

## Episode 157: Unexpected Difficulties an Opportunity to Grow

Life Repurposed Podcast  
[michellerayburn.com/157](http://michellerayburn.com/157)

### Host/speaker Michelle Rayburn

Michelle Rayburn [00:01:08]:

Let's talk about acknowledging the unexpected. Life has a way of throwing us curve balls when we least expect it. We encounter unforeseen difficulties that can often leave us feeling lost, discouraged, or even broken, but it's crucial to remember that we're not alone in these struggles. The Bible assures us that God is with us even in the darkest of times and he promises to never leave us or forsake us.

What's your challenge right now? If you're in the midst of an unexpected difficulty, take a moment to acknowledge and accept the situation. It's okay to feel overwhelmed or uncertain I encourage you to surrender your burdens to God and lean on his strength to guide you through the journey ahead. That might sound like a platitude or like I'm trying to oversimplify it. So let me acknowledge that it's messy, and that's okay. In the last episode, Kaitlyn Fiedler there talked about it being okay to be real about our feelings.

So I encourage you to do that to tell God how you feel about it, and it's okay to ask him why sometimes After we acknowledge the unexpected, then we can embrace the opportunity for growth. While facing unexpected difficulties can be disheartening It also presents us with a unique opportunity for growth. It's during these challenging moments that we discover strength we didn't even know we had. We can learn to rely on God's guidance, we can trust his plan, and we can develop resilience all during that process. Remember, god can use your trials to shape you into the person he intends you to be. What if you embrace the process of growth that comes with starting over. I encourage you to allow yourself to learn from the past and embrace new possibilities Just as a seed must break open before it can grow into a beautiful flower, our struggles can pave the way for a stronger more resilient version of ourselves. I know that's not a fun process at all sometimes, but it's beautiful when we look back. When we see the beauty, then we understand the process.

Let's dive into 4 practical steps that can help you start over after an unexpected difficulty.

First, it's crucial to give yourself grace. Understand that setbacks happen to everyone, and it's okay to feel a range of emotions. Be kind to yourself and practice self-care during this time. self-care for you and for me may not look the same. So it's good for you to develop a plan that fits your needs and personality, not one that I tell you is a good self-care plan. For example, I love to nestle in my hammock with a book and some chocolate, but I have friends who love a vigorous run or a Zumba class. Those don't sound like self-care to me, but they are to my friends.

2nd, seek support from your Christian community. And if you don't have one, now is the time to look for your people. Surround yourself with people who can offer encouragement prayer,

practical assistance, and that listening ear. Engage in a bible study or maybe join a small group. or seek guidance from a mentor who can walk alongside you on your journey. Now sometimes we're in seasons where we're not as well connected as others, So this is a really good time if you don't feel connected to a Christian community to seek out people. And if you aren't sure where to begin, I encourage you to begin with your local body of believers. That's the church that you regularly attend. And if you don't regularly attend one, now is also a good time for that. Not just because of the learning that comes from sitting there and listening to God's word being taught each week, but the community that we have when we're with one another.

3rd, take time to reflect and reassess your priorities. You can use this as an opportunity to realign your life with God's purpose for you. Revisit your goals, your passions, your dreams, and seek God's guidance for the next steps. Remember, starting over doesn't mean starting from scratch. but rather building upon the foundation of your faith and the lessons you've learned in all of your experiences in life.

Number 4. be open to new opportunities and possibilities. Sometimes God opens up possibilities we never anticipated, Trust that he has a plan for your life and be willing to step out in faith even if it feels uncomfortable or uncertain. Some of the skills that I learned in 1 season have become the foundation for my current passion of designing books and doing creative work for author clients. I had no idea when I started the season that I'd end up here now and that it would be my full-time job. Just so you know, podcasting is not my full-time job. I work with authors as an editor, book designer, and a typesetter. And so I'm passionate about that, but I had to learn the skills, and it was during one of my challenging seasons of life where I learned those skills.

As you think about applying these four steps, It's important to not lose sight of joy and laughter. I love taking a lighthearted approach to life and finding humor in unexpected places. but it wasn't always my nature. God has nurtured that value in me. So I encourage you to share a laugh with a friend, watch a funny movie or engage in activities that bring you joy. Laughter can provide a much-needed release during our challenging times, and I love a good laugh where I laugh until I'm crying and wheezing.

I also encourage you to surround yourself with positivity and uplifting influence And this is not me trying to just say, oh, just be positive. I'm really talking about filling your mind and your heart with God's promises and uplifting messages that point to him. I've said goodbye to some activities and pursuits that weren't serving me well. When something that you love at one point becomes drudgery or obligation, this is a really good sign that it might be time for a change. And this is in hobbies and activities, and also sometimes, it means not spending as much time with people that really have a way of weighing down my heart. and so limited contact is sometimes very important for me in healing my heart, healing my mind I encourage you to engage in hobbies or activities that bring you joy and peace.

