was more around the way of thinking, um, framing things and even softer skills like um, you know, time management and being self motivated and structuring an essay and all those things. With hindsight, I

wish, to be honest, I had studied something that I was really passionate about. There was one guy studying archeology and anthropology, which I always found sounded amazing or something like that. And so in England in particular, I think we study things that then we don't end up doing it all in our career. And I think for that reason I would have loved to have just done something for the love of it rather than choosing something that sounded like it was a good thing. But, so no, I'm afraid of not using a lot of the subject matter anymore. But I don't think that many people are.

Kathryn: No, I really don't think so either, but it's interesting to hear what skills you can transfer.

Anna: Yeah, absolutely. And I guess that's also why we go to university. It's also too to find ourselves, to be adults for the first time. I mean I did. I did actually. And again I found the newspaper clippings that I'd written for the university newspaper. I did some plays. I did acting. Um, I did rowing, I went out partying a lot. You know, there were a lot of other things that I did and I think it was obviously an incredible time and um, yeah, great for many different reasons, the least of which probably was the actual subject.

Kathryn: What was your first foray into being location independent?

Anna: Well, um, it's a good question, again. I guess what, what exactly is the definition? I think when I left my job, so I guess between university and now I have to quickly summarize that I ended up in Geneva studying international relations. I wanted to work at the United Nations and I did lots of volunteering and internships and things, but I ended up in the private sector working in marketing at a big multinational company. Um, then in 2013 I asked for a sabbatical so I went traveling for three months. Halfway through that I quit my job, um, and moved back to London, which is where I grew up in case you didn't hear from my voice, um, uh, temporarily, just because my family was there and I put my things into storage thinking I would be sort of location independent. Um, I wasn't really though because I was then working, I set up my consultancy marketing consultancy and I was working in the client's office.

Anna: So one, I was driving to, it was out in Hampshire, sort of in the countryside in England and the other one was in London. A couple of them were virtual. So it began to sort of become more virtual than location independence. But then after a couple of years of that, I realized, you know, I think I'd heard about this kind of nomadic idea and I thought this is not the reason why I quit. I want to actually travel the world and so on. So then I packed my bags, said no to those sort of big consulting contracts and I went off traveling. So I guess that was 2015. Um, but then I went through what I call my hippie phase because I was traveling and being location independent, but I wasn't really earning a lot of money. Um, so it's only really in the last, you know, after that I took a couple of years to sort of really to get the business off the ground. Um, and now ironically I'm location independent work wise, but life wise I've fallen in love with a guy who lives here in London. So I am from a personal perspective, less independent than I have been.

Kathryn: How do you describe your job to people who are being polite?

Anna: I love that question because we obsess so much about what we're going to say to people. I have to admit that for many years I just would still hang onto my title. So I'd say like I'm a marketing consultant and it was partly ego for myself, partly because I knew as you said, that people don't really care. Um, so now I think probably I'd say business coach or I work for myself, actually is even more vague. I think if someone literally is just asking what you did, it's like, oh, I work for myself and then I see if they ask anything else.

Kathryn: And when they do they want to know a little bit more?

Anna: Yeah. Then it depends how much they wanted to know. But I would definitely go more into, you know, I quit my job in 2013 and I now help people leave their jobs and I'm set up on their own. Um, but that's probably the sort of still the shorter version of how I describe it to people.

Kathryn: How did you get into the coaching that you do now?

Anna: Yes. I think I should add a little bit of it. Um, in terms of, you know, as I said, I started doing purely marketing consulting. Then I went the other direction. I discovered coaching for my own personal development, really. I signed up to a course, I wanted to learn more about my own values and career choices and say, one, I loved it so much that I put up a website. I graduated within six months instead of the two years that you were supposed to take doing it. I finished it very quickly and then, set that up and again, it's the last few years, um, that I've been able to reconcile those two things. Initially I turned my back on the marketing stuff. I was like, no, I don't want to do that branding marketing, bla bla bla. I just want to do the coaching. And then I realized, no, but I've got 10 years of very valuable experience, network, you know, people need this for that business to am. So I found a really lovely way of, of balancing weaving in both the business and marketing expertise, but also more of kind of the life coaching elements as well.

Kathryn: How did you find your first clients?

Anna: So I think the very first ones whereby the coaching program, but then I started, I had started when I went traveling and blog. That morphed into my professional website and I wrote articles as, as a writer, which I sort of think of myself as now, which is great since that was my ambition when I was younger and, but as a writer that was really my strength. So I'd write articles, people would read them, they get in touch, they say they were inspired and wanting to learn more. So the first few clients definitely came from, um, from the writing.

