

This is Stacy Julian with episode 8 of Exactly Enough Time. Exactly enough time is all about being present. It's about recognizing the time and the life you have and making the most of it. It's about owning what you love (today, I love Skype) and inviting more of whatever that is into your life. In this podcast I tell stories and I invite you to celebrate people, places and things that make you and your life a-mazing!

Many months ago when this idea of a podcast started showing up and hanging around and poking me, I knew that if I did something like this I wanted to involve other people and there are so many people that I want to involve. But today, I am thrilled to bring you the very first interview via Skype, on Exactly Enough Time. If you listen to episode 7, you will likely recognize my guest name, Cathy Zielske. Cathy is one of the "Lucky Seven" women that I talked about that showed up in my life at just the right moment. I have many happy memories with Cathy for the years that we worked together at Simple Scrapbooks. So, Cathy Zielske is a graphic designer who loves her family, typography, clean and simple design, french fries and Silence of the Lambs. Her motto is "own your life, document it well and preserve reality." Her mission- take the crap out of scrapbooking. To that end, she offers digital products, online workshops and writes about crap-free approaches to memory keeping on her blog. Cathy also designs clear stamps and metal dies for Simon Says Stamp and is presently the art director for Scrapbook and Cards Today magazine.

You will learn much more about Cathy in this interview and I will give you all the links to her website and the many things that she's involved with in the show notes for this episode. So without further delay...

Oh my goodness, I am so excited today because I have my good friend Cathy Zielske on the podcast with me.

SJ- Hello Kathy!

CZ- Hello Stacy.

SJ- You make me happy. So, Cathy, I received after maybe my first episode even, an email from Alyssa Williams and Alyssa said this, "just listened and I'm so excited. I would basically listen to you read the encyclopedia. I too, miss Paper Clipping Round Table and this reminds me of listening to your audio in your BPC classes. So excited about your new venture. I've always enjoyed hearing about your memory keeping projects and your parenting tips. I think it would be fun to hear behind-the-scenes stuff, what's inspiring you lately and- this is the important part- are you ready?- to chat with Cathy Z on how your scrapbooking has changed with your children being older." Alyssa, I love you and here you go. This is my chat with Cathy Z. We are both in our mid-years and our children have grown and tell me about maybe when you started scrapbooking and what your approach has been with your children and then we can just naturally move into where we are today.

CZ- Well, that sounds great. I started scrapbooking in 2003 and it was because of *you*. I actually really did walk into a scrapbook store and I picked up two magazines one was called "Ivy Cottage" and one was the inaugural issue of "Simple Scrapbooks." And I took them home and I had no idea there were scrapbook magazines and there was something about it that made me think- mmmmm, maybe this isn't as weird as I used to think it was. Those are famous last

thoughts, because as soon as I started to test the waters, I was all-in! I've been scrapbooking ever since then. The funny thing was, that I thought to myself, well I'm going to send some pages to this magazine because, I mean, I'm a graphic designer, I'm pretty good with space and type and photography, so maybe they'll like me. So I sent some things in and then I got this call from you. You are like super, super hyper, you talked really fast. I couldn't really follow it but you did say these words, "I don't know who you are, but I do want to work with you." That's kind-of how it started and that started this wonderful unexpected career working in the craft industry. There's obviously as you know, there's a lot of other pieces that fall into place. The fact that I was a writer and a graphic designer did help me to actually work for you at Simple Scrapbooks, but it really did start something that I could have never predicted, never. It was just the perfect hobby for me, someone who likes stories, someone who likes pictures and someone who loves design.

SJ- What you don't actually know is that in episode 7, which has not been published as we talk, I actually tell that story a little bit. Because I credit seven women who showed up when I needed them to show up and made a difference in my life. So is that interesting? This is how the universe works and I love it.

CZ- And the fact that we grew up in neighboring towns and we are just a year apart. We are both dyed-in-the-wool Pacific Northwest girls and we just had some connections on other levels and I think we both have an element of I don't want to call it hyperness, but when we get excited about things, we are all in.

SJ- How old were your children in 2003? Take me from your approach then to where you are today.

