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**TRANSCRIPT**

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**TEASE:**

LET'S BE HONEST, NOT ALL WEB BLOGS ARE CREATED EQUAL. SOME ARE PRETTY PAINFUL TO READ. BUT IF YOU FIND A GOOD ONE, A BLOG CAN BE REMARKABLY ENGAGING, EVEN ADDICTING. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HEATHER ARMSTRONG'S BLOG, DOOCE.COM, IS ONE OF THE GOOD ONES.

TONIGHT SHE WILL JOIN US TO TALK ABOUT HER LIFE AS AN A-LIST BLOGGER, AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SHARE THE PARTICULARS OF YOUR LIFE WITH A TOTAL STRANGER.

**DOUG:**

GOOD EVENING. THANKS FOR JOINING US.

YOU EVER WANDER INTO A WEB BLOG ON THE INTERNET AND FIND YOURSELF TRAPPED, CAPTIVATED BY THE MUNDANE EXPERIENCES OF A COMPLETE STRANGER? THERE IS A REASON BLOGS ARE POPULAR, THOUGH. IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN IT.

IT COULD BE A VOYEURISTIC TENDENCY THAT'S JUST PART OF HUMAN NATURE. BUT NOT ALL BLOGS ARE REALLY ALL THAT INTERESTING. SOME OF THEM ARE PACKED WITH THE DREARY MINUTIA OF PRETTY EMPTY LIVES, AND SCROLLING THROUGH ONE OF THESE IS LIKE BEING FORCED TO WATCH A SLIDE SHOW OF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S CRUISE TO ALASKA.

THE DIFFERENCE IT SEEMS IS SO OBVIOUS IT'S THE SAME REASON ONE BOOK WORKS AND THE ANOTHER ONE DOESN'T. IT'S THE WRITING. WE DON'T THINK OFTEN THINK OF A BLOG AS A LITERARY FORM, BUT WHY NOT? WHAT IS A BLOGGER REALLY DOING, IF NOT JUST TELLING A STORY? AND MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY TO THINK OF HEATHER ARMSTRONG'S ACCLAIMED AND WILDLY POPULAR BLOG, DOOCE.COM.

SO IT IS NOT SO MUCH A DAILY ENTRY AS ANOTHER IN A COLLECTION OF MINI MEMOIRS OR SHORT STORIES. TONIGHT, HEATHER ARMSTRONG IS WITH US TO TALK ABOUT HER LIFE AS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BLOGGERS IN CYBER-SPACE.

SHE'S LEARNED A THING OR TWO IN THE YEARS THAT SHE'S BEEN AT THIS LIKE WHERE YOU DRAW THE LINE, WHAT'S TOO PERSONAL. IT'S HARD TO KNOW THE BOUNDARY IN A FORM THAT THRIVES ON BRUTAL HONESTY.

**ROLL-IN:**

**HEATHER:**

THIS WAS A TOTAL HOBBY IN THE BEGINNING...ALL THIS WAS GOING TO BE WAS ME WRITING ABOUT MUSIC AND A PLACE TO STORE SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT DESIGN AND

LIFE AS A SINGLE PERSON LIVING IN LOS ANGELES. I HAD NO AMBITION FOR THIS TO BE ANYTHING MORE THAN LIKE AND ONLINE SCRAPBOOK. IT'S BECOME A MUCH MORE ENORMOUS PART OF MY LIFE.

**JON:**

IT'S SO EASY TO POST SOMETHING AND SO QUICK AND IMMEDIATE, YOU LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THERE'S WORK BEHIND THIS. HEATHER IS TAKING TIME TO CRAFT A STORY AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT I DON'T EVEN THINK I AT FIRST WHEN I READ HER SITE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, I DON'T EVEN THINK THAT I PICKED UP ON THAT.

**HEATHER:**

I APPROACH MY WRITING LIKE I'M SITTING DOWN WITH JON AT THE END OF THE DAY, OR SITTING DOWN WITH MY FRIENDS AT THE END OF THE WEEK, AND TALKING ABOUT THE CRAZINESS THAT WENT ON. YOU KNOW, PARENTHOOD IS CRAZY. THERE'S A LOT OF MUNDANE THINGS THAT HAPPEN, BUT YOU'RE LIVING WITH A KID WHO SCREAMS AT YOU FOR FOUR HOURS STRAIGHT, YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO COME AND TALK TO SOMEONE AND SAY "IF I DON'T LAUGH ABOUT THIS I'M GOING TO CRY ABOUT THIS. LET ME LAUGH ABOUT IT." AND SO I APPROACH MY WEBSITE AS I'M LOOKING FOR THE CELEBRATION IN LIFE.

