

Kathryn: Welcome to episode 30 of Compass, I'm your host Kathryn Hunter. Have you ever realized that you needed to slow down and still meet your financial commitments? Today, Kayla Kurin and I talk about that and more when we discuss becoming an online young instructor. 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. This is the compass podcast. And I'm your host, Kathryn Hunter. Today we're talking with Kayla Kurin, yoga instructor. Kayla, welcome to the show.

Kayla: Hey, thanks. I'm excited to chat with you.

Kathryn: 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?

Kayla: When I was five I wanted to be a writer.

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

Kayla: By the time I left high school I had gotten diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, which is a chronic illness, more common, I think people in their thirties and forties, but it does affect youth as well. And that had kind of throughout the last couple of years of high school and also my time in university, that had just really changed my perspective on life because chronic fatigue syndrome is basically like debilitating fatigue. And I was really struggling to keep up just with school and I really wasn't sure what that meant for me in terms of a career, what kind of jobs that I could have. So, yeah, I guess when I finished high school I think I was just very uncertain about what the future was holding.

Kathryn: What did you pursue in college?

Kayla: I studied psychology and classics.

Kathryn: Is there anything from that that you use now?

Kayla: Yeah, I mean I definitely use psychology a lot and that really helped me with my own journey to healing and kind of learning about from the things that I, I teach now about mindfulness, about stress, about sleep and kind of about how all those things can affect health and wellness and how those things can affect people who are ill or can, can be part of something that, that causes somebody to get ill. So definitely use that as well. And I would say that I, I use classics in a less direct way. I think just, you know, studying the history and the philosophy and the stories, the ancient myths and the plays and all that really introduced me to some, to I guess storytelling and really the basics of storytelling and, and talking about yoga as an online business, I, really is about my story and writing about Yoga and how it's helped me. And that's kind of what allows me to be able to do this online rather than just teaching, teaching in a city where you might, you know, have those in person classes to build the connection. Online building, the

connection is obviously online, which is a lot through, through sharing of my own stories. I think yes, in the, in the less direct way I use the classics as well.

Kathryn: How did you get into being location independent?

Kayla: I had always wanted to travel more and no one else, my family was, was that interested in travel or that, going on on vacation, like a beach vacation, but not, not really kinda long term travel. Uh, so I'd always wanted to kind of have plans to do a gap year when I finished university. Then as I said, I just, I wasn't really sure what the future was going to hold because of my illness. So when I started to feel better, kind of the first thing that I started doing was planning this big trip and I kind of thought, you know, I would go and do this gap year and do some volunteering abroad and traveling. And then I would go back to Canada and get a job or get a master's or you know, the kind of typical things. And then as I started traveling I realized that I, I didn't want to go back and I didn't want to go back to that kind of nine to five lifestyle where, you know, I was working a little bit after university and I would work all day and it would come home and I would have dinner and I would watch TV and I would go to bed. And it was just this, this kind of cycle where it wasn't really, I felt as though I was not fully exploring life. So once, yeah once I started traveling, I realize I did not want to stop. So I started, yeah, thinking about what I could do online,.

Kathryn: How do you describe your job to people who are just being polite when they ask?

Kayla: I'll usually just say I'm a yoga teacher. That can be pretty straightforward, not the, the online thing makes it more complicated to explain.

Kathryn: And when you're talking to someone who really wants to know

Kayla: Yeah, I would also tell them that I'm a yoga teacher, that I work online, that I have, that I have courses and books and workshops all designed for people with a chronic illness.

Kathryn: How did you get started teaching yoga?