CZ- When I started in 2003, Aiden was nine. My daughter, Aiden, who is now 22, she was nine and Coleman, my son, was four. And so obviously, I jumped in and documented every tooth that fell out. I documented every meltdown that came our way, any story that could be told made it into a scrapbook. That was sort-of my approach for a number of years. Of course as I started working for the magazine and as I started working for you and teaching classes, I had this wealth of information because I had these kids, these crazy, fantastic, original, funny, weird kids that provided me with endless material. That was there for the taking. And that's sort of how it went along for many, many years. But one thing that happened in 2005, a couple years after I got into scrapbooking, was when blogging began to explode. You know, the typepad and the bloggers and all these formats that came out and one of our mutual friends, Ali Edwards started a blog and I remember calling her, because I didn't have a smartphone of any kind. So I called her on an old rotary telephone and I asked her, "how did you set up your own website?" So, that also started to come into the world and because I was already involved in online communities, you know, back in the day- Two Peas in a Bucket and we would share our pages with all these other seemingly disconnected women from across the globe, who were passionate about the same type of things. Blogging was it a natural extension for me to continue sharing stories and as it turns out, I've always loved to write. I think I'm a good writer. That's not arrogant, I'm a good writer. I spend time working on that craft. So I was able to take my storytelling in a more digital direction. All of that is well and good. It's fine. It's great. But something starts to happen all-of-a-sudden (if you're a parent) and that is your children, turn into teenagers 13-14-15-16. You get the idea, you know how to count. And I realized that the way I was presenting my life, which I thought was authentic, had to start to morph and change. Because one of the things that

I started to realize and I'm really grateful that I did, was that my hobby, which I absolutely love, was not going to be more important than my adolescence life. What I mean by that is, scrapbooking is an awesome thing, but the most important thing as they moved into this age was that I needed to acknowledge that my teenagers lives and experiences were unique and they deserved to be respected, honored and understood as separate from my own. Adolescence is so hard. I know we're pretty far away from that now, but it's a tricky stage and when you are a person like you or like me, who at the time was pretty public, you have to take a step back.

SJ- I think what is fascinating about what you're saying is that I thought for years I was telling my children's stories and then as they matured and became teenagers and I had that same awareness. I realized-wait a second- I've actually never been telling their story, I've been telling my story about them. And there is something magical that happens when they are teenagers and you realize you have your own thing going. And at some point I need to stop deciding what that looks like. What I did before, that it was very valuable and I know that they, at the age that they are now, they value what I did, but there is a transition. I'm just saying to you that I agree and that it has to be a shift in both how we tell stories and and how we respect their privacy and their individual rights, stories, ideas.

CZ- That is so on point. That is it. One thing that I always loved that you have said for years about you as an individual and encouraging women to tell their stories, is that you are the only one qualified to tell your story. And that's true. I think you and I both agree, but what you said is so accurate and dead on is that you are telling stories about them, but they are from your perspective. I think that's okay still, I would never go and say don't ever do that. Here's a thing, I believe that you can tell a story from your perspective, it's perfectly okay. But as they get older, you have to use common sense. I'm all for telling real stories in my scrapbooks, but here is an area now, as they began to get older and are now older, you don't want to go overboard as you are telling the story. Even though it is from your perspective. I don't believe that scrapbooks are a place and I feel really strongly about this, to talk about how hard it is to be a parent and all the changes that are happening so fast right now. That belongs in therapy. I think therapy is great and I recommend it for everyone, but there are certain things that I think might be in your perspectives that don't necessarily belong in an album. You know what I mean?

SJ- Totally, because as teenagers they become hyper-aware of their surroundings and people and they don't need to also know that mother is creating this story around them. From her perspective or not. I mean, it just feels like a violation, on some level, about just their maturing experience and their awareness.

CZ- They might like that later on, like I do think and sometimes I said this in articles and I've said this when I used to teach in person. I wish I had my mom's thoughts of what life was like when she was young and had two little kids and had a husband who didn't lift a finger to help her at all, in the 1970s. When I asked her about that now she was it was just terrific you kids were great. And I know that's a lie. There's a value if they want to come back. If you put things like that into your own personal scrapbooks and I know you and I both have albums that are like "all about Spacy" and "all about Cathy." That's ok. You can put those into a place that is more private.