**JON:**

HEATHER'S WAS REALLY THE FIRST SORT OF PERSONAL SITE WITH A PERSONAL SITE TO DO IT, SO SHE TOOK A LOT OF HEAT..."OH, YOU'RE SELLING OUT YOU KNOW...YOU'RE PUTTING ADS UP, IT'S GOING TO BE TERRIBLE FOR YOUR SITE...YOU'RE VOICE IS GOING TO BE DESTROYED BY THE CORPORATE INTERESTS AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE WHAT YOU'VE GOT..." IT WAS SUPER STRESSFUL THE FIRST YEAR I WOULD SAY NOT KNOWING FOR SURE IF IT WAS GOING TO WORK.

**HEATHER:**

WE GOT IN THIS ONE ARGUMENT ONE NIGHT AND I WAS JUST CRYING AND IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BAD WEEKS AND IT WAS LIKE "NO, I'M SERIOUS, IF YOU TELL ME THAT WE NEED ANOTHER COMPUTER, I NEED YOU NOT TO TELL ME THAT WE NEED ANOTHER COMPUTER. CAN YOU JUST DO THAT FOR ME?" (LAUGHS.)

**JON:**

I GUESS...IT'S SO MUCH BETTER TODAY...IT'S KIND OF LIKE THROWING A HAND GRENADE OUT THERE FOR ME TO...

**HEATHER:**

HAND GRENADE.

**JON:**

HAND GRENADE.

**HEATHER:**

AND I THINK THAT TAKING ADVERTISEMENTS SUBCONSCIOUSLY FORCED ME TO TAKE THIS A LOT MORE SERIOUSLY. AND I FEEL LIKE I'VE BECOME, AND I'VE TRIED TO BECOME A BETTER WRITER BECAUSE OF IT. MY LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON IT AND YES; THERE IS A LOT OF PRESSURE. I WILL NOT EVEN HESITATE TO ADMIT THAT. THERE'S A LOT OF PRESSURE BEHIND THAT. I MEAN, IF I DON'T PERFORM WELL, WE DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY COMING IN TO PAY THE MORTGAGE.

**HEATHER:**

WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

**JON:**

WANT TO DO TOMATO?

**HEATHER:**

I'VE ALREADY DONE TOMATO.

**JON:**

YOU HAVE? OK. I WASN'T SURE.

**HEATHER:**

YOU KNOW THERE'S A RICE SHORTAGE, RIGHT?

**JON:**

(LAUGHS.) SUPPOSEDLY.

**HEATHER:**

ISN'T THERE A RICE SHORTAGE?

**HEATHER**

I THINK WRITING IS MY NATURAL PASSION BUT WRITING IS NOW MORE THE JOB ASPECT OF IT. AND PHOTOGRAPHY FOR ME IS NOW MORE OF THE HOBBY.

**HEATHER:**

THERE ARE DAYS WHEN I SIT DOWN TO WRITE AND IT JUST COMES. YOU KNOW, AND THE PARAGRAPHS JUST SPILL OUT OF ME. AND THERE'S SOME DAYS WHEN IT'S A LOT MORE DIFFICULT AND I WILL HAVE A CONSCIOUS SPOT...I WANT TO GO OPEN UP A PHOTO AND MESS AROUND WITH A PHOTO JUST TO SORT OF GET MY BRAIN WORKING. THERE'S ACTUALLY, I HAVE THIS ONE LITTLE PHOTOSHOP TRICK THAT I DO ON MOST OF MY PHOTOS, THAT GIVES THEM THIS REALLY DARK, DARK QUALITY, THAT I HAVEN'T...I HAVEN'T SPILLED THAT SECRET YET. AND PEOPLE ARE LIKE "WHERE'S THE SECRET? GIVE ME YOUR SECRET!" SO IT'S THIS UPCOMING POST THAT I'M GOING TO WRITE AND TELL EVERYONE HOW I DO IT."

**HEATHER:**

SOMETIMES THIS FEELS LIKE IT'S EATEN UP MY LIFE AND I GO TO SLEEP CRYING AND I TURN TO JON AND I GO "I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS ANYMORE!" EVERYBODY HAS A DAY WHERE THERE LIKE "I CANNOT TAKE THIS JOB ANYMORE." BUT THOSE ARE MINIMAL COMPARED WITH THE DAYS THAT I REALLY ENJOY WHAT I'M DOING AND I FEEL FIRE. I STILL FEEL A FIRE IN MY GUT ABOUT WANTING TO DO THIS AND GETTING UP AND LOOKING FORWARD TO WRITING.

**JON:**

YOU CAN THROW ANYTHING UP, BUT IF YOU WANT IT TO BE GOOD YOU HAVE TO SLOW DOWN AND YOUR TIME AND CRAFT IT AND REALLY DO A GREAT JOB OF CRAFTING. THE NOTION THAT TALENT IS SOMEHOW NOT PART OF THE DISCUSSION, THAT SHE JUST MAGICALLY DOES THIS...SHE'S TALENTED. AND I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE BIGGEST REASONS FOR HER SUCCESS.

**HEATHER:**

WHEN I LOOK AT THE INTERNET I SEE POSSIBILITY AND I SEE PEOPLE BECOMING HAPPIER WITH THEMSELVES AND MORE UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER PEOPLE AND MORE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITY. AND THAT MAY BE COMPLETELY NAIVE OF ME, BUT I'VE SEEN IT HAPPEN ALREADY.

