

The Brave Files Podcast
Heather Vickery Solo Episode: What I've Learned From Being Alone
Episode 178

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Worthy, valuable perspective.

Welcome to The Brave Files Podcast friends, I'm your host, Heather Vickery. In most of our 177 episodes, I interview someone awesome. Someone who has stepped out of fear and into bravery in literally every possible way. You see, I'm on a mission to create a revolution of people embracing every day brave. Because here's what I know for sure. When we choose bravely with intention and thought, we choose bigger, we win bigger and it's contagious. So my goal with The Brave Files Podcast is to get you to think about what you're doing every day. That's brave and brave, much like success is self defined, depending on the day and what's happening in your life. Sometimes, getting out of bed is brave. Sometimes it means something that everybody else would consider brave like climbing a mountain or quitting your corporate job to start a side hustle or having a baby or deciding to go on a first date. Brave can be literally anything, what makes it powerful is that you have a fear that you acknowledge, learn something from and then choose to do the thing. Anyway. So normally, I interview people who have stepped out of fear and into bravery. But today, I'm sharing a personal story, and it's going to be a solo episode. The idea came to me while listening to some clients talk about their struggles with being alone. How many of you feel really uncomfortable being alone? Personally, I love being alone. But learning to spend time with myself has been, you know, a bit of a challenge. It didn't come easy. I didn't start that way. But it's also been a game changer. In fact, I'm recording this very episode live from Nashville where I've been attending the podcast movement conference, surprise, surprise, alone. I'm really excited to have this conversation with you, just me and you. So let's get to it.

This is Heather Vickery. And you're listening to The Brave Files, stories from people living courageously. When we choose bravely in big and small ways, it powerfully elevates our lives. I hope these stories connect with you and encourage you to embrace bravery in every possible way, day after day. Together, we can build a movement of courageous living that enriches both our lives and our communities. And if you enjoy the show, I asked you to please share it with others. Maybe think of someone who you want to choose bravely right alongside you. Thanks for tuning in. Now, here's the show.

Alright, friends, let me just start by saying that I love being alone. But it really wasn't always like that. I can clearly remember moving to Chicago after college graduation, and finding myself as alone as a person could possibly be. I was ready for a big move. I was ready for a big city. I was born and raised in Indianapolis, went to college and a really small school in Springfield, Ohio. And I moved to Chicago without a single friend. I didn't know anybody there. My mama. I love her so much. She brought me to Chicago. She helped me get moved into my apartment. And I'll never forget when she got in the taxi cab. This was before Uber or Lyft. We were getting in taxi

cabs to head back to the airport. And I watched her drive off. And I just started bawling. Like I was alone. There was no safety net. There was nothing and it was really, really terrifying. And off I went back up to my little studio apartment, where did it have a cat I guess there's that there was a cat.

Me and my cat. Her name was honey. She's not with us anymore. And I was like, Oh my God. Now I need to like go to the grocery and, and figure out how to feed myself and go to restaurants and make a life for myself. alone. It was just me myself and I honestly and that while this was really new for me, it didn't feel like that much of a stretch because I love meeting new people. And I tend to make friends fairly quickly, pretty much everywhere I go. So I knew that the full and total complete aloneness of the situation wouldn't last forever. In fact, I remember making my very first friend and my first apartment in Chicago shout out to Mark Rosenberg, my buddy. from my apartment. kitchen window, you could see a little sun deck that we had, and I was in there making making dinner and check it out. out and I saw two guys who are hanging out on the rooftop deck. And I just like popped right out and went over and introduced myself and said hi and built my very first friendship, which of course leads to more connection and more friendship. And so that kind of thing, when you're able to choose that it teaches you to trust yourself, it teaches you to trust the people around you. There was no real risk. If those guys didn't like me, they didn't want to be my friend, whatever didn't really matter. I could talk to somebody else. And I know that that's definitely challenging for some people, talking to strangers can be really hard. But I was eager to build a life for myself and make these new connections. I ended up getting a job my very first job in Chicago Oh my god, was I sold ,well, I was supposed to sell copiers, I worked for a copier company. I was joke to say, I was supposed to sell them. But I didn't actually really sell any, was outside sales. It was a terrible job knocking on corporate doors, literally foot traffic from one place to the other. But what I did learn was how to get around the city. And I learned different spots I liked and I definitely started talking to people making some friends. So you know, I was really immersed in in this aloneness. But the very first time that I did anything that felt really uncomfortable with being alone for me, was I, at this point, I was working for a company I was producing, and planning, executive training conferences, and they were fun. We had a really good time, we would plan them all over the country and gorgeous hotels, and I was going to be doing an event in Atlanta. And my best friend since middle school was living nearby Atlanta. And we were going I booked a ticket at a hotel room to come in three days early and spend the weekend with her. which back then was really big deal folks think it was making I don't know what your \$28,000 a year or something. The money was tight. Booking a ticket was tight. You couldn't really change that stuff like you do these days. It was all a really big investment. And the day before I was supposed to leave to meet her she called and let me know that she couldn't spend the weekend with me. Now the whys of that are a bit tricky. Maybe it's a little bit fuzzy. I was definitely hurt and I thought what am I gonna do? I have to go to Atlanta, I have to go for work. I didn't want to change my flight. All that was really tricky. So I thought okay, Heather, like, here we go. You're going to go to Atlanta by yourself for the weekend. What the hell does that even mean? It was terrifying. I literally felt panicked. But I did. I went checked into for the first time ever in my life. I checked in to hotel by myself, I wandered around and found something to eat. And I had three days totally alone, no plans, no work. And I needed to fill my days and I started just wandering around, I was

