

## Ep #12: Sustainability Part Four: Legacy



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Dr. Susan Crockett**

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Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa* the podcast with Dr. Susan Crockett. You are listening to episode number 12: *Sustainability During Difficult Times Part 4: Legacy*. This episode is dedicated to all of my future grandchildren, and their children, and their children, and their children.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, where women learn to love their lives. Do you find yourself frustrated by society's expectations? Looking for practical advice on how to discover your talents and level up your life? You've found the right place. Here's your host, US News top doctor, robotic surgeon and certified life coach, Dr. Susan Crockett.

Hello, my virtuosas. I'm your host, Dr. Susan Crockett, and as always, you can call me Sue because we're not doing medicine here. We're having girl talk. I'm so grateful for today. Today is a beautiful day in Texas. We are still homebound during the coronavirus, and I'm doing this four-part series during our stay-at-home order. We are in stay-at-home order day 17 here in San Antonio.

So, it's been kind of interesting. We thought it was only going to be two or three weeks, and now, we're planning for seven weeks more. We're looking towards the beginning of June as a reboot, and as I was thinking about what we're talking about here, I thought that probably that's going to be fun because we're, right now, in the process of hibernating or cocooning kind of like a butterfly would do.

If we are carrying through the theme of becoming a virtuosa, our best selves, it requires times of cocooning in which we get all disconnected, and discombobulated, and reformed, and come out better on the other side. So, that's what my wish is and my prayer is for each of you. I'm really excited about today's show.

Today's show is on legacy. It's the fourth in a series that I've been doing on sustainability through difficult times. As always, we'll have a lesson with an exercise at the end of it. I wanted to start with one of my favorite little stories. It's one that I've taken from other sources and made my own. I

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don't know if you all remember a couple of podcasts back. I talked about the idea that we're all interconnected, and we went down on the micro level where if you start with a body, all the cells are connected.

Even if the little pinky toenail cell doesn't know what's going on in the left ear lobe cell, they are all connected in one. That's, as human beings, how I think of ourselves. We are all connected in one. We went down and looked at it all the way down to the subatomic level, and then backed up and looked at it as a universe and multiple universes, galaxy, everything type of picture.

So, I want to do one of those of stories for you today. I want you to picture a drop of water. Maybe it's the saliva in your mouth. I want you to picture about where that of water may have been. There's a couple interesting facts about water. It was 60% of our bodies are water, 60% of the human body is made out of water, and the earth is 71% water, and only 4% of that hangs above it in the atmosphere as vapor.

I want you to picture one of the molecules of water that's in your saliva, and I want you to picture it leaving your body as breath on your next exhale, and I want you to picture that that breath with the vaporized water continues upward into the atmosphere, and it joins one of the clouds that's up in the sky that I'm looking at outside my window right now because it's Texas, and that changes about every five minutes.

Okay. So, it becomes one of the water droplets in the cloud, and the cloud carries it from where you are to somewhere across the ocean. Let's say Italy. They need help now with stuff. Let's say it turns into rain in Italy, and the rain flows into the canals in Venice, and so that water droplet is now in Venice. It flows from the canals in Venice, and it goes all the way out to the ocean where the fish all swim in it and a whale swallows some of the water. A blue whales is swallowing its krill and all of that. It swallows in a bunch of that water, and that molecule that used to be in your saliva is now in the belly of a whale.

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Let's forward over time. That whale eventually dies, and decays, and falls to the bottom of the sea, and is eaten by whatever eats things that fall to the bottom of the sea. Maybe a shark, maybe little, tiny microorganisms that feed on decaying body parts. That drop of water goes from that whale into a shark. Then let's say that shark is caught by a fishermen off the coast of Denmark, and the fishermen actually cuts it up and kills the shark, cuts it up for food, filets it, and sends it off to the market, to the restaurant.