**JON:**

YOU KNOW, FOR ALL THE MEAN COMMENTS AND THE CRAPPY EMAILS, THAT'S REALLY WHERE THE POWER OF THIS COMES THROUGH, IS WHEN YOU KNOW WHEN...THAT HEATHER HAS WRITTEN SOMETHING THAT HAS TOUCHED SOMEONE'S LIFE.

(MUSIC)(MUSIC)

**DOUG:**

AND WITH US IN THE STUDIO IS HEATHER ARMSTRONG, THE CREATOR OF DOOCE.COM. AND WELCOME THANKS FOR BEING HERE.

**HEATHER:**

ABSOLUTELY, THAT WAS AN AMAZING INTRODUCTION. I ALMOST CAN'T SPEAK AFTER THAT.

**DOUG:**

I WANT TO ASK YOU, YOU HAD THIS EXPERIENCE RECENTLY IN NEW YORK. YOU WERE IN A CAB OR SOMEBODY WAS DRIVING YOU IN NEW YORK. AND THE DRIVER ASKED YOU WHAT YOU DO. AND YOU SAID YOU SAID, "I'M A WRITER." ARE YOU REALLY PLEASED WITH THAT ANSWER, AND DID YOU ALWAYS GIVE THAT ANSWER?

**HEATHER:**

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER GIVEN THAT ANSWER. I REMEMBER I WROTE ABOUT THIS A WHILE AGO. I HAD A REPORTER ASK ME, AND HE SAID, "DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A WRITER?" AND I WAS LIKE, "I THINK SO." YOU KNOW, I WRITE ABOUT MY FEELINGS. AND DOES THAT QUALIFY ME AS A PROFESSIONAL WRITER? YOU KNOW, I DON'T KNOW. I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS LIKE, "YOU NEED TO EMBRACE IT, AND YOU NEED TO BELIEVE IT." WHICH THERE IS STILL THIS IDEA OUT THERE THAT BLOGS AREN'T ANYTHING TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

**DOUG:**

YEAH. DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO WRITE? I MEAN, YOU WANTED TO BE...I READ SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU WANTED TO BE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES. YOU WANTED TO BE THIS BIG POWERFUL ATTORNEY. DID YOU HAVE IN THE BACK OF YOUR MIND THAT YOU WANTED TO CREATE A GREAT NOVEL OR SOMETHING?

**HEATHER:**

I NEVER HAD THE AMBITION TO WRITE A BOOK. THAT TO ME SEEMED THAT WOULD... LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON, SOMETHING THAT I MIGHT DO WHEN I AM 60 OR 70, PUSH IT OFF. I PARTICIPATED IN WRITING COMPETITIONS IN THE 7TH AND 8TH GRADE, BUT I NEVER REALLY DID... I NEVER WROTE FOR THE SCHOOL NEWSPAPER. I NEVER DID ANYTHING LIKE THAT. I JUST SORT OF WROTE AS A HOBBY. I HAVE NEVER TAKEN IT THAT SERIOUSLY.

**DOUG:**

SO THE FORM, I'M WONDERING...YOU PROBABLY READ YOUR SHARE OF BLOGS BEYOND YOUR OWN. I'M WONDERING WHEN THEY WORK. WHAT IS IT ABOUT THEM THAT IS

GOOD? I MENTIONED WRITING BECAUSE THAT SEEMS THE MOST OBVIOUS TO ME. IS THAT PART OF IT? IS THAT IT?

**HEATHER:**

YEAH, IT IS THE WRITING. IT'S THE STORY THAT THEY ARE TELLING. I THINK WHAT WORKS ABOUT A BLOG, LIKE YOU SAID, OR THE BOOK IT WORKS WITH A SITCOM IS YOU BECOME ENGAGED AND YOU START TO CARE ABOUT THE CHARACTERS THAT ARE ON THE SCREEN OR THAT YOU'RE READING ABOUT. AND THE BLOGS THAT I READ ARE THE ONES WHERE I'M ACTUALLY ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS PERSON'S LIFE.

**DOUG:**

YOU KNOW, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE THING THAT REALLY WORKS, PARTICULARLY FOR YOUR BLOG, THAT GIVES IT KIND OF A POWER OR SOMETHING DIFFERENT, IS THE CANDOR. THAT IT'S NOT JUST THE KIND OF, YOU KNOW, YOU ARE WILLING TO USE CURSE WORDS FROM TIME-TO-TIME.

**HEATHER:**

FROM TIME-TO-TIME.

**DOUG:**

FROM TIME-TO-TIME AND REALLY CANDID LANGUAGE. BUT THAT KIND OF CANDOR SEEMS TO BE THE THING THAT IS COMPELLING FOR PEOPLE. DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT? IS THAT TRUE?