Kathryn: And is that still true?

Anna: Um, is that still true? I don't know, maybe not. Um, so I did more and more writing and a few years ago, I had Arianna Huffington share one of my articles and that, as you can imagine, sort of gave me a massive influx. I obviously have written every week for the last sort of six years plus I write on external sites. But now it's much more diversified

because like I'm on podcasts, I have a very active Facebook group, those and you know, I'm active on LinkedIn as well. So I think those are more driving people now to actually work with me. But definitely the first touch point where people find we could be that they read an article. Absolutely.

Kathryn: Tell us about your first major struggle.

Anna: Oh, like I don't even know what the first struggle was, it was just ongoing series of struggles and no, not really. I think, in a way, I was naive and therefore didn't really realize that there was a struggle and I had a comfortable position and then I had savings. Um, I had a base to come back to at my parents and so on. So, I think I was, you know, quite maybe excessively comfortable thinking that everything was going to work out fine. I think, again, naively I thought that quitting my job would be the big decision, tada, I'm living my dream life. And actually it turns out that was a big step, yes, but it was only the first step. Um, so we have to keep pushing our comfort zone and we have to keep risking things. Swallowing our ego, learning things, failing, trying things, working hard. And I think that was, you know, sort of a mindset struggle, I guess that I thought that was it. I'm now going to be successful in my business. I put my website up and people are going to come and want to work with me. And actually that's not the case. It's just again the first step of many.

Kathryn: And how about your first major success?

Anna: Oh I love that question but, then I feel bad though, that I can't right away think of something. Because, I think probably I'd have to say quitting the job was my first success because it was the first time I, I think in a long time that I listened to my intuition and did something that felt so, so right. And yet rationally didn't sound like a good idea cause I really quit, you know, without any plan of what I was getting to do. So in a way ironically, my first success feels like it was when I actually got off that conveyor belt, quit my job and decided to, um, sort of wake up and start deciding things with a bit more intentionality.

Kathryn: If you could start fresh today, knowing everything you know, would you do it differently?

Anna: Ehehehehe... Um, I, I'm going to say no because I have with maturity, realized that everything that I've done has led me to this point, whether it's, you know, and I was gonna say bad relationships, but not bad relationships. I haven't had that, but you know, whether it's choosing the, so called wrong university. I was looking at going to universities in America, which I would have loved to do, which I often used to think back, oh I wish I'd gone to, you know, the east coast or whatever, but I didn't. Um, I often could have taken that job or not this job. I wanted to work at the UN, but I didn't. Um, you know, and, and it doesn't bother me anymore at all. I feel like because especially the last five, six years, I've really been making choices intentionally. I no longer have those regrets. And again, every little thing that's happened has made me the person I am. So, um, yeah, it's quite a nice place to be. And I guess to not have to go back and think, oh, I should have done this, that the other, um, but always remind myself that I have the power or at least to change what I'm doing now.

Kathryn: Odds are you don't really have a typical day. Do you want to give us what a random day looks like?

Anna: Yeah, definitely no typical day. But again, I've gone back and forth with that because I think initially I was um, so, um, fiercely sort of holding on to not having any kind of structure and routine and, but then I realized that in order to have freedom you do need that routine somehow. And I was blurring the lines between, you know, uh, work and play, you know, I love my job so much so I don't mind working all the time. I'm actually now, largely thanks to my partner, I work more of a so called nine to five structure and then take weekends off. We've just been two weeks on holiday and I had managed to prerecord and set everything up before going. So I've almost fallen back into a more sort of structured day and we a random day I guess we can talk about today just to show the mess that is my life at the moment.

Anna: I got up quite early. I finished a writing project that I had two, three hours of writing, sent that off. I recorded some new audio trainings for my membership site, for my business coaching program. I had lunch, I'm at sure at some point I had breakfast as well. I've done two or three podcast recordings this afternoon. But in between all this I've had the collection of the broken bed, the delivery of a new bed. I've had about two, three parcels delivered including curtains for our new flat that we have and all sorts of sort of adminy things going on as well. So it's been a very messy day. But um, productive work wise and also personally I think. So, I guess successful in a way, although very random as you said,

Kathryn: That tends to be a theme. We all have, we have a set list of things that we have to get done and then, you know, life intervenes.