Then somebody eats the flesh from the shark that happens to have the molecule of water in it that was once in your saliva that traveled all the way over there. Now, that droplet of water, that molecule of water, has become somebody totally different. It's in somebody else's body. My point is this water, this idea of the water molecule, is really interesting because it shows our interconnectedness, and when we start thinking about legacy, I want you to think about how interconnected we truly are and what it means for you to leave a legacy.

So, the definition of a legacy is twofold. There's one way of looking at it that can be a gift of property, personal property, like money or you bequest something in a will. That would be the legal definition of a legacy. You can be a legacy child at a university. That means that your parent went to the university. You're a legacy kid. It also can mean anything that's handed down from the past like everything that you've gotten from your ancestors, and it also means everything you're passing down to your predecessors.

What is your legacy? The reason it's important to think about this in terms of sustainability is this is the fourth part of the four parts of sustainability that we've been teaching on. The first part was resilience, and resilience is getting up when you're knocked down. Then the second part was tenacity. Tenacity is the ability to hang on when letting go might be more convenient or seems more attractive. Then we talked about diligence, which is keeping going when it would be easier to quit. Diligence also involves practice, and then legacy would be the product of the sustaining.

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Legacy is what happens when you do the other things and you come out the other side. Legacy is what we're going to have when we get through this Coronavirus pandemic and how we are on the other side. How we handle it, and what we do in it, and how we affect the people around us is the legacy. It's what the history books are going to write about it. It's how we have changed our world and how we will affect the world for better after being through this.

When I think about my own personal legacy, I think about several different kinds. There's one that's genetic. Our genetic legacy comes from parent down to child, and then we procreate, and have children, and pass that genetic material down. So, my kids have a legacy of my DNA, which is the script of our being. That's one kind of legacy.

Then there's the legacy of the works that we do, which would include the work that we do like going to work and having a job, but it also includes the work of creation, like intellectual property. These types of legacies are teaching, and writing, and music, and art, and creating. What are you bringing to the world that will sustain and be there after you're gone? Or what are you bringing to the world that is influencing other people that will continue to influence the world after you have passed?

As you start thinking in this and the bigger categories, what you realize is that everything you do, everything you choose to do or don't do is legacy. Everything that you do affects the world around you. You are profoundly important, and everything that you do is important, and it matters. You matter.

So, I want you to think about this scientist named Edward Lorenz. I'm not sure if any of you have heard of him, but in 1963, Edward presented a hypothesis to the New York Academy of Science, and his theory, which was just radical at the time, was that a butterfly could flap its wings and set molecules of air in motion, which would move other molecules of air, in turn moving more molecules of air, and eventually capable of starting a hurricane on the other side of the planet.

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That was his theory, and he and his ideas were literally laughed out of the conference. It was thought that that was so ridiculous, and this is what we've come to know as the butterfly effect. Over the years, in fact, about 30 years after it was introduced, physics professors working in different colleges and universities all over the world came to the same conclusion that this was actually true.

It was an authentic, accurate, and viable theory, and they changed the name of it from being the butterfly effect to a law, and it's now known as the law of sensitive dependence upon initial conditions. Really fancy. Basically, what that means is there is a force in our world that is far more encompassing than just butterfly wings, and it's been shown that this effect engages with the first movement of any form of matter, including people.

So, when you decide to do something, when you decide to move on something, it always has this ripple effect around you, even though you're not aware of it. That's what this theory says. When we think about this in terms of managing our brains and thinking about transformation for ourselves, or becoming our best version of ourselves, our virtuosa selves, the reason this is fascinating to me is, I introduced you to this in the transformation model, but not so succinctly, the theory behind managing our brains that we work off of is that the world around us is made up of circumstances.

The world is made up of things that happen, and they are completely neutral, and then our inner life, our thought life, which we have control over and have choice over how our brain thinks and what it does is the part of the world that we can control when we don't have control over anything else outside of this like circumstances or other people. So, our thoughts control our feelings, our thoughts create our feelings, our feelings motivate our actions, and our actions create our results. That's the natural order of the brain theory that we work off of for life coaching.