**HEATHER:**

IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I SIT DOWN AND THINK, "I NEED TO BE CANDID." IT IS...IT COMES NATURALLY. IT COMES FROM THE WAY THAT I WAS BROUGHT UP. MY FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEEN OPEN WITH EACH OTHER. THE TOPICS OF CONVERSATION DURING DINNER HAVE RANGED FROM THE VERY MUNDANE, TO THE PROFANE, TO THE DOWN RIGHT DIRTY. I THINK MOST OF MY FAMILY WOULD BE WILLING TO TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW. IT'S WHO WE ARE. AND WE EXPRESS OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER BY POKING FUN AT EACH OTHER. AND SO, I THINK THAT MY WRITING IS A REFLECTION OF HOW I HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP.

**DOUG:**

IS IT SOUTHERN?

**HEATHER:**

THAT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT ANYBODY ASKED ME THAT. IT IS VERY SOUTHERN. IT'S SITTING OUT ON THE PORCH WITH YOUR TEA AND TALKING AND SHARING AND LAUGHING. MAYBE IT COMES FROM SOUTHERN LIFE, IT USED TO BE REALLY HARD. AND YOU ARE FARMING AND YOU'RE GETTING THROUGH IT. AND SITTING DOWN AT THE END OF THE DAY AND CELEBRATING, "YEAH, THAT WAS HARD. BUT WASN'T THIS PART GOOD, AND WASN'T THAT FUNNY." YEAH, I THINK SO.

**DOUG:**

YOU ARE GOING INTO THE ACCENT THERE. DID YOU TRY TO STRIP IT AWAY FOR A WHILE? YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL, WHEN YOU HEAR YOU TALK, YOU DON'T SOUND THAT SOUTHERN. BUT YOU SURE DID JUST THEN.

**HEATHER:**

I HAD A PROFESSOR IN COLLEGE WHO WAS FROM A TOWN RIGHT NEXT TO MINE. AND I CAME IN ONE DAY FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM AND I SAID, "YOU DON'T TALK LIKE I DO. AND HE SAID, "WELL, MRS. HAMILTON, AT THE TIME, THAT IS BECAUSE I'M EDUCATED." EVER SINCE THEN I AM A LITTLE WARY ABOUT IT. AND I CAN TURN IT ON AND OFF. IT IS HOW I SPEAK. BUT BEING HERE IN UTAH IT HAS TRANSFORMED QUITE A LITTLE BIT.

**DOUG:**

IT SEEMS LIKE THERE IS A DELICATE BALANCE. PART OF THE THINGS THAT DRAWS THE PEOPLE TO THE WEBSITE IS THE CANDOR. IS THAT THEY KNOW THAT YOU ARE GOING TO SHARE SOMETHING WITH THEM. YET, YOU ALSO HAVE THAT PART OF YOU THAT YOU DO KEEP FROM PEOPLE. AND I'M WONDERING...YOU DESCRIBED IT RECENTLY AS SAYING, YOU HAVE 95 PERCENT OF YOUR LIFE IS PRIVATE. I THINK THAT YOU SAID SACRED.

**HEATHER:**

YEAH, SACRED. YEAH, THERE IS SOME...I REALLY TRIED TO LISTEN TO MY AUDIENCE AND BALANCE WHAT I WANT TO WRITE ABOUT WITH WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR ABOUT. AND I THINK I'M BETTER. I'M THE BEST...I'M AT MY BEST WHEN I'M WRITING ABOUT DAILY LIFE AS A PARENT AND AS A WIFE AND S A DOG OWNER. I DON'T WRITE A LOT ABOUT POLITICS OR GET INTO THE REAL BIG DEBATES ABOUT RELIGION BECAUSE PEOPLE DON'T COME TO ME TO READ ABOUT THAT. AND SO THERE IS THIS PART OF MY LIFE, MY CORE...MY CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS ABOUT POLITICS AND RELIGION THAT I DO KEEP VERY DISTANT FROM MY WRITING.

**DOUG:**

BUT, ISN'T PART OF THE REASON IT'S SO POPULAR IS THEY FEEL LIKE YOU ARE SORT OF SHARING YOURSELF?

**HEATHER:**

I THINK THAT IT IS THE WAY I TALK, AND I THINK IT IS THE WAY THAT THE WRITE THAT MAKES IT FEEL THAT I AM OUT THERE NAKED RUNNING AROUND, WAVING MY ARMS.

**DOUG:**

SO, I AM TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE BOUNDARY THEN. AND THIS IDEA OF RELIGION...

**HEATHER:**

SO AM I.

**DOUG:**

ARE YOU?