Anna: Yes, definitely. But I mean that's um, again, sort of, I talk about the ideal week as a structure that I encourage people to sort of map out, okay, if you had an ideal week, what would it look like? And the magic of that is that it is ideal and you will never achieve it. But it's just knowing that these are my priorities, blocking those into your calendar and knowing okay, obviously if I have a deadline today I have to do that. Or you know, some things are much easier if I have a client call, I have to do that, but if you really want to prioritize exercise or going outside or whatever it is, that needs to be part of that as well. So, um, yeah, a bit of structure and routine as I said, can do wonders for actually creating more freedom and then can let you take the time off in the evenings and the weekends or whatever it is that you want to do with your time.

Kathryn: Do you keep up with any kinds of continuing education?

Anna: I'm such a massive fan of lifelong learning and I definitely, over the last years, I've been so, um, devouring from the beginning, um, I guess more informal in terms of every book that I could find the first on career choices and all those things, um, business consulting, marketing, and so on. And, um, obviously I did the coaching program and I continue to read and to learn about that. Um, I have to admit that now it, yeah, I'd definitely say it's more informal because I think in the world of running your own business you know, and this is coming from someone who did a bachelor's, a master's, who was very much the good girl. Who always thought, you know, it was all around getting the good grades and

the Gold Star. Um, but it's much more powerful to learn a skill to do it than it is to go off and pay thousands for an MBA or some formal course and get a qualification that could potentially be not so meaningful. So, I definitely, I'm always listening to podcasts, learning, reading, talking to people, going to events and I want to keep challenging myself and learning new things. But it's definitely more informal than formal.

Kathryn: Now, we're going to get into the numbers. What is your salary range and how long have you been doing this work now?

Anna: Yeah, so it's interesting to call it a salary. I think again, as you've heard, you know, there's been some twists and turns along the way. So when I first started my consulting, I was earning more than I did in my full time job, which was quite unusual and quite impressive I guess given that in Geneva, in a big corporation, um, we had quite a generous salary. Um, so the first couple of years, you know, I was doing well even though I was then traveling in between. Then for a couple of years, as I said, I was really not earning anything at all. Um, a couple of clients here and there at quite a low rate. Um, and it's the last few years again that I combined those two. So I do some more well paid projects with companies, but they're things that I love to do. So again, writing and training and presenting they're all the fun things. Um, and then I do, I have my individual coaching and my group coaching as well. So now I guess the last few years I'm gradually building that up again to the same level that I had previously as well.

Kathryn: What would you say that level was?

Anna: Well the, the salaries in Geneva for let's say when I left, I'd have to think back now. I think it was like 160,000 Swiss francs, which I think was sort of dollars. There was more or less the same at the time. So it was a pretty high base to sort of start from I guess, in terms of setting up on your own and thinking that you can recreate that at all, right away. But as I said I did and then I went back to zero with the coaching when I started from the beginning.

Kathryn: As far as the beginning range, you're, you're starting from scratch or starting from zero, where do you think you could reasonably get within say the first six months?

Anna: I think it's hard to answer that question. I think the likelihood is that you're going to price yourself too low. But it's such a question of how comfortable you feel, how confident you are, how clear are you on, on who you're targeting and how you position your value and your credibility and so on. I think in, you know, it's so easy just to look at what other people are doing and to think that's a benchmark, but other people probably don't know what they're doing either. Um, a lot of coaches in particular, you know you start with like a hundred dollars an hour or something like that. I think that's quite sort of a typical starting point. And then you get people charging obviously thousands and thousands further down the line. And in terms of writing as well, people will charge hardly anything. If you go onto a website, like a freelance website like Upwork, you get people asking for, you know, thousands of thousands of words for just like \$10, \$20. I think there's a danger and I think unfortunately there are people who go for those very low ends and, but there's also the possibility, if you do it right, to just start from a much more reasonable standpoint I guess. So it's hard to give a figure that's pretty typical.

Kathryn: What would you say is the top of the range? Like where, how high could you go?

Anna: Well, it's funny again, specifically with um, coaching, I was just listening to, there's a podcast and I want to think it's called The Life Coach School or something. And with a woman who was talking about, she has the millionaire, I can't remember the names of these, sorry, but you can understand the concept. So she has some kind of a millionaire group where all her coaches are earning millions. So it sounds like there's no top range, in that case. And you know, I think more generally speaking, running your own business, there's such uh, two extremes I guess that exist. One is that kind of, you can make millions sitting on a beach in Thailand. And the other extreme is, oh, we're all struggling freelancers hustling. And not earning anything. And I think the reality is most of us will probably land somewhere in between. But from a mindset perspective, at least, I would suggest that you don't give yourself a limit from the beginning and you think more about is your top range or what do you really want to earn, that's more important than um, what you know, what someone else randomly happens to, you know, if um, some impressive celebrity coach in America is earning something that doesn't really mean a lot to what I can earn.

Kathryn: And how do you decide what you charge?

Anna: Yeah, so a few different approaches that I always recommend. One is I'm starting from the bottom up in a sense and the looking at, you know, the expenses and understanding what's the bare minimum I need. An expense, is meaning personal expenses, but also depending on how you run your business, it will be business expenses and taxes and marketing and admin and accounting and so on. And so that sort of a breakeven to at least cover those. And then you can see, okay, I need to add dah, dah, dah. The other is sort of top down as I said, that some people just want to earn, I want to an a hundred thousand or why not a million, whatever it is your target is and then you can work out from there, um, how much you need to charge. I think that the standard way that's often recommended in the way I did it initially was you know there's 2000 hours a year and then you divide that, so I want to earn 100,000, divide that by 2000 and etc.

Anna: Um, the problem is that when you're working for yourself, as I just outlined, because I've been dealing with deliveries all afternoon and I've done my accounting this morning as well, by the way, and you know, all these other things and um, you know, you're not paying me today, Kathryn, for example, for this call, which means basically that many hours in your week, um, apart from holidays and sick leave and so on, are not going to be chargeable. Um, so, you know, you need to, again, another way to do it is to look at the number of hours you're actually going to work and then think, okay, that means actually I need to charge probably quite a bit more than you thought. It's based on, you know, working 40 hours a week, 50 weeks a year. Um, so again, you know, there's a few different sorts of formulas you can use. By now I think it's more comfort level. It's knowing my value, it's knowing, you know, benchmarking versus my other programs and things I've done in the past and so on. And um, knowing, you know, for the bigger projects, you know how much that will take and, and what that involves really. So again, there's no magical formula, but there are a few ways in which you can attack it.

Kathryn: What's your number one tip for women looking to get into coaching?

Anna: Ooh, I'd probably say get a coach because that's definitely how I got into it. I mean, I didn't think I needed a coach. And with hindsight, I feel that's quite arrogant because if you're looking for other people to pay you as a coach, then why on earth wouldn't you have one? So, you know, I've in, um, November last year I was working with meditation coach actually specifically for a month to help me get into meditation practice. I work with a business coach. Now I have invested for the second time in a full year with her. You know, I would expect any coach that I work with, to be also investing at a high level with her coach. So to be honest, I think you need to experience what's another coach does. So that's one benefit. And the other is that you need to be constantly, um, working on your own personal development and growth and so on. So I think it's important both for your clients but also for you as an individual, as a coach to be coached.

Kathryn: What are your next steps?

Anna: Um, my next steps are a bit specific this year because I'm actually, I'm going to be taking a break going on, so called maternity leave for a few months, quite soon. Um, so for me this year has been about maintaining momentum from um, the last few years of building up the business. I've hired a couple of freelancers, so now becoming part of my team, um, who are already taking off more and more from my plate. And the goal is to do a lot of prerecording and setting up because um fundamentally my belief in these last few years has been having your own business is the best way to have the flexibility and freedom to travel, to have a young family, and so on. And now I guess the proof is in the pudding so we'll find out. But um, so for me it's a bit of a special year of sort of transitioning into a new phase of my life.

Kathryn: Where can listeners find you?

Anna: So my company name is One Step Outside. It's based on the quote "Everything you've ever wanted is one step outside your comfort zone". So, you can find me on onestepoutside.com. Search One Step outside on Facebook. Or you can find me on my podcast as well, since we are podcasting today, on Reimagining Success.

Kathryn: And we will get all of that in the show notes to make it super simple for everybody. Anna, thank you so much for joining us. This has been great.

Anna: Thank you, Kathryn. Thanks so much for your time. I hope it was interesting for people.

Kathryn: Did you enjoy this episode of Compass? If so, please take a moment to write a review. Leaving a review helps other women find us so they can find their direction too. Thank you for listening to Compass. You can find today's show notes at compasspod.com/017, that's compasspod.com/017. Next week we'll be talking with Amanda Baye, branding strategist. .