So, when we start thinking about the butterfly effect, which is working off of the A line, the action line, what it's talking about is that everything you

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choose to move or do, that every action that you take, has profound ripple effects throughout the world, throughout the rest of us.

So, when we go back from that to our feelings that created whatever action we're doing and the thoughts that we had to create those actions, you begin to realize how very, very important it is that we learn how to manage our minds and our thinking, and just how powerful our brains actually are.

The other little piece that I came across as I was thinking about legacy has to do with genetics. The interesting thing to me is I was always taught that genes were like the encyclopedia, for those of you that remember those. They're the Wikipedia of the human genome. So, all of our little chromosomes are like the volumes of books that hold all the information encoded about everything about us.

Then in order to have children, we split certain chromosomes in the gonads, and then the egg and the sperm come together, each with half of a chromosome load, and they create the full new chromosome for the new being. So, genetically, we were taught that the chromosome unzips, the DNA unzips, like a ladder unzipping and half of it goes from the mom's side, half of it comes from the dad's side, they rezip, and if everything works out well, it all comes together, and then you have a new human being that has the combined DNA from both sets of parents.

That was a theory when I was going through med school and residency. Up to really about 2002 was the first time I started seeing information on this idea called epigenetics. Epigenetics has really come into the spotlight recently because of cancer research. Basically, epigenetics is the study of changes in organisms that are caused by modification of the gene expression rather than alteration of the code itself.

We used to think that the only way genes got altered was to change the letters in the encyclopedia, or in the Wikipedia, to change the letters in the code, the combinations. Now what we're realizing in science very simplistically, is that there are lots of things that turn genes on and off that

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make them work or not. It's almost like off, on switches. That's some of why environment and dietary things are important in managing cancers. It's also where genetic research is going in being able to treat lots of disease, not just cancers.

The other interesting thing that falls into epigenetics is this idea that maternal, or paternal, or inherited trauma can be transmitted through the DNA down to the progeny or down to the children. There are a couple of really interesting articles that I found. One was from the New York Times in December of 2018. The article was called *Can We Really Inherit Trauma?*

It talked about an article that was written by researchers in California earlier that year who had published a study of Civil War prisoners. What they found was that the male children of abused war prisoners were about 10% more likely to die than their peers were in any given year after middle age. This is fascinating, right? The idea that maybe the trauma of the father before he had children could have been transmitted through his sperm.

I looked a little further, and I found a Swedish study in 2002 by Kaat E., et al. In 2002, they conducted studies to see whether nutritional trauma affected the death rate associated with cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and whether these effects could be passed from parents to their children and grandchildren. What they looked at were the annual records of harvest and food prices in Sweden across three generations of families going way back into 1890.

What they found was that if a father during a starvation or a famine period did not have enough food available to him during a very critical period in his development just before puberty, his sons were less likely to die from cardiovascular disease. So, that's fascinating, right? Well, is the reverse true? Actually, yes. What they saw was the death rate related to diabetes increased for children if food was plentiful during this critical period for the paternal grandfather, and then it decreased when excess food was available to the father.

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These suggest very much that diet can cause changes in genes, epigenetic changes, that are passed down through generations by males in the family, and that it can alter the susceptibility to certain diseases. So, then I thought, “Well, that’s interesting because in men, men’s sperm is created continuously.” They are not born with all of their germ cells, all their sperm, like women are. Women aren't born with sperm, obviously.

Women are born with all of the eggs that they're ever going to have when they are born. In fact, the highest number of eggs that a woman ever has in her ovary is a good bit more before she's born. It's while she's in the womb, it's several million, and then they die off until she's born with all of the eggs that she's ever going to have. Then as she reaches maturity and starts ovulating, the best and healthiest egg each time gets released until she goes through menopause.

So, this idea that men's trauma can be transmitted through sperm made sense because the sperm are being generated during those times of trauma. They're new. So, then I wondered, “Well, what about for women?” Is there any evidence that trauma to women can be passed down epigenetically to their children? It turns out that there is quite a bit of information on that too.