in Midtown, wandering around Midtown Atlanta. And I came across this little restaurant, which a friend of mine says that she thinks is still there, which is so cool, called the Vickery Cafe. And I thought, Man, back then I wasn't as in tune to messages and signs from the universe as I am now. I was very far away from the personal growth. Pay attention to your intuition space that I'm in now. But something felt really big about that. I was like, Oh, I'm gonna sit here, I'm gonna have dinner and I'm gonna take a picture of the menu and send it to my dad and, and I felt all of a sudden, like, I wasn't alone, like somehow the city had decided to welcome me. And I sat there. And this was way before iPhones and smartphones and E readers and any social media way, way before any of that, right. So I think add a book and maybe a notebook. And I pulled those out. And I just sort of sat in that space.

And I started to recognize in that moment sitting at that cafe, that I'm fun. I'm nice. It's cool to hang out with me. I didn't have to have other people around to validate my worth, or my value or my existence that I could give that to myself that I could entertain myself enough. And it probably should have been my first time that I'm actually not an extrovert. Nobody believes that about me, because I have a very public persona. And I can talk to anybody but really, I am an introvert. I like my quiet time. I like my quiet space. All of that is really, really crazy, right? So sitting at the Vickery cafe, with no real entertainment was this first opportunity to embrace the value of spending time alone. And for those of you out there who have some fear with spending time alone, I would love to know You know, what is it that you're afraid of? What is it that you think will happen? If you spend time alone? I think for some folks they worry about, you know, if you're really quiet, if you're really listening to yourself, what are you going to find? I have one friend who said, she can't do yoga? Because when she does yoga, the inside parts break, right? What are we hearing? What's connecting with us? And why is it brave to do it anyway? You know, I went from living alone, to having a family. So no more living alone. But going on trips and vacations alone, sometimes for work sometimes for pleasure. And now one of the things that came out of the pandemic for me, is this desire, this deep, deep, deep desire to participate in sacred rest, I learned about that, from Dr. Sandra Dalton Smith, who was a guest on this very podcast, right. And so I started taking solo retreats started as a, you know, 48 hour get away, I would detox with tech, or no phone, no computer, whatever, just me and a book and a notebook. Back to those old days, right? I started doing that. And then it's grown. And now it's five days, usually five nights, five days, where I go away, usually within driving distance, pretty short. And I just get a little Airbnb, which I know is, listen, I know that steeped in privilege, I absolutely know that the ability to do that, for me, I'm super lucky that I get to do that. And sometimes I work while I'm gone. But but I get a lot of quiet time, I don't have anybody else sharing my energetic space. And it's something that's really, really impactful for me. And I do that, you know, three or four times a year now, just like this trip right here, coming to Nashville on my own, it allows me the opportunity to be open to whatever presents itself to making new friends to try new restaurants. And I don't have to worry about accommodating somebody else's needs or worrying about whether or not they're getting what they want out of the experience. And that's such a beautiful confidence builder is that I can do this on my own, I can make these decisions, I can be open and flexible. And you can start doing this too. You can start slowly. You don't have to go away on big solo retreats. You don't have to go on vacations alone or work trips alone. You can take walks, and go to a museum alone, take yourself out to eat, you can just sit and rest in

silence and dream and think. And I know it can be really scary. But often, we're afraid of like I said, what we might find when we get quiet, but it's worth it. Because as RuPaul says, If you can't love yourself, How the hell are you going to love somebody else, right? spending this quiet time alone learning to trust yourself, learning to listen to yourself, is one of my favorite bravest ways to grow your own self confidence, to value your own self, to find your own worth to change your perspective.

As I've sat here, throughout the last week, I'm here for a whole week in Nashville, I have started to really gain a completely new understanding of my own personal brand. And the direction I want to take my business right, so many exciting things coming down for all of you both with this show. Within our Facebook community, which is the Brave on Purpose collective, I hope you're over there. If you're not within my coaching practice intentionally brave entrepreneurs, VIP days, I have a new podcast that I can't tell you anything about yet. I'm not trying to tease but I'm super excited to see that take shape and come out here in just the next few weeks, it's going to be amazing. So if I had not decided to show up in this space, alone and open to possibilities, I wouldn't have learned some of these wonderful things about myself and the direction that I want to take my life and my business and my brand. And that's a big scale for me. But it can be a small scale for you. How do you want to be in the world? Who do you want to be in the world? How do you want to connect? How do you want to be seen? How do you want to be heard? You are worthy, you are valuable. And your perspective matters. Those are the three words I did three words. I never get to do three words. I never get to do them because I'm always the one doing the interviewing. And I thought well, I get to do