**HEATHER:**

YEAH, ABSOLUTELY. IT IS A CONSTANTLY CHANGING AND SHIFTING. I MEAN, MY BOUNDARIES SINCE THE BEGINNING HAVE COMPLETELY CHANGED. I USED TO WROTE SOME REALLY HURTFUL THINGS ABOUT MY FAMILY IN THE BEGINNING, AND I AM NOT PROUD OF THE PERSON THAT I WAS. AND SINCE THEN, MY BOUNDARIES HAVE SHIFTED AND PUSHED BACK AND PUSHED BACK. THEY CONTINUE TO DO SO AS I GET OLDER AND WISER. I HOPE I AM GETTING WISER ABOUT THESE THINGS. AS MY DAUGHTER GETS OLDER, I'VE NOTICED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS WHAT I SHARED ABOUT HER AS SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASED AS A PROTECTION OF HER PRIVACY AND HER INTEREST.

**DOUG:**

I KNOW THAT THIS IS CLOSE TO THE SURFACE FOR YOU. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY'S POST, FOR EXAMPLE. WHERE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THIS REALLY DIFFICULT TIME THAT YOUR STEPFATHER IS HAVING. HE IS GOING THROUGH CHEMO THERAPY.

**HEATHER:**

RIGHT.

**DOUG:**

AND YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT WHEN YOU ARE AN ACTIVE, ENGAGED MORMON THAT YOU HAD AN ANSWER TO WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN. YOU ARE STRUGGLING ABOUT THE FACT THAT... NOW YOU ARE LESS CERTAIN ABOUT THAT. THIS IS A PERSONAL THING THAT YOU CAN SHARE.

**HEATHER:**

I SAID ON THE WEBSITE THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO GET TOO MUCH INTO IT.

**DOUG:**

RIGHT.

**HEATHER:**

I DON'T KNOW IF... YOU KNOW, I AM STILL TRYING TO FIGURE IT OUT. AND I RUN THE RISK ALSO WHEN I SHARE UP TO A CERTAIN POINT, I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE FEEDBACK. AND IF I GO TOO FAR, I KNOW THAT I'M GOING TO BE READING E-MAIL FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS FROM MORMONS TRYING TO PULL ME BACK INTO THE MORMON FAITH. AND THEY ARE THINKING THAT THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY. IF YOU HAVE YOUR DOUBTS, THEN HERE LET ME CONVINCING YOU. SO I AM GOING TO GET HUNDREDS OF E-MAILS FROM MORMONS SAYING THAT YOU HAVE YOUR DOUBTS AND THIS IS A CHANCE FOR YOU TO COME BACK. IT IS NOT SOMETHING THAT I AM EMOTIONALLY PREPARED FOR. AND I THINK AS I WORK THROUGH THESE FEELINGS... AND I THINK THIS WAS THE SAME WAY WHEN I BLOGGED ABOUT THE POST-PARTUM DEPRESSION. AT FIRST, I WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO SHARE THE FACT THAT I WAS HAVING A HARD TIME BEING A FIRST-TIME MOTHER. AND AS I WORKED THROUGH THOSE FEELINGS AND BEING ABLE TO ARTICULATE THEM ON MY WEBSITE, IT HELPED ME WORK THROUGH THEM. BUT I WAS ALSO GETTING TO A PLACE WHERE I CAN EMOTIONALLY HANDLE THE FEEDBACK THAT WAS GOING TO COME AT ME.

**DOUG:**

THERE WAS THIS KIND OF LOVELY WAY THAT YOU PUT IT IN TODAY'S POST WHICH IS THAT YOU SORT OF CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU ARE OKAY WITH NOT KNOWING. BUT SOMETIMES YOU ARE NOT OKAY WITH IT.

**HEATHER:**

SOMETIMES I AM NOT OKAY. MY HUSBAND LOST HIS FATHER 20 YEARS AGO, WHEN HE WAS 21 YEARS AGO. I HAVEN'T LOST ANYBODY IN MY LIFE. MY SISTER AND BROTHER HAVE TALKED ABOUT THIS. THERE IS A SMALL PERCENTAGE CHANCE THAT MY STEPFATHER WON'T MAKE IT THROUGH THIS DIAGNOSIS. AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR US? YOU KNOW? I HAVEN'T EVER BEEN THROUGH THAT. AND ESPECIALLY I'VE NEVER BEEN CONFRONTED WITH THE THOUGHT OF THIS NOT BEING A MORMON AND NOT THINKING THAT HE IS GOING TO THE SPIRIT WORLD, AND WE WILL EVENTUALLY

SEE HIM AGAIN ONE DAY.

**DOUG:**

YOU TALKED ABOUT THE FEEDBACK THAT YOU GET, THE COMMENTS. SO I MEAN IN THIS WAY, THIS IS A DECIDEDLY DIFFERENT SORT OF EXPERIENCE THAN WRITING A SHORT STORY AND JUST SORT OF SENDING IT OFF. YOU GET FEEDBACK, YOU GET REACTION.

**HEATHER:**

I GET INSTANT FEEDBACK. I GET INSTANT REACTION. I GET INSTANT JUDGMENTS.