The best review article I found on that was one called *Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Effects: A Putative Role of Epigenetic Mechanisms*. This was published in *World Psychiatry* on October 17<sup>th</sup> of 2018. As I started thinking about these concepts and these ideas, I was a little bit blown away because spiritually, in the Bible, there's an idea that the sins of the father are passed down in generations, and that there's this concept of generational curses.

Now, I'm seeing here there's science that's bringing science evidence to that possibly even being true. Then the next thought I had is, “Well, but it only gets passed down until the child is conceived.” In other words, only the traumas that happen from your parents' birth until they conceived you are

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pass down. So, any traumas that they had after that, the rest of their lives, that doesn't get passed down genetically. It's fascinating to me.

I wonder about if there's less trauma, if you are born to a 16-year-old than if you're a born to a 45-year-old who's had so much more time, basically almost three times more time to accumulate trauma to the epigenome over those years. Just a thought. Anyway. So, when we think about legacy, genetics is definitely one part of legacy.

The other part that I came across was just the spiritual idea of legacy being a part of your virtuosa self. When we think about our works in creating and leaving knowledge, and wisdom, and imprints of ourselves, memories of ourselves with our friends, memories of ourselves with our children that'll be passed down, those are very, very special types of legacies. One of the things I didn't talk to you all about when I talked about how this podcast was named is on a deeper level. It seems appropriate now.

So, the word virtuosa, as you all know, it means a woman of excellence. Striving to be the most excellent version of ourselves, and it's taken from the male word virtuoso, which is an artist of great artistry. We just feminized it to be virtuosa. I have both a music background. In fact, I was a musician way, way longer before I was a physician.

When I named my medical practice, I use that word to name it, but there's an underlying spiritual connection to a book in Proverbs. So, Proverbs 31 is the story of the virtuous woman, or la virtuosa. When I was developing from going from being my older self to being my newer self, one of the things I looked at was the idea in these verses about what an excellent woman or a virtuous woman should be, and whether I believed those things.

As I started reading it and understanding it, instead of feeling like this was some high level woman that nobody could live up to, I started seeing validation for me being allowed to move in the world as I felt God had created me. I didn't always feel that in other ways.

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So, these sayings, this Proverbs 31, are sayings from King Lemuel. I'm not even qualified to make a judgment on this, but there's great consideration by scholars that this is probably talking about King Solomon and it's advice from his mother, who if it's Solomon, that would be his mother, Bathsheba, and his father was King David.

His mother is telling him what to look for in an excellent wife. It's advice from a mother to a son about what to seek in a woman. This particular part has always stood out to me, and it's Verses 16 through 18. She considers a field and buys it. Out of her earnings, she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously, and her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

At first glance of those verses, it seems like she's Super Woman. She's doing everything and she never sleeps, but as you think more about it or research it and look at it a little bit more, what it shows is that in those days, women were capable of being businesswomen.

In fact, if King Solomon's mother is talking to him about looking for an excellent wife, she's not telling him to look for somebody who's subservient, and just stays at home, and does the shopping, and doesn't have much purpose in life. She's talking about look for a woman who's got a brain, and the work ethic, and the wherewithal to actually understand how to run a business, and is able to consider purchasing and running that business, and then works at it, does the work to make the business successful, and is able to add something of profitability to the household, she sees that her trading is profitable

When it talks about her lamp not going out at night, that could mean a couple things. It could mean that she has, in those days, most of what they were talking about was textile creation. Maybe she has textile creation and people working for her that are around the clock. In other words, the lamp doesn't go out at night because her business is continuously running even throughout the night. That's one possibility.

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The other possibility is maybe it's because her goods are traded all over the world, and I know that's a big jump because back then, there's really no way for them to have been trading all the way around the world. But the idea now about taking that verse and considering, well, maybe we think about it in times of our current culture, maybe this means that the efforts of her work are spread throughout the world so that literally, there's sunlight on some part of her creation at some time all the time because it's around the whole wide world.