SJ- That's right. There's a place for a journal as well. You talk about therapy. Writing in a personal journal is a great place to express your deepest feelings as children grow and mature.

I think as you scrapbook about them, and I know from me, there was just a point in time different for all of my kids, but in those mid-teen years 14,15,16 where you hold up the camera and they give you the hand and say “what are you going to do with this, mom?” and you actually have to have sort of an ongoing negotiation- Can I take your picture? Can I share it here, here or here or can I just keep it for me? For the most part, I mean they grew up with a scrapbooking mother so they knew, but I did have to negotiate sometimes. They just said nope, this is a non-share. I respect that.

CZ- It's the same thing here. When they were moving into this era, I will tell you this, my daughter, her name is Aiden. She has always been much more- yea, mom, take a picture. I love it. Aiden even wrote a guest post on my blog about what it's like to grow up with a scrapbook “celebrity” for a mom. She wrote a beautiful post about it. I didn't edit it, it was amazing. My son, on the other hand, he never wanted to be in the spotlight in the way that she did and even to this day and he is hanging on to the edge of adolescence, he's 19-he'll be 20 this summer. We have a very clear communication on this. He will send me something, he will text me something and it will follow with “not for public consumption” So, Cole, people don't see much of him anymore and that's okay. That's what he wants. Because scrapbooking isn't very cool to a 19 year old college student who is trying to find his way in the world and become independent. So with Aiden, I would get clearance very easily and with Cole, not so much. And that's ok.

SJ- That's 100% ok. And it doesn't mean you're not documenting, because it's not for public consumption. It does not mean there isn't an ongoing documenting, with photos. What's interesting to me, because I did that same process with Clark, who is my oldest and I just respected his wishes, you know-for the most part. There may have been an occasional slip up. But I generally paid for that. Then as he became engaged and got married and guess who got to make the wedding video? Then he actually said to me, mom, I'm so glad you didn't stop taking pictures. So you go through that cycle with them and then they're like yeah, I want that in my wedding video. I'm so glad you still took the pictures even though I scowled or limited your freedom to share it at the time. So, I've seen one child through that whole process and now where he's to the point where he's grateful.

CZ- That's really cool. I actually got a little choaked up, because it's hard for me to think of that with my son right now. I had someone send me a direct message the other day and she said “I'd like to know more about your parenting cuz it seems like you are such a great relationship with your kids” and I said “well, you know, I work really hard at it and they aren't equal in terms of how hard I have to work and Cole makes me work. And it's a privilege to be able to do that. But I have to re- get to know him at every stage, because so much is changing right now. I can't imagine the day that Cole would say that kind of thing, but I see flashes of it. He's a kid who keeps a pretty close to the vest even though he was such an out-there kid when he was young. I have a similar story and I wrote about this, but I did not share this publicly because this is not for public consumption. I broke my hand two years ago. I tripped on my over my feet and fell and it sucked, it was really dumb. It was made everything harder, it made work harder, it made my life at home harder and Cole, at one point-out of the blue, walked over to me where I was sitting on the couch, gave me a hug and he said “I'm sorry this happened to you, it must be hard” and in that moment that was like the greatest moment with my son. So it's that kind of thing, where someone will come to you. It's not his job to acknowledge me, that's my job. But in that moment I was like, “I'm gonna go journal about this.” You know, here's the thing about this

time in their lives, there so many ways that you CAN document them. I think the easiest and you and you and I are both fans of this, is just just stick to the facts. I think my favorite way that I documented both of them, was simply to do one of those “you-right now” type of pages. Just share the facts of what they are doing. You don't need to layer in any of your opinions or judgments or anything like that. Just list the facts. So, for my son, during these years that have been more difficult, I I just did things like “you love Ultimate Frisbee”, “you are a drummer in two different bands”, “you still express your creativity through writing” and so on and that's the type of content that has filled the pages about him.