By cultivating a lighthearted perspective, you can navigate the journey of starting over with renewed hope and a brighter outlook. It puts me into a mindset of hope when I have joy in my life, and I know I think that's a universal thing. So, I encourage you to do that too. As Christians are ultimate source of hope is found in Jesus Christ. He is our anchor, and our comforter, and our guide. And even when everything seems uncertain, He remains steadfast.

The longer life's journey goes on, the more we know this to be true. We can hold on to his promises, and we do that by seeking presence through prayer and reading the bible and letting his hope fill our hearts. This does not come with shame or guilt. Your pace, your rhythm, is between you and God. So don't let yourself get rules oriented here. It's really about just spending that time. no rules, no time constraints.

Dig deep into your memory and draw from the strength of stories of people in the bible who experienced unexpected difficulties and found hope in God's faithfulness. Many of them are accounts you learned as a child. I remember all sorts of stories that my parents and Sunday school teachers read to me whether it's Joseph who went from being sold into slavery to becoming a ruler in Egypt or Job who endured immense suffering and found restoration, their stories remind us that God can bring beauty from ashes and turn our trials into triumphs. and that is a life repurposed.

Please remember that no matter what unexpected difficulty you may be facing, there is hope. embrace the opportunity for growth, take practical steps towards starting over, and remember to find joy and laughter along the way. Through it all, lean on your faith and trust that God has a plan for your life. If you haven't already checked it out my new bible study in the remade series is a good place to start, so here's a little commercial from me to you about that series.

Michelle Rayburn [00:10:18]:

Before we wrap up, I want to tell you what I'm reading. I've had a few extra trips and places in the car all by myself, which means I was able to finish more audiobooks than normal. I read one of the best books I've read in a long time. The title of it is now what, how to move forward when we're divided about basic -- everything. This is by Sara Stewart Holland And Beth Silvers. They are podcast hosts, and I really need to chat with the authors about coming on this show sometime.

But for now, I want to tell you about the book. In this book, they help us understand the powerful -- actions we have with other people on a personal community based national and even international level. And then they show us how to engage your family with spirit of curiosity, listen closely to the anxieties and fears of your friends, explore shared values within your community, understand your work as a citizen in a diverse country and hold lightly to these things that are beyond your control around the world. I think of this right now as a must read and I'm going to link in the show notes.

It's really about how to start over and move beyond our divisions. And I found it refreshing because the authors have come from very different perspectives and they are still very close friends and also colleagues, and they show how we can be diverse in our points of view, and we can still love one another, and we can still move forward even if our opinions divide us. So if you're feeling like that's part of what's keeping you back right now, I really encourage you to look for now what how to move forward when we're divided about basically everything.

I also just finished reading my first fiction book from Lauren K Denton, and I really loved it. I've I'm just exploring some new fiction authors. For a while, I've not read fiction. I had I used to read lots of fiction, and then I got really, I don't know, discouraged by sappy sweet stuff, and it just wasn't for me anymore. So after quite a few years without reading very much fiction, I'm exploring through audiobooks because I can do that when I'm in the car and when I'm out and about and exercising and doing different things.

So this one is about a couple starting over when they're peace was interrupted, and the title of the book is *The One You're With*. Lauren Denton has a lot of books, but this one was on sale and I grabbed it and added it to my Audible account. This one is about high school sweethearts, Mac and Edie Swan. who lead a seemingly picture perfect life in their community in Mobile, Alabama. Edi is an interior designer, and Mac is a pediatrician. And they have 2 great kids and a historic home. And from the outside, it looks like they're living the good life. And then a young woman walks into max office one day and changes everything. And it kind of explores their past.

It talks about the summer they spent apart when they were in college and how that affects their present day. And then they have to look at their choices and really establish whether their relationship is still strong. or whether their entire relationship and family will be in upheaval. So I'll leave it there for you to explore If you're looking for a good novel to dive into this summer, this is one that I highly recommend. And, yes, it's in the show notes, so I will link to that there.

If you found today's episode helpful, be sure to subscribe, and you can do that by going to the show notes. You can get links to the resources and sign up for the bonuses that they send out by email each week. So that will be in the show notes. And there are summaries there. There are quotes from the episode, all kinds of stuff there. So anything I've talked about here is linked in the show notes. That is at [michellerayburn.com/157](http://michellerayburn.com/157)

Michelle Rayburn [00:14:15]:

This is episode 157.

Michelle Rayburn [00:14:17]:

I also am sending out a resource to my email list this week. The bonus for this episode is a printable devotional related to starting over when God calls you to do something scary. Those bonuses are free to my mailing list, and I send them out to subscribers each week when I send out info about the latest episode And if you've missed those, they are also available for life repurposed plus subscribers on Patreon. And when people subscribe on Patreon, it just helps support this podcast that I'm putting out there for free, which is mostly funded by our family budget.

And so when people sign up for that small monthly fee, on Patreon. It helps support the show so that I can keep on going with episodes. Alright. That's all for this episode I hope that you find strength peace and hope in the midst of life's challenges this week, and I want to wish you God's blessings as we close I will see you next week.