

Kathleen Asks Me What Success Means to Me

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SPEAKERS

Kathleen, Remi, Saskia de Feijter

S Saskia de Feijter 00:00

Hi there, welcome to a smaller life. My name is Saskia de Feijter. And I'm really happy that you're willing to lend your ears to me for about half an hour this time. This episode is a little different. It's a conversation between me and Kathleen, one of the most enthusiastic members of the travel community, and podcaster herself. Her podcast in conversation with Kathleen is all about how her guests define success. I was invited, and I love the atmosphere of this conversation so much that I wanted to share it with you. If you're struggling to get your work done, if you don't know how to find balance and where to go next in your business, I hope you find this conversation inspiring. The main topic is my motto, progress over perfection. We'll discuss the value of surrounding ourselves with a supportive community, celebrating our accomplishments, and being proud of how far we've come even if the journey was difficult. Additionally, we'll dive into the impact that we can have on others by sharing our knowledge and experiences and being open to learning from them as well. So grab your yarn, your needles, or your dog or your laundry, and enjoy our talk. Have fun. Hi, my name is Saskia. I've got over a decade of experience in running a small business in the needle craft industry, selling patented product design, teaching and running a needlecraft school. As a small business owner, you're in charge of everything, branding, marketing, selling, promoting and cleaning the loose. I'm educated in marketing and photography, and learn to do everything else on the job. I'm obsessed with the healing magic of crafting, and the power of community. And I'm determined to list our Seino for the world to notice so they can step away from fast fashion. In a smaller life. We learn from experts in the needle craft textile and creative industry, big names and small about what it's actually like to run a small business. Emotional talks with sellers about wins and woes, product and design, conscious decision making and branding and communication. Why we do it, how we do it. And what we need to become the future of fashion without burning the help at a smaller life fights apathy and app are out and aims to inspire you to look at your wardrobe differently. Where do you buy? How do you use your clothes? And can you make some of it yourself? dreaming big about a world where we rely on value based businesses, the kindness economy and where we can fully say fuck fast fashion. A smaller life is Yambol is completely free way for makers and sellers to learn how to be part of a healthier take on clothes and fashion. Yeah, well offers an online community where they can connect and inspire each other monthly topics with challenges for makers and coaching and support for sellers. We will move the needle. For more information go to J A hyphen w o l.com. Yam all.

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Kathleen 03:22

Today I have the great pleasure of talking to Saskia de Feijter. Saskia runs a supportive creatively conscious online knitting community called yovel. And she has a fabulous podcast called a smaller life, helping textile crafters and others make conscious choices to the way they live their lives. And Saskia doesn't know this I don't think but she is solely responsible for me coming off all social media except LinkedIn. And I have agreed on her website to not buy any new clothes because I know I have enough. So there you go. Saskia, what do you say to that?

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Saskia de Feijter 04:01

Oh, I'm trying to push back the tears. First question. Oh, really? I'm done. That's amazing. And I'm looking very much forward to taking pledges like that in the community and really supporting each other to do this, because it's actually not that hard. And it's actually also fun, which is something that some people don't think about when you talk about conscious choice and values and all of that.

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Kathleen 04:32

Good point. Yeah, I'm actually looking forward to it. And I think it'll make me more creative in the way I use my wardrobe. But I have already other stuff here. So I want to start with the first official question. Tell me where you are today, what your life looks like and what you're doing.

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Saskia de Feijter 04:49

I come from today, and usually I come from Rotterdam in the Netherlands. I live in an old parts of town in a new house which can be very He's interesting. And it was complex to come and live here, because it's part of an area of town where some people had to move in order to have new buildings, belts. And this is a whole thing I went through for myself. And the way to deal with that is to be active in community and to organize, and do some things that really connects the new people here to the older people in the community, not necessarily by age, but by the groups of people that live here. So that's where I am, I have my own room, which doubles as a Sewing Studio, podcasting room, it's my office. And it's actually also we have one of those air Col de beds so people can stay here, I have a big mission, I want to I want to see a world where there is no fast fashion where people are more conscious about the way they dress themselves, keeping in mind that they can do that in a fun, stylish way that also fits their needs and their bodies and wishes. This is the vision and I do that by offering a platform for makers as well as sellers. So people that are in the crafting, and textile community, there's a podcast, there is an online community in which we together work towards building that more conscious wardrobe. And I also have a program that is called the The BBC with an extra B, it's the building better businesses circle where I am not necessarily a coach, but a teacher and a guide. And in terms of having that people that started their business and crafts from a passion, most of them start from passion or, or from art school, and they don't have an education in business and marketing. And all of those words that they usually think are really dirty words money, oh my gosh, do I build a program from the ground up from the questions they asked me that helps

them to be more visible, and look at money and branding in a way that can make their business fit their values and needs because they need the energy to move forward and to make changes in the world. So that's that's the big picture.