SJ- I love it. So we did this thing and it's not my idea and I and I've gone back a number of times to try and find the source because they love to credit people with good ideas and I haven't been able to do it. One day on Instagram, I read a post and it was a mother and she said you know “as my kids grow up, we do this thing called “family days.” So for example, Cathy, you're born on March 8th, so on the 8th of every month would be “Cathy day”. So once a month, each of my children have a day and it's an opportunity number one, just to think of them, we have a family group chat. So someone will say “hey it's Trey Day, you know- love you Trey” so it doesn't have to be like documentation in a traditional sense. But there's this ongoing opportunity to remember someone, to say something about them. What I try to do with that, though, on my blog or in my journal is, two or three times a year, there's 12 “Taft days” but two or three times a year on “Taft day” I try to write something about him. I'm finding, like you, that at the age he is, he's a senior in high school and he's definitely and a “not for public consumption” person. There's very little about Taft on social media. But he knows about “Taft day” and he knows about the fact that I will write on my blog two or three times a year and just report what he's doing and what he's enjoying and what he's good at. Everybody likes to be complemented, recognized for what they're working on. Anyway, I'm just telling you, telling the listeners that it's something that helps me remember and it helps me acknowledge. That right now is the form of documentation, even more than scrapbook pages that I'm doing for my older kids.

CZ- I love that. I think you know this, if not I'll share, a project that I did for both of my kids when they were seniors. I did a year-long project called “message to my” and the idea was really simple. It was every Sunday, during the school year, an alarm will go off on your iPhone and you stop, drop and write. And I opened a little file and I write a message and I found a photo from the week and that was it. It was my effort to show my children that I saw them. There is a little more about me, I will say. I think I did a little more therapy when I did by the time I did Cole's album, so it's less about me and more about him. But it's just a collection of messages for the 28 weeks of the school year. I gave that to Aiden and I don't even know what her response was I really don't remember. I remember giving it to Cole. Cole graduated, now almost two years ago and he just kind of passed me in the hall and said “thanks for the album, mom.” It was sweet. It was just this little collection of, I am going to say something to you every week. I am going to include a photo that somehow represents you every week to the best of my ability. A little bit of wisdom. A little bit of factual observation. But they are my favorite scrapbooks. I had them printed, digitally from Artifact Uprising. They're my favorite. That type of project is at the core of what I think is telling a good story about someone in a way that's simple and unobtrusive. Of course I did have their permission to share some of the results. Not all of Cole's was public at all. You know what I mean, that type of thing.

SJ- You know what's interesting and let me just say this to moms that might be in that phase right now. Is that, you might not even get a "thanks mom" as you pass by them in the hall. But you're going to watch them, you might walk by their room and through the crack see that they're looking at the album. There will be signs that they appreciate what you're doing but please don't think because they're not super vocal about it, that they don't appreciate it or that it's not worth your time to do. I think that's important, especially for boys. I don't have a girl that's a teenager, I have four boys. They're not going to stop you and thank you and say, "mom, that last scrapbook page you made was a-maz-ing!" It's not going to happen.

CZ- That's true. The fact that Cole even acknowledged it. I don't remember my daughter saying a single word and I thought this is the most meaningful gift. A project like that is a labor of love. If you set out and you're hoping they're going to think you're the most awesome coolest mom because she made a scrapbook about me.

SJ- I just want to point out one more thing you said, that I think is super important, for me as well and that is that you set an alarm on your phone because the thing is, these older kids they're not under tow all day long do not making funny faces and doing all these cute things. So you're less inclined to photograph and I love how you also said "stop, drop and write". You've got to set some reminders or just something to poke yourself so that you will. To just sort of wake you up and go, okay this is happening right now, you'll look and be aware and capture it.

CZ- Half of Cole's album was pictures that reflected him in his environment. I didn't have a ton of pictures of him at every turn. So I would go, ok take another picture of your drum set in the basement where you live. I am going to take a picture of your cleats because you're going to practice after.... There was a lot of his environment, because getting pictures wasn't on the top of his priority list. Work with what you have. You know, a perfect photo is not what is needed to tell a real story. The photo is the afterthought.

SJ- The photo is just the illustration to the content you create as a storyteller. Yes, true. I love talking to you and time flies every time I talk to you. Let's do it again. Final thoughts, anything else you want to share about documenting children as they mature?

