

Interview with Kelly Diels

execution, collaboration, and the cycles of stuck

TARA GENTILE: Hey, this is Tara Gentile and today I'm talking to [Kelly Diels](#) who has been a personal mentor and role model for me. I'm so excited to be talking to her. She is a writer with a capital W who shares her thoughts on writing, money, and sex among other things on her blog Cleavage. Kelly, I'm beyond thrilled to be talking to you today.

KELLY DIELS: Oh, I'm always thrilled to talk to you. Thank you for loving me up with that intro.

TARA: You're welcome. I'm going to ask you to love up yourself now with your own intro because I think we always kind of look at how – We have an idea of who people are in our heads, but I think as entrepreneurs we tend to self identify a slightly different way. So could you tell me a little bit just briefly about who you are and what you do from your own point of view?

KELLY: Alright. Let's start with what I do because that's a much simpler question than who I am. What I do, I write a blog. I make my living off of writing, not specifically off writing off my blog, as a writer. When I decided to find a focus for my blog I thought, "What are the three things I'm never going to bored writing about?" Those three things are sex, money, and dating. I'd never get bored with those. I have topics forever and ever, which I think is a great way to find your niche. What's the thing that you're passionate about that you can't stop talking about? So that's what I do.

The long story, or the short story, is that almost two years ago I had a full time job. I had two little girls in daycare and I was like, "Is there more to this?" Like I'm just on my hamster wheel of commuting, getting them to daycare, getting home and getting dinner ready, collapsing on the sofa and watch TV. Like there has to be more than this and outside looking in that looks like a successful life. You're living in a nice house. Your kids are well dressed. You have a nice car. All those things are supposed to be, you know, what we're, happy with. I had a decent position and it just felt to me quite empty. So I started writing although I had always written and always had side gigs as a writer. Most of my jobs have always involved being a writer.

I started writing for an audience and putting it up there. I really wanted sort of my blog just to find an audience and to be a better writer by writing everyday. So that's what I do. I write. I write about sex, money and dating. I also write a Sunday series about how to be a better writer. I have an eBook coming out about how to use blogging to grow your business and also to grow as a person as an artist because that's been my experience. The practice of writing is the practice of thinking. So that's what I do. Who I am is a much larger question, honey. Do you just want me to start at the beginning? Because we'd have to talk to my mom for that.

TARA: No, just give me in maybe just a sentence how when you look in the mirror what do you see.

KELLY: Looking in the mirror I see momma. I see sex goddess. I see writer. I see chauffeur. I see a whole bunch of things. I guess what's interesting to me is that I don't feel internally a lot different than I did when I was 20 years, 25 or what have you. **But I just started to get a place where I think I have a voice where I'm starting to understand how people work and how I work**

and understand how learning mistakes can be so much more gentle in the world. I'm just starting to get to that place. I'm starting to feel more like a wise woman these days.

TARA: Awesome. That's a great place to be I think.

KELLY: It's a nice place to be heading.

TARA: So I'm going to ask you now, when was the last time you felt stuck? Because the people that are listening are the people – Well, they're just like all of us. I think we all feel stuck and it's very easy to think that there are successful people who don't get stuck. Then there are unsuccessful people who do get stuck. That's such a lie. We're all the same. We all get stuck. We all have places that there are seeming barriers around us. So when was the last time you felt stuck and how did you kind of move out of that?

KELLY: It's probably around six or seven months ago I felt really, really stuck. I just felt like all these pieces that were half written. I was behind with my work for my clients because I had all these pieces that were half written. You know, I was neglecting my blog. I wasn't developing products. All the things that I sort of mapped down as this is how business goes I wasn't getting it. I wasn't finishing it. I was doing a lot of work, but nothing was finished. **Good ideas are great, but execution is what counts.**

I was not executing. I just started to get ya know on the hamster wheel of, "I'm not doing this. I'm not doing this. "I'm stuck, I'm stuck, I'm stuck!" So a couple of things helped me. One I talked to my friend Dave Doolin, who is just an extraordinary guy and blog genius, and he got online immediately. We got on Skype and he said, "**The thing you need to do now is finish something because that will get you unstuck because now you have something.**" It's like

when you have credit cards. You pay off the little one first because now you feel like you have an accomplishment. It's done and now you have to look into the other two.

That's the same thing he wanted me to do. He just wanted me to have a little success so that I can go and take that, you know, the good juju, the good success and roll it into something else. So we got on Skype and got on Google Docs and we wrote a piece from start to finish together. It was really good. It went really fast because it was the two of us. I learned two things there. One is when you're stuck go get a tiny success which will give you the confidence, a little lift to go and tackle the bigger things and also collaboration and reaching out. Reach out to someone and let them be there for you and collaborate on something.

That was new to me. I'm not a collaborator. I'm a lone wolf. **So having that experience and how rich and rewarding and quickly a project moves when two people put their energy to it was kind of a surprise in a good way.** So that was how I got unstuck and I did go and tackle other things I've mapped out. Then I actually launched the little thing at the same time because I think it's just that little success. You just need that little success. You know, it's sugar in your coffee. It lights it up. That little success so you can get going. But I think there is a larger question around stuck as well. Because if we're sort of type A, go, go, go, entrepreneurial kinds of people we always think we need to constantly be busy and producing and creating in order to actually keep making progress.

But it's not all quality of the output. **The output is only good when the quality of the input is being taken care of.** So I think that stuck is almost a result of us thinking linear. Like you do this then you do this then you do that and if you're stuck there is like a break in that line and your stuck in this break. How do you build a bridge between those two lines so we can meet again?

But if you think about it in a more cyclical and seasonal way like even in an organic way we're creatures of nature. We live in nature. Nature has cycles and there's no creature that's go, go, go all year, you know, and neither are we.

So sometimes stuck is actually our winter where we need to take a rest and reflect and think and gather the energy for the coming spring. So sometimes stuck is a really necessary part of the creative process because there is no artist who can frenetically create all the time. There are times when ideas need help to incubate.

I think sometimes stuck is what we feel like we should be producing, but our body and our soul and our psyche is saying, "**No. Now's the time to think, to mull, to reflect and to feed all the artistic appetites in side of you and to nurture them so that then you'll be energized to go and create.**" I think sometimes stuck is winter.

TARA: That's really powerful. Two things kind of came to mind as you were talking that way. One being you mentioned the word "gentle" earlier. I think, you know, thinking of yourself being stuck like that and how you can get yourself out requires a real gentleness of your own spirit, you know, really gentle inter self talk. The more you are hard on yourself, the more you're negative to yourself that doesn't get you anywhere. You have to be gentle to move forward or to continue the cycle.

Then I also love your metaphor of winter and a period of rest. It's just really beautiful. Do you think, kind of jumping off of that, that if you kind of schedule or plan for those periods of rest or looking at the seasons, that if you understand maybe how your creative process goes through it's own seasons that you can kind of create those periods for yourself to better avoid the unnatural feelings of stuck?

KELLY: I think that's an excellent idea. As you create you get a sense of the way you create. I tend to work here, let's say six weeks of just sheer passion, intensity and I rock it out and I'm working all the time and the kids are in bed. I'm working more, but it's not that I'm tired. It's like I'm on fire. I've got all this stuff to give. I'm doing it. I'm helping my clients. I'm doing my thing and I'm writing and everything is on fire. I know what's going to happen at the end of that six weeks is I'm going to be tired and I'm going to need to just detach for three weeks.

I calm down. I take my kids to the park and get a little bit away from Twitter and not answer my email. I know that's just the nature of the way that I produce. I know that. It's been like that since I was a little kid. I always took on a whole bunch of projects, rocked them out and then I wanted nothing to do with anyone for two or three weeks. I could do a whole bunch of things. I could regiment myself, force myself to calm down in those intensive, creative times. But what I've decided to do is embrace that and that's the way I roll.

So I do tend to schedule short term projects and go all at them and then take a breather. That does give me a sense of taking care of myself and a sense that acknowledging that this is the way I work. If I schedule myself for six months, 9:00 to 5:00 it's not going to work for me. It's just not going to work. I think this is one of the things about being gentle with yourself. Just be really honest about the best way to create for you. Like you know your most creative times are from 9:00 to 11:00 in the morning then don't schedule calls during that time. Don't check your email. Do let your friend come over for coffee.

That's the gentleness and respect to yourself, to your creative energy. I think part of growing up as an entrepreneur is to throw away the way that other people work and the way that we've been trained that work looks in the sense that work is from 9:00 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Throw that away and really understand, what's your creative cycle? How do you work?

When are your best times? Then organize your life to accommodate that. That's, like you said, schedule reality, schedule in a way that you work because that gives you permission to create in the way that you need to create.

TARA: Right. I think that's part of the whole freedom that we're looking to attain as entrepreneurs too, if that's our thing. You know, we're not looking – I think we tend to kind of structure things the way we've been told or the way things have always been just like you said. But really, what we're after is something that's all our own. If you ignore that you're going to deal with the consequences unfortunately. But it is possible to ignore that.



About Kelly Diels

Kelly Diels writes about sex, money, and meaning on her blog, [Cleavage](#). Work with her to develop your voice, write for your business, or craft a juicy bio for your media kit.

Visit her [site](#) and follow her on [Twitter](#).

Get a FREE chapter, [in concert with fear](#), from her forthcoming ebook.