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Kathleen 07:26

Yeah, you create so much good content. I just love it. So looking at all of that, what does the word success then mean to you?

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Saskia de Feijter 07:35

This is such a good and complex question. Because there's so many layers to it. But one of the things that I keep going back to is I interviewed Alice Carolina for she is from the ethical move, which is all about ethical marketing. And she said, or she asked me if somebody solves your problem today, would you be sad or happy solving the problem of no fast fashion in the world tomorrow? And my answer to that is, I will be amazing. I have 7000 Other things I want to do. I'll go into sustainable interior design, it's fine. fast fashion is out of the world. Great success. So success is not necessarily connected to me when I'm successful. I think it can be so small, it can be completely at the other end, like you saying, I stepped away from social media, I'm so happy about it. inspiring people is the middle. So if there's small things, huge, big things, I think the middle is inspiration. And for the longest time I thought that was naive, or inspiring people to make better choices might be taking the moral high ground. But I've changed my view on that because I was inspired by somebody that gave a talk about inspiration. And I thought it's just the way you look at it. It's just I just don't want to be a glass half empty kind of person I want to my glass is always half full. I want to share joy and share solutions share good news. So if that in any shape or form comes across, then that is success. Well, that's that is just for my business. Then there's my family. And that is a whole different story. Yeah,

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Kathleen 09:35

no, that's right. And success does come in so many forms, doesn't it? But you really are inspirational and I'm you can tell by the community you're building, the feedback that people share. You are great at bringing people together with a shared interests, a shared focus, and it's so important what you're doing. It's not some flighty thing that's kind of fashionable. No pun intended. It's really it's really meaningful and powerful work. And your podcast as well is is that, you know, it really does. Thank you so much. So that's a really good point you've made there. Where else do you sometimes sit back and go? Yeah, that was successful.

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Saskia de Feijter 10:16

Success to me is when my teenager or when my teenagers share their feelings with me as a parent, because that makes it possible for me to support them in the best way that I can. They have to deal with so many difficult things. And if they kind of close up and go inside, that would be so hard for me as the parents, and they still snuggle up to me on the couch, and they still share their issues with me and their problems and their journeys and challenges. And in this moment, that is success, I think is bigger than all the other things I said.

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Kathleen 10:58

Absolutely. I completely agree with you on that.

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Saskia de Feijter 11:01

On the other hand of that success is also embarrassing my teens. Absolutely. I love to do that. It's my favorite thing to do. I don't get much chance to do it. But whenever I can, I like to make a lot of bird noises whenever we were

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Kathleen 11:21

civilian. Oh, that's a good one. I try that. It's really, so with regards to the worksite of your life and the success associated with that. How did you get to this point?

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Saskia de Feijter 11:33

knuckling down I think not giving up with anything and everything. I've always followed my heart first. And just recently, I figured out that it's not always my heart, but my guts. So I have three things that I base my decisions on my head, my heart and my gut. i My gut is quite literally Oh, is it? We don't need to go there. But but it does really tell me when I'm nervous. Or what I am not comfortable with something. And not being comfortable can be good. But going back to your body and listening to your body is something that I've taken very seriously in the last couple of years. When you ask me, how did you get where you are. There's a lot of just pausing. And being honest to myself, whenever I need to be honest with myself, I go to my gut, my heart will tell me if I love it or not. It's a feeling of who new projects it's like. And then my heads usually is not super active the head is when it is more of when it comes to money or things like that. But it's usually heart and gut that do the deciding. And those are important tools. Other tools are being allowed to be messy, and taking action in a way that is not perfect. So I think it must now be more than 25 years ago, I ended up in therapy, because multiple reasons. But also because I was too perfectionistic like my perfectionism was in the way in every every aspect of my life. So I went through this phase or periods where I went the other way, everything was chaos. And there's this aspect of me as well. I'm also kind of finding out not diagnosed, but I'm definitely neurodiverse in different ways. So on that journey as well. But that like battle between perfectionism and creative chaos has resulted in a solution that for me is taking action. Instead of ruminating, that really helps. But it was it was definitely a learning curve. And it means that I send out newsletters even today that are full of mistakes. Because if I don't if I if I would read them the next day, and the next week, they will never get sense. So I have to make a decision there. And I have to trust that the people that I want to talk to have that space and can deal with the fact that I make mistakes. Those are my people. I like to think that I have that space for them as well.

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Kathleen 14:37

I think that's really important what you're seeing there, just do it rather than try to make it

perfect. And how often can you make a plan, write it down, ruminate over that and then procrastinate for the next five years, thinking about how it needs to look how. But if you're producing the work and putting it out there, you're getting better and better and better and better and you're drawing in more people who are going to be interested in what you're doing. And nobody cares if there's a common misspelling, or a spelling mistake, because the content is full of volume and insight and great content. And that's all that matters. So the

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Saskia de Feijter 15:13

imposterism. I've heard from good friends that it's not a syndrome, that imposterism is definitely in my life a lot. But I battle it with those tools and with knowing that taking action is my main strength and what I now have learned that when I start to overthink things, I should really just do something. And once I start doing, I'm enjoying, and I'll move forwards and moving forwards and not being so perfectionistic also saves a lot of time. So you grow faster. Yeah. So that kind

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Kathleen 15:51

of ties in with my next question, which was, what was the biggest obstacle or obstacles for you to overcome to get to this point. So I guess, the perfectionism and getting some therapy to help with that, and being messy, but getting it done. That's part of it, have you got any other obstacles that you can think of that were in your way,

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Saskia de Feijter 16:11

the main obstacle is just me basically, in the way I think, my mind talks to me. So just being mindful of who I am and what I need, and learning about myself and building a space for myself in which I can thrive. It's definitely a huge privilege in a way that I've been able to do that I found out a couple of years ago that I have a heart condition, I got surgery for that. And that kind of like those things tend to do really makes you think about the way you live your life. And we do have two incomes in this family. And it's enough, it's more than enough. That is privilege. But I mean, if you are in that situation, you really need to take responsibility, I think. And you do that in terms of living a more sustainable life, the more things that are more expensive, that you really need to choose if you have the ability to do so. And for me, it's the same thing. So now I build my working day, in a way that is sustainable and healthy. For me. The mornings are for exercise, because I've figured out that I can do exercise in the morning, not at night, I'm done by four o'clock, the switch is off. And then so I do exercise in the morning, or meditation should do more of that note, self, or journaling, just taking care of me or crafting for that matter taking care of me, in the middle of the week, I have a day off, where I do more crafting, or whatever I want studying, I love to learn. And then I have a part time job. I know what I need to be able to focus for longer periods of time. And I've had the opportunity to figure that out. And COVID was a big help in that perspective. So this helps me to do more in less time. And this whole journey has helped me to build a program for business owners, creative business owners to show them how they can make use of those tools, even if they're not neurodiverse. Or even if they're a lot different than me that the things that I've learned can really help them to be more focused and grow their business,

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Kathleen 18:36

really an author, they really, really fascinating. And I think the neurodiverse thing is such a double edged sword, you know, because actually, it can lead to so much creativity and diversity and taking your experiencing and creating the BBB see. It's brilliant. So we talked a little bit there about the biggest obstacle was you You said yourself and I want to ask you then the internal dialogue through the tough times must have been kind of relentless. So what did you do to quieten or silence that was that through meditation and through the crafting and having those time

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Saskia de Feijter 19:12

crafting, mostly crafting, and actually exercise. I've always done a lot of that I'm a big woman, I like to use the word fat myself because there's no value, there's just fat, nonfat whatever. I always done a lot of sports. They never resulted in a lean body, but they definitely result in a quiet mind. So there's that and the crafting and just having projects to really bite down and get the focus that calms me down. As I said, I love to learn it sometimes kind of switches over into podcasts or learning courses instead of working but you There's holding fiber, and stitch by stitch by stitch just coming down really, really helps. And then also, I just made this beginners scarf, like what people would call a beginner scarf. just knit stitches, the basic knit stitch. It's not hard, but sometimes that is just what you need to just have a rhythm going.

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Kathleen 20:23

Yeah, I agree. That's, that's great. So did you always know that you would succeed? Did you always have that background knowledge?

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Saskia de Feijter 20:31

No, definitely not. But I did have the fire. I didn't believe it for a long time. But the fire that I wanted to make a difference was always there. And I remember I wrote a rap about environmental change. When I was 12. When I think I think it was about 12 weeks when the the nuclear disaster happened in Russia in eternal trouble. And it was a big part of my life, I've always been super focused on things that were an equal or things that weren't fair, in my opinion. And I didn't get much space in the family where I grew up to be myself. I was always too emotional, or too I don't know, crazy creative. But it was always there was always a fire that wanted to like, stride. Yeah,

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Kathleen 21:30

it certainly have it breaking through, isn't it? And you've certainly done that. So if you witnessed a friend going through a similar journey, looking at where you were, what you've come through, and where you are today. Two questions, what would you think of them? And what would you say to them about what they've experienced? And where they are now?

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Saskia de Feijter 21:50

Such? I love that question. Because that's what I say to people, but doing it yourself as a whole. If it was a friend, I would be their number one fan. I would be consuming every little thing that they did, because I thought they were awesome. So we just say because now I'm thinking of the friends. And I'm also thinking of myself, it's really history. So what was the second part?

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Kathleen 22:18

What would you say to them about what they've experienced? And where they are today? So from the difficult stuff through to now,

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Saskia de Feijter 22:25

I would say you should be Can I swear? You if you can. You shouldn't be damn proud of yourself for getting here. And yes, you should have a party every day, just celebrating where you gotten to through all of the hardships, because I didn't even talk about the hardships and the really hard things that have been part of my life. But I have come a long way. So I would be I would say to them party every day.

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Kathleen 22:54

That's brilliant. I love and you know, you talked about, if a friend was doing it, you would take every bit of content they create, and you would soak it up. That is fine. Like this morning when you posted that 14 minute audio on the group and the website. I was like, Oh, good. I could listen to that while I do my yoga. And I absolutely loved it. I was like, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, I'm with that. Oh, yeah, I know. It's just

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Saskia de Feijter 23:17

I love that.

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Kathleen 23:19

It's so yeah, I'm waiting for that little when I see that little sign in the box that there's been something posted on yovel community I'm like, okay, who's it from? Seeing what's happening here? Let me let me have a look.

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Saskia de Feijter 23:32

You've been such an amazing member, I know that there's a bunch of people that are shy. A community is about sharing and offering what you know, to somebody else. There's a lot of people that that are scared to do so and I tried to talk to them in direct messages and kind of

support them there, but I can't force them. So if you are modeling this amazingly communal way of communicating that is perfect so thank you so much for that Oh,

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Kathleen 24:02

you're really welcome. I really do love it. It's just such a nice group of people and yeah, I get that yeah, that everyone's at a different stage. And you know, I remember messaging you when I first joined and saying I don't knit because total joy because I love what you're doing. I do rock cooking and I crochet you said I don't care what you did you

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Saskia de Feijter 24:23

actually changed the way I talk about it even more since you said that because I everybody that feels the same fire as welcome. Doesn't matter what you do if you're a baker maker, candlestick maker, what is it Baker?

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Kathleen 24:39

Well, Saskia, you have been an absolute star. So now I would like you to tell people where they can find you how they can join the community, and the podcast and everything else you're doing. So Remy can add that to the show notes and we can have lots more people turning up.

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Saskia de Feijter 24:55

That's amazing. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share a lot have stuck with you. So I didn't know I was going to be international. So I'm gonna have to spell it out. I think I have a website and on the website you can go to everywhere else. It's the main hub. It's www dot j a hyphen, w o l.com. So that's Yeah. Hyphen wall.com. And yeah, well, I like to explain is in Dutch it means yes, wool. And in German, it just generally means hell yeah. So where the name comes from, and I think German and Dutch people get it, but sometimes I have to explain. So

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Kathleen 25:44

as you can find the podcasts are smaller, like,

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Saskia de Feijter 25:46

yes, it's there, too. But a smaller life is on all the podcast platforms. And you can just go there.

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Kathleen 25:53

Yeah, brilliant. Thank you so much. That's good. absolute dream. Thank you. I knew you would love that, too. I could see you're enjoying it, even though you're yes to your face.

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Remi 26:08

Yeah, I loved it. I just wanted to high fiber all the time,

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Kathleen 26:11

in nuggets of great information from or to, but you know, be messy, just get on with it, get it done. Rather than ruminating and procrastinating, it doesn't matter if it's not perfect, what you're making what you're creating, and this can trip into many aspects of life. You know, reaching out to a friend, doesn't matter if you only have five minutes to chat. But you know, if you if you know, someone struggling that you care about a five minute chat, it's very meaningful to that person. So yeah, don't put things off. Just get on with it and produce and work and create whatever you need to do.

R

Remi 26:46

Yeah, and I also love that her idea of success was not just personal, but kind of community and even more sort of, internationally, almost like sort of universal success about sounds like she's very well. She's very conscious about waste and things. And then she's got her community that she's put together, but she's also really aware of the community that she's living in and things like that. And then there's the personal success as well. But she she mentioned she touched on with her family, which Yossi didn't want to get into into. But a different spectrum of success, I thought was really interesting.

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Kathleen 27:24

And you know, I really do feel that Saskia is one of these people who is an inspirational teacher, she's very much someone who pulls people together brings people together, what she's brought to the conscious living, the whole process of being mindful of what you're buying for creators for crafters, but the type of will you're buying, where's it coming from? We're sourced are the sheep a well cared for brings people together who have similar beliefs about the bigger cause of environmental issues and, you know, doing things in the right way so that we're not just using for the sake of using stuff we have enough that a lot of that message comes through, you know, we do have enough our stash, which talks about the wills stash Do we really need to add to the stash? Or can we create with what we have, you know, that comes out in her website a lot, too. And that's, that's been really helpful because I think I'm, I'm very, I have been not so much recently, but I have been very guilty of just buying, not not consciously the opposite, unconsciously buying, certainly yarn. And will, she just, she just gives you so much. So many ideas, she gives you so many ideas, she gives you so much food for thought, if you're just on the start of this process of thinking consciously about the way you live and what you buy, and where you buy from across the board, not just for creative people, the food you eat and all of that. She just helps you climb that ladder of understanding more and more about what really is conscious living.

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Remi 28:55

And the other thing actually, that I really loved and I wrote it down the word, procrastinate learning. I definitely do that. I definitely do that. And it I mean, again, overachiever, perfectionist, it makes me feel better about procrastinating. So I don't know, there's probably something to be worked on there. But I love that that's got a word because

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Kathleen 29:19

I love that. I like to she talks about being a Euro divers and that stitch by stitch. As she works, she finds it very calming and grounding. And that has helped, you know, with the sort of internal dialogue just getting really involved and engrossed in a piece of crafting and knitting and all

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Remi 29:39

of that. And, and the other thing that I have noticed that's kind of been a bit of a thread through a few of the people that we've interviewed, is the mindful nature of a craft or the way someone lives can be a real common denominator in how successful they feel. So it's not necessarily about reaching so certain targets it's about being able to be mindful in the thing that they're doing or being mindful of the world around them. And I feel like that's a that's definitely a message that I will take away today.

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Kathleen 30:11

I just come away from listening to her thinking, Yes, I need to even practice what I'm going to be doing more consciously. I need to be mindful of the choices. I'm making the food I'm putting in my mouth, all of that stuff, you know, the food I eat, the clothes I wear, the will I choose to buy? It needs to be not just blindly, not thought about process I need to really think about who's getting people getting fairly paid for this, you know, all of that stuff. She, you know, she talks as well about not taking the moral high ground. And that's what puts people off, isn't it? But that thing of, I'm being judged here. And Saskia is not a judgmental person. You can really, really pick that up in the conversation.

R

Remi 30:56

Yeah, there's no better way to put someone off with making different decisions than making them feel bad. I think it may be it's it works for some people, but certainly anyone with a rebellious streak or any resentment about a situation it's not the way to get someone on side so it was it was wonderful. It was great to meet her.

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Kathleen 31:13

I really loved it. Yeah, I'd love to. Might have to make a trip to Rotterdam Nope. Yeah.