CZ- Here's what I think sometimes if you're listening to a podcast you might be a little more of an online kind of girl. You might be sharing publicly and you're having groups and share things on Facebook and all I would say that if you have children in that span of 13 to 19. Just make sure you have permission to share things publicly, that's all. That is really important and I think especially if you're a passionate memory keeper and you like to share, just make sure you have that. Because it will say to your children, I see YOU.

SJ- And you are outside of me. Yes, that's parenting and scrapbooking, documenting. I love that advice. That's parenting 101.

CZ- It is and I mean, I feel really silly saying this, but I didn't really realize that in the early years. I think parenting and scrapbooking- those are our opportunities to do a better job with giving our children what they really need, which is to be seen and not judged.

SJ- I love it. I love it all the way. So outside this topic we have been discussing and thank you very much for all of that wisdom and experience, I have part of my podcast that I haven't tried yet cuz I haven't interviewed anybody yet, but it's called "people, places and things"

Who, where or what are you focused on right now? Share with me and my listeners, someone, someplace or something that you're excited about or into and want to share.

CZ- It's a thing. I am into card making. I started making cards in 2017, because the publisher at Scrapbook and Cards Today, Catherine said "hey you know you really should do something for our blog and we've got a birthday coming up. Can you just make a card." I was like, Ugh-whatever! I'm going to dial it back a little bit more, because years ago, I was in the Creating Keepsakes Hall of Fame, I think you remember that era. I had a fellow inductee and her name is Jennifer McGuire and if you don't know Jennifer McGuire she's a big card maker. Years ago she decided I'm leaving scrapbooking and going to card making. For years she kind of poked me and said, you know you should make cards. I was like, yea-right. Hard pass. Well, I did this card in 2017 and they sent me a Stamp it Up bigshot and they sent me some dies and I don't know what happened. I don't know what happened, but there was something about the hand cranking and the little panels that had the stitching that wasn't really stitching. The reason it was such a good fit for me at the time, I still craved crafty and making stuff but my scrapbooking was really changing because of children being in college and Cole being in high school and it filled something that had been missing for a while from scrapbooking and that was just pure creative joy. Just creating for the sake of creating. What I didn't realize when I started, was it would also spill over into giving me a breath of new life for my business in this craft industry, because guess what- I'm a designer, I know how to make stuff- so I could design stamps and dies and all of a sudden it just allowed a slight pivot in my creative work life. You know what- they're like little canvases and you can play and get messy and it's not really that big of a risk if you mess up. There's so much stuff and you know scrapbookers, we like to collect the things and have all the things. It's the same with card making and the great thing is, I've learned things from card making that I was able to bring in scrapbooking and now I feel like I can move comfortably between the two. But it's just so fun! Just like I never thought I would scrapbook, literally like I never thought it was cool. Card making, same deal, both totally cool. Best co-existing hobbies ever.

SJ- Let me just say, for me and for my audience, you are the cool factor. You're the one that brings cool to both of those. I just want to say one more thing and that is.. thank you, because that's linked to the topic of- how do you scrapbook children as they age and you stay creative. So you find other ways to step outside the lines and if you've created lines for yourself and the scrapbook thing isn't working for you now, how else can you use what you've developed as a writer, stamper, whatever where else can you express that? Because that's important for you as your story unfolds. So that's awesome. You're the best, Cathy- I love you.

CZ- Thanks, Stacy- I love you too.

SJ- Thank you for being my first guest on my little podcast, episode 8 episode. That's you, that's "Cathy day" oh my gosh that's so cool. Last thing, where would people go to find you and stay connected?

CZ- The best place would be cathyzielske.com, my blog is there, there's a little social media little bar on my blog that'll take you to my Instagram is I have two, but the one I really post to is CZ design and you'll get all the info that you need. It's all there. You can read my about page.

SJ- You do great stories and by the way, Cathy's full bio and this link will also be in the show notes at stacyjulian.com/podcast.

Thanks! Is there someone else you'd like to hear me interview on Exactly Enough Time? Use the orange "speakpipe" button and StacyJulian.Com/podcast and leave me a message. I love hearing from you!