So, when you think about the internet, and being able to post something, and people to read it on the other side of the world, that may be one example of it. That's a creation. In my line of businesses as an OB GYN, over the years, I've delivered babies, and I know that I've got patients and babies all the way around the world. Not a whole lot of them. Of course, most of them are in the United States, but it's really thrilling to me to think that those children are growing up, and that's part of my legacy, is the work that I did helping bring them into this world.

Here's our exercise for today. What I want you to get out of this is that everything that you do matters. You matter very much. Who you are and what you do with your life today is significant. Even in the time of Coronavirus, maybe more so in the time of Coronavirus, and it matters forever.

The ripple effects of what you do, whether you deliver a baby, or you create a beautiful piece of artwork, or you make cloth masks for the healthcare workers and bring them to the hospitals, or whether you are a janitor, or a housekeeper, or you care for your children, or you take care of your husband, or you talk kindly to the clerk in the grocery store and offer them a word of encouragement.

None of those things have more weight than each other. None of them has more worthiness than any other. They are all equally weighted. So, we need to stop stacking the importance of our work. Everything we do has the possibility of ripple effects to everybody else.

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So, how would you show up differently in your life if you really believe that you matter and that everything you do affects everyone else? How would thinking that in your T-line, your thinking line, your thought line, create feelings in you that would bring different action than maybe what you're doing today, and how would those results change the world?

How would you show up if you believed that everything you do is as important as the other things that you do, that that kindness to the grocery store clerk is just as important as the president giving a speech, for example, something super important?

It seems like the president giving the speech is great importance because he's reaching and affecting the lives of millions of people, but you never know what that one kind comment to the grocery store clerk results in, in his life and in the ripples of his life as well.

So, the exercise for this week is to write down a little bit about what you think your legacies are. I want you to just ponder and think about as you go about your week this week in your interactions with people, particularly online, but as you have to go out and get food and stuff, I want you to think about your own butterfly effect and your own little droplet of water and where that ends up.

So, what I've shown you today is the fourth tool in sustainability. It's called legacy. In thinking about legacy, this is something that hopefully you'll continue to get help from, and growing your life, and becoming your virtuosa self over and over again.

Now, I'm coming to my favorite part of the podcast, which is what I'm listening to and reading. What I'm listening to today is a song called "Legacy", of course, by Nicole Nordeman. Beautiful song. What I'm reading is the book called *The Butterfly Effect: How Your Life Matters* by Andy Andrews. It is a beautiful, small book. It's beautifully illustrated.

The pages are actually pictures with the words on it. Super easy to read, short, little book. So profoundly meaningful, such a beautiful idea, and I

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would highly encourage you to pick up a copy. And you know what? I'm not watching TV much. I'm busy this week, so I don't have anything to tell you that I'm bingeing on Netflix because I haven't been bingeing.

So, in the next two weeks, we have two more weeks of me doing individual podcasts before we start a really special treat in May, which is going to be the interview podcast. We have interview podcasting starting of the 30 life coaches that I've hired for the virtuosa coachings practice. I'm so excited about starting that.

We've got the whole schedule of them doing individual talking points with me, and I think it's going to be so much fun to be able to do an interview and have a conversation. So, I'm really looking forward to that. It's starting in May, but I've got two more weeks of individual podcasts like this, and I'm going to do to addons that are bonus addons for this talk about sustainability during difficult times. Those two are going to be gratitude and emergence from the cocoon.

Next week, we're going to do gratitude, and then the last week of the month, we are going to hit emergence from the cocoon. Okay. Love draws a bigger circle, my friends. Go draw your circle and love everybody around you. Have a wonderful week. Love always, Sue. I will see you next week in episode 13.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Becoming Virtuosa*. If you want to find out more, come check out [virtuosacoaching.com](http://virtuosacoaching.com). That's virtuosa - with an A - coaching.com. See you next week.