**DOUG:**

LET ME TELL YOU. I WAS LOOKING TODAY. AND I WAS JUST LOOKING AT THE POST THAT YOU HAD WRITTEN TODAY. I WAS LOOKING AT IT. I REFRESH IT AND 40 MORE POP UP. IT IS TOTALLY INSTANTANEOUS

**HEATHER:**

IT IS THE CRAZY AMAZING. IT IS CRAZY AMAZING IS WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. I MEAN, HOW AMAZING IS IT THAT I WROTE THIS POST, AND I'M SORT OF LAYING MYSELF THERE AND HAVING A HARD TIME RIGHT NOW. AND I HAVE THIS AMAZING SUPPORT FROM THESE GENEROUS READERS. AND WHAT AN AMAZING TIME IT IS TO BE LIVING IN AND HAVE THIS TECHNOLOGY TO... THAT PEOPLE CAN FIND THE SUPPORT LIKE THIS OUT THERE, FROM COMPLETE STRANGERS. FOR ME THE INTERNET AND MY BLOG HAS RESTORED MY FAITH IN HUMANITY, IT REALLY HAS. AS GOOFY AS THAT SOUNDS

**DOUG:**

RESTORED YOUR FAITH. BUT THERE IS SOME DREADFUL STUFF THAT COMES AS WELL. WAS THERE A TIME WHEN YOU WENT THE OTHER WAY THAT YOU THOUGHT...

**HEATHER:**

YEAH. ABSOLUTELY. YEAH, A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO I HIT ROCK BOTTOM WITH THE FEEDBACK. I FOUND A COMMENT FROM SOMEONE THAT I HAD THOUGHT WAS A FRIEND. AND SHE LEFT A COMMENT ON THE WEBSITE THAT SHE HATED ME SO BADLY, THAT SHE WANTED TO PUNCH ME IN THE FACE. THAT WAS A BAD TIME. IT WAS SOMETHING THAT I HAD TO WORK THROUGH. EVER SINCE THEN, I HAVE PUT UP A WALL EMOTIONALLY. AND I FEEL LIKE NO ONE ELSE GETS TO HAVE A SAY IN HOW I FEEL ABOUT MYSELF AND WHAT I AM DOING. IT'S ME. IT'S ME AND MY HUSBAND, AND ARE WE HAPPY? AND ARE WE COMFORTABLE WITH WHAT WE ARE DOING, PERIOD.

**DOUG:**

AND THE FACT THAT YOU GET BOTHERED BY THAT REACTION THAT IS A GOOD THING, RIGHT? IT MEANS THAT YOU'RE STILL...

**HEATHER:**

AS A WRITER AND IS AS A CREATIVE PERSON, I THINK THAT IF I EVER GOT TO A POINT WHERE IT DIDN'T, YOU KNOW, POKE ME A LITTLE BIT, THEN I WOULD LOSE WHAT IT IS THAT MAKES ME CREATIVE AND MAKES ME WANT TO WRITE AND MAKE WHAT PEOPLE COME TO ME AND RELATE TO. IF I LOST THAT, THAT WOULD TAKE A GREAT DEAL AWAY FROM THE WRITING, I THINK.

**DOUG:**

DO YOU HAVE TO LET IT GO, OR DO YOU EVER THINK I'M GOING TO RESPOND TO IT OR REACT TO IT.

**HEATHER:**

I LET IT GO. FIRST OF ALL, IF I AM GOING TO RESPOND TO A E-MAIL, IT IS GOING TO BE A SUPPORTIVE E-MAIL. I WANT TO REWARD ,I WANT TO PUT BACK GOODNESS INTO THE WORLD. AND RESPONDING TO A NEGATIVE E-MAIL DOES NOT ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING. AND SO I HAVE FOUND THAT WHEN I DON'T RESPOND TO SOMETHING, I USUALLY FORGET THAT IT EVEN HAPPENED WITHIN A DAY OR TWO.

**DOUG:**

SO, I WONDERED ABOUT, ABOUT WHY YOU THINK PEOPLE READ, WHY DO THEY READ BLOGS? WHY DO WE, BECAUSE YOU KNOW ON ONE HAND IT SEEMS SO ORDINARY.

**HEATHER:**

SURE IT SEEMS ORDINARY, BUT THAT RIGHT THERE IS THE CRUX OF IT. IT'S THAT E, BLOGS ARE THIS RAW, ROUGH-EDGED STORY, ROUGH-EDGED VOICE OF PEOPLE. IT'S NOT RUN THROUGH A FILTER. IT'S NOT RUN THROUGH AN EDITOR. THERE IS, YOU KNOW, NO COMMITTEE OF 17 VICE PRESIDENTS SAYING YOU CAN AND CAN'T SAY THIS. IT IS THIS RAW, UNFILTERED VOICE FROM A HUMAN BEING WHO IN MOST BLOGS ARE OUT THERE TO, YOU KNOW, "HERE IS MY STORY, I'M REACHING OUT. HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU?" IT IS THIS COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER SHARING STORIES AND FEELING HAPPY IN BEING HUMAN WITH EACH OTHER.

**DOUG:**

IS IT HARD TO WRITE A POST? I MEAN, IS IT LIKE WRITING A SHORT STORY? DO YOU HAVE TO BACK OFF THE SORT OF LITERARY WORDING OF IT TO MAKE IT SEEM MORE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT I AM SAYING? HOW DO YOU CRAFT IT?

**HEATHER:**

I DON'T KNOW. SOMETIMES IT IS REALLY EASY. I HAVE A POST IN MY HEAD AND I SIT DOWN AND BOOM IT IS DONE WITHIN 20 MINUTES. SOMETIMES IT WILL TAKE EIGHT HOURS BECAUSE I CAN'T GET ONE PARAGRAPH OUT. I THINK THAT I LEND MYSELF MORE TO THE BLOG MEDIUM BECAUSE I WRITE MORE CONVERSATIONALLY THAN I DO LITERARILY, IF THAT'S A WORD. AND THAT MAY NOT BE A WORD AND THAT IS WHY.

**DOUG:**

GO AHEAD.

**HEATHER:**

IT JUST IS, A LOT OF US WHO DO THE BLOGS, A LOT OF US WHO WRITE BLOGS FIND THAT IT IS EASIER TO WRITE THEM BECAUSE IT IS MORE RAW. IT IS LESS FILTERED. THAT IS WHAT WE AS... I THINK THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE MTV GENERATION FEEL FREER WRITING THIS WAY.

**DOUG:**

I WONDERED ABOUT, YOU KNOW, YOU TALKED IN THE PAST ABOUT THE...YOU HAVE...I WONDER IF THERE IS ANY COMMERCIAL CONSTRAINTS. YOU HAVE ADVERTISERS NOW ON THE WEBSITE. AND WHERE YOU FELT THAT YOU COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING BECAUSE YOU WERE AFRAID OF OFFENDING SPONSORS AND STUFF. WHAT IS THE PROCESS LIKE?

**HEATHER:**

IT SEEMS LIKE IT IS AN EDITORIAL PROCESS IN SOME WAYS. I HAVEN'T...I'VE NEVER ALTERED MY CONTENT BECAUSE I THOUGHT AN ADVERTISER WOULD PULL OUT. IN FACT, I WAS SITTING DOWN TO DESIGN A MAST HEAD USING A VULGAR PHRASE THAT

SOMEONE HAD SENT AS A HATE MAIL TO ME, AND I THOUGHT THE VULGAR PHRASE WAS REALLY FUNNY. I AM GOING TO SIT DOWN AND MAKE A MAST HEAD THAT HAS THIS VULGAR PHRASE IN IT. AND AUTOMATICALLY I THOUGHT THAT A, ADVERTISER IS GOING TO PULL OUT OF THIS BECAUSE OF THIS. BECAUSE I HAD THAT THOUGHT I KNEW THAT I COULD NOT MAKE THE MAST HEAD. SO I PUT THE MAST HEAD UP AND WITHIN TWO DAYS TWO ADVERTISERS HAD PULLED OUT. AND I HAVE AN AD NETWORK WHO WAS LIKE, "MAYBE IN THE FUTURE IF YOU COULD WARN US ABOUT THE VULGAR PHRASES." AND I THINK WE HAVE BEEN TEACHING THE AD NETWORK, LOOK, THE REASON THAT PEOPLE COME TO MY WEBSITE THAT I AM WILLING TO PUT THAT PHRASE IN THE HEADER AND WHEN THE ADVERTISERS REALIZE THAT THEY WILL BE MORE COMFORTABLE ADVERTISING ON BLOGS.

**DOUG:**

THAT IS YOUR CURRENCY.

**HEATHER:**

THAT'S MY CURRENCY, ABSOLUTELY.

**DOUG:**

SO THAT IS INTERESTING THE WAY THAT YOU ARE SOMETIMES BRANDED A MOMMY BLOGGER. AND YOU TALKED ABOUT HOW, YOU ARE OKAY WITH IT, BUT IT'S NOT EXACTLY WHAT YOU ARE.

**HEATHER:**

I'VE BEEN BLOGGING...I WAS BLOGGING THREE YEARS BEFORE MY DAUGHTER WAS BORN. I MEAN, MY BLOG...I WOULD CALL MYSELF MORE OF A LIFESTYLE BLOGGER THAN A MOMMY BLOGGER. I WRITE ABOUT SKIN CANCER, I HAVE TAKEN IT TAKEN OFF. I WRITE ABOUT THE RACCOON IN MY CHIMNEY, MY DOGS, A LITTLE BIT OF MORMONISM HERE AND THERE. BUT IT IS FROM A VOICE OF A MOTHER. I THINK THAT IS WHY PEOPLE WANT ME IN WITH MOMMY BLOGGERS. AND I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH IT. I MEAN, BECAUSE MOMMY BLOGGERS ARE DOING IMPORTANT WORK, ABSOLUTELY. THEY ARE DOING VERY IMPORTANT WORK. THEY ARE LETTING PEOPLE KNOW THAT IT IS...WHAT WE ARE DOING IS IMPORTANT. BEING A MOM IS A HARD, HARD JOB.