Kayla: So, I had started doing yoga when I was ill. It was recommended to me by my doctor at the time and I studied both yoga and meditation and they found that they were really helpful to me. And so kind of after I had done that gap year of traveling and I was thinking, about what I wanted to do, I thought, I just thought about how important maintaining my own health was to maintaining the lifestyle that I wanted to live. Cause I wanted to keep traveling and going on these adventures and be able to make money and have a job. So, I knew that it was really important for me to maintain my own health. So you're kind of, felt like it'd be good because I'll, I'll be forced I guess to keep up with my own practice and doing my own yoga from teaching it. And also I'll get to share that with other people who are struggling with chronic illness or chronic stress or insomnia. I'll kind of get to share my practice with them because that's a little bit harder to find people who have, who have come to yoga from those places. So it's, yeah, kind of a combination of those two things. I originally didn't really think about doing it online. I thought about doing different courses and workshops in different places where I was.

And then after I ran the first few courses and was talking to people that just kind of evolved into running the courses online as well.

Kathryn: How did you find your first clients?

Kayla: I'm trying to remember now. Cause I ran the first course in person in London and I had been blogging a bit and I had a free, free video where people could sign up to the newsletter to get the free video and had done some flyering around London. So I think my first client had had found me through the blog. And there, I'm just trying to think cause there were three people in that first course. So the first one had found me through the blog and the second one had found me through a guest post I had done in another blog and I'm actually not sure about the third, third one, how she found me. Talking about online clients specifically. That those all came from, from people who found my video rather, that was on youtube or another social media channel and then signed up to my mailing list from there.

Kathryn: Are those still the types of sources where you get clients now or has that shifted?

Kayla: Yeah, it's pretty much the same. I mean my reach is further now as I've been blogging for a while and I have more guests posts up and things like that and a bigger social media presence. But yeah, my main, the main way of finding clients is still take out them onto my mailing list, whether that's if they got my blog and signed up or wanting to get one of their free videos and signed up and then I'll have a welcome sequence that I send them. And then they have, depending on their needs, I have some books and they have some short courses and then they have a main course and I also do sometimes work with people one on one as well.

Kathryn: Tell us about your first major struggle.

Kayla: I mean I guess making the transition from the, this idea that I was going to be, you know, a traveling teacher who taught in person to, to essentially running an online business I think was just a, a challenging transition period and just thinking about what that would look like and, and what that would mean. Because instead of trying to find a small group of core clients, I'm now trying to reach a wider range of people and getting the technology all set up, figuring out what technology I needed to run this course online and and all of that. I think so, yeah. I don't know if that's a good one challenge, but kind of, yeah, just making that transition was a lot of moving pieces.

Kathryn: How about your first major success?

Kayla: I think it was, you know, I ran the beta for this online course and actually got people to sign up for it. I think there were seven or eight people signed up for the this beta kind of lower price. The course, the first time running it and just getting everything together and, and getting positive feedback from the people that did it. It was, yeah, felt really good and made it feel possible.

Kathryn: If you could start fresh today knowing everything you already know, is there anything you would've done differently?

Kayla: I think I would have focused a lot more on building my mailing list and focusing on SEO. I did those two things, but I also focused a lot on social media and tried to be on every single platform and tried to do kind of every single thing. And I think like now knowing and, and at the time I wasn't sure if it was always going to be just me or if I was going to expand. And now knowing that I actually purposely want to keep things small and want to keep things just me at least in near future, the next five years or so, really focusing in on what marketing tools I wanted to use and what was the most effective use of my time. I think of what I would have tried to do that sooner to kind of hone that in a little sooner.

Kathryn: Odds are there's no such thing as a typical day for you. Would you give us what a random day looks like?

Kayla: Sure. Yeah, I can give maybe two examples because I kind of have more typical days when I'm not teaching Yoga in person. And then I have typical days when I am also teaching Yoga in person, which is often guest houses or hotels or hostels or sometimes yoga studios as well as I'm traveling, I'll partner with them to run the workshop. So I'm teaching yoga. I'm usually up pretty early by around 6:30 or 7:00. And this is so that it can give me time to do a little bit my own meditation practice and journaling before getting started. Um, I have a tea and then I'll go teach my own yoga, my morning class. And then after that, the rest of the morning is when I kind of like to take care of administrative type work. So that's when I'd be checking my emails, checking social media and doing any kind of shorter tasks that maybe don't require as much time or attention. And then I'll usually try to take a long lunch and that's when I might work out or go,

Kayla: If I'm in a new city, I might want to go explore or you know, if I'm feeling lazy, maybe I just want to watch a TV show or read a book, whatever it is. And then in the afternoon is kind of what I save for my, my bigger projects, so things that need more focus and attention and creativity. I would work on that in the afternoon. So that might be a blog post, it might be working on my next book, maybe creating a new course kind of bigger, bigger idea, things like that in the afternoon and then ever teach the evening a good class if there was one and then yeah, the evenings are pretty free. And when I'm not teaching yoga tend I to be a little bit more flexible in the schedule. I'll wake up a little bit later and will kind of let my energy level guide where I'm doing throughout the day. So in the morning I'm feeling more energetic than maybe that's when I'd work on the bigger project. Or I might say, oh, there's this thing I really want to do today and go take five hours to go to that and then work in the evening instead. Yeah, it can, it can vary quite a little bit, but I hope that gives a, that's a general general day I guess.

Kathryn: As far as licensing, is there an international authority or is this really more of a country by country kind of thing?

Kayla: So, there are different boards. So there's the Yoga Alliance, is the biggest one and they have an international branch and then they also have a few countries specific ones. And

then there's also the Yoga Wheel, which is more popular in the UK, but I believe they have an international branch as well. And then there's also the International Association of Yoga Therapists. And I think there are a few other associations like that. So if you are searching, if you wanted to be a yoga teacher, and you were searching for a school, you could look on the website of the place that you want it to be accredited with and you can check if the schools that you're looking at are accredited there or they usually just have a list of schools on their website if you know you want to be accredited with yeah, with a certain organization you can go through their list of schools and that can help you find one.

Kathryn: Do you keep up with any kind of continuing education, formal or informal?

Kayla: Yeah, I do a lot. I definitely take online courses both from independent people kind of like masterclass type stuff as well as, through organizations. And I did a, a micromasters through this MIT x online program. And then I also read a lot. So I'm constantly reading new books or new research that's coming out in my field.

Kathryn: What are you excited about right now in yoga teaching?

Kayla: Ooh, I'm really excited about, in the overall yoga trend I'm really excited about is this movement that's going on to make yoga more accessible. As many people are probably familiar, a lot of yoga. It's kinda the visuals that we see in yoga or a lot of young than flexible, healthy, fit, white woman. And that's not really who yoga is for, or what yoga is about, and there's really been this movement in the yoga industry that started in the past few years and I hope will continue to grow about making yoga more accessible, both in the visual aspects of the yoga industry to better reflect the actual yoga community, but also in terms of teachers being more aware that people are coming to their classes from all ability levels. And it's not, you know, necessarily about doing a headstand or touching your toes or any of those things, but it's about the, all of the mental and physiological benefits you get from the class. So yeah, that's been a really nice movement. And then on a more personal note, I'm going to be releasing a new, a new project soon on yoga for insomnia, which will be a, a mini course in book so, I'm very excited about that. On a more smaller scale, personal level.

Kathryn: Now it's time to get into the numbers. What would you say your income range is and how long have you been doing this work?

Kayla: So my income range can be anywhere from \$500 to \$1500 a month, US from the yoga and then that's not really including the in kind payment of of room and board for if I'm doing a work trade.

Kathryn: What would you say the beginning range would be?

Kayla: It really depends. When I first started I was teaching some classes in London and then I also had a course in London. Trying to think how much that was. I think it was making about \$300 or \$400 a month when I first started and there was also working full time at that point, as well.

Kathryn: What do you see as the top income range?

Kayla: I think it's really quite hard to say because it would really depend on how you built the business and who your target audience was and what offerings you have. Being online, it's kind of, it's unlimited in a way. I could, I could always have new offerings and reach new people. You could also, depending on the qualifications you have, you could start your on teacher training. So yeah, I think it's, it's a little bit hard to say because it would depend, and as well for me this, I'm not doing this full time. I do some other work as well. So I think you have to really depend on how much time you put into it and the way that you wanted to grow your business. So very variable.

Kathryn: How do you decide what to charge?

Kayla: I decide what to charge, I think just based on the work I put into it and the value that I think that people are going to get out of it. I also look at market rates. I go with like how much a yoga course or workshop is in the studio and price it near there. Online, you know, you want to keep it a little bit, or I do anyways, want to keep it a little bit cheaper as a, it's online. I don't have the same overhead costs as a studio have. At the same time I'm offering something that's a bit more niche, that a lot of studios are not offering. So I don't, I don't feel the need to compete on price too much. And then the third factor for me is thinking about my audience and what I know about their income levels and what, what they could afford or what would be, what would be kind of fair, fair to them. It's kind of hitting that cross between what I think my audience could afford or what I think they'd be willing to pay for it versus the, the work I put in and the benefits I see that they're going to get and the market rate.

Kathryn: What, if anything do you do to keep your income stable?

Kayla: I just try to keep in constant touch with my audience. So, I like to keep blogging and sending newsletters and posting on social media and having some, some good welcome sequences to keep people engaged. I also create new things. I create new new books and new courses and yeah, just try to keep people engaged and interested in the content.

Kathryn: Are there any tools and software you would recommend for beginners to start with?

Kayla: Yeah, I mean, again, it really depends on the kind of business that you want to build. So you definitely would need to have a website. I use wordpress. I know some people use Squarespace and you need somewhere to upload your videos to. So I use Youtube. You can also use Vimeo. It kind of depends. Vimeo has a little bit more of a professional feel if you just want to embed them on your website. Whereas Youtube is kind of a whole search engine if you want, kind of wanna use them to attract new people. So both of those could be good. And then if you want to teach one-on-one, I'll usually use zoom or Skype to do those meetings depending on which software the student is familiar with. So yeah, those would be the most basic tools. Oh and a camera and a tripod to film your videos.

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

Kayla: I think getting really clear on the style or styles of yoga that you want to teach and who you want to teach it to. And then looking for a teacher training program that kind of reflects your values, the styles that you're interested in and addresses perhaps some of the, the concerns that you foresee that people that you want to teach having.

Kathryn: What are your next steps?

Kayla: My next steps are going to be, to really once this and insomnia program launches. So I guess, yeah, my first step is, is to launch that book and course and then I really want to hone in on my marketing and really think about the content that I'm creating and how I'm sending it out to my audience and, and talk to my audience by sending out surveys and asking questions on social media to find out what it is that they, they want more of. Now that I have quite a bit of content out there, I wanna find out what it is they want more of what it is they're looking for. If they need more one on one help or if they need more kind of broader lower cost help. So yeah, I guess after after launching my next product I'm really going to focus on speaking with my audience and really narrowing in on on how does that, I can help them more.

Kathryn: Where can listeners find you?

Kayla: We website is arogayoga.com and my Facebook is arogayoga, Twitter and Instagram are @KaylaKurin. And I also have a free 10 day challenge if anybody's interested in that. So we'll be on arogayoga.com but I think Kathryn will have the direct link to this challenge in the show notes. So it's a 10 day challenge with 10 videos that are 10 minutes long that you can, that will get dripped out to you once, once per day. And the focus of these videos is really building creativity and productivity. So if you are starting an online business or if you're a freelancer, or you're looking to make the shift from your nine to five job into and to have freelance or online business owner position. It's really geared at helping you cultivate that creativity and productivity and just 10 minutes a day.

Kathryn: Yes, we will get all of that in the show notes just to make it super easy for everybody to connect. Kayla, thank you so much for joining us. This has been great.

Kayla: Thank you.

Kathryn: If you want your own location independent life and are eager to take that next step, join us in compass insiders where every week I send you actionable tips, inspiration, and motivation so you can take that next step towards going remote. Join us now at compasspod.com/insiders 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/030 that's compasspod.com/030. Join us next week when we talk with Julia Watterkotte, stationer.