**DOUG:**

WHEN YOU SAID THAT BEING A MOM IS A HARD JOB, IS THAT THE THING THAT INTERESTS PEOPLE THAT IT'S...AREN'T A LOT OF PEOPLE SAYING THAT BEING A MOM IS REALLY HARD? IS IT THE WAY THAT YOU ARE SAYING IS AGAIN...

**HEATHER:**

IT IS MORE THAN JUST A SUPERFICIAL, YES, BEING A MOM IS HARD. I THINK A LOT OF US WHO HAVE COMING INTO THIS FOR THE FIRST TIME HAVE BEEN KNOCKED OVER ON OUR BUTTS BECAUSE WE WERE NOT READY FOR THE VERY MIXED FEELINGS WE HAVE ABOUT IT. A LOT OF US COMING TO THIS AFTER HAVING CAREERS FOR MANY YEARS. AND WE THINK THAT WE ARE GOING INTO MOTHERHOOD KNOWING EVERYTHING AND KNOWING THIS IS GOING TO BE THE MOST WONDERFUL THING I'VE EVER DONE. AND THEN TWO MONTHS INTO IT WHEN YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT FOR TWO MONTHS AND THE KID IS STILL SCREAMING AND YOU ARE SITTING THERE LOOKING AT YOURSELF, GOING, I DON'T LIKE THIS. AND WHAT DOES THAT SAY ABOUT ME? AM I THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS NEVER LIKED THIS? AM I GOING TO GET OVER THIS AND BE ABLE TO WORK THROUGH IT. IT IS A EXISTENTIAL DILEMMA I THINK THAT IS FINALLY BEING DISCUSSED. IT IS NOT JUST, YEAH, IT IS HARD, YOU KNOW, SHE SCREAMS A LOT AND I DON'T GET TO

SLEEP. IT'S, WHAT DOES IT SAY ABOUT ME THAT THIS ISN'T COMFORTABLE?

**DOUG:**

DO YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR CELEBRITY...IS THAT THE WAY TO PUT IT. THERE IS A NIGHTLINE PIECE RECENTLY. AND YOU WERE ON THE TODAY'S SHOW. AND YOU ARE GETTING MORE AND MORE ATTENTION. DO YOU WORRY ABOUT HOW THAT IS GOING TO AFFECT THE WEBSITE AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE?

**HEATHER:**

I THINK MOSTLY, I GET A LOT OF SUPPORT. AND HOPEFULLY I WANT TO TAKE MY READERS ON THIS JOURNEY WITH ME. THIS IS A PRETTY UNIQUE EXPERIENCE. I'M REALLY LUCKY. I INVITE THEM TO COME ON THIS JOURNEY WITH ME. YOU KNOW, I'VE SAID THIS BEFORE. THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF CONTROVERSY OVER THE NUMBER THAT IS FLOATING OUT THERE ABOUT THE NUMBER THAT I MAKE OFF THIS WEBSITE. EVEN IF I DID HAVE A MILLION DOLLARS IN THE BANK, WHICH I DON'T, I WOULD STILL SHOP FOR THINGS ON SALE AT TARGET. THAT IS WHO I AM, AND THAT IS FUNDAMENTALLY NOT GOING TO CHANGE. I'M STILL, I'M SITTING HERE AWESTRUCK IF FRONT OF YOU. I JUST DON'T THINK THAT WILL EVER CHANGE. I DON'T SEE MYSELF EVER CHANGING BECAUSE OF THE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING TO ME. IT IS JUST ANOTHER THING THAT I CAN WRITE ABOUT.

**DOUG:**

YOU HAVE ABOUT 30 SECONDS LEFT. DO YOU EVER ANTICIPATE A TIME WHEN YOU'RE THINKING THAT I AM THROUGH WITH THIS. THIS IS GREAT, BUT I'M NOT...I'M DONE.

**HEATHER:**

YOU KNOW, WHEN...WHEN I'M DEAD.

**DOUG:**

REALLY?

**HEATHER:**

I THINK THAT I WILL ALWAYS BE DOING THIS IN SOME FORM OR ANOTHER. IF IT IS JUST IN MY JOURNAL, IT WILL BE IN MY JOURNAL THAT NO ONE READS.

**DOUG:**

OKAY. HEATHER, THANKS VERY MUCH. THANK YOU. THAT'S UTAH NOW FOR THIS EVENING. WE INVITE YOU TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE WHERE YOU CAN FIND ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AND FEATURES. YOU CAN SEE WHAT BILL ALLRED HAS TO SAY ON THIS STORY IN 350 WORDS OR LESS. GO TO OUR WEBSITE [KUED.ORG/UTAHNOW](http://KUED.ORG/UTAHNOW). THANK YOU FOR JOINING US. I'M DOUG FABRIZIO.

\*THIS TRANSCRIPT HAS NOT BEEN EDITED FOR GRAMMER OR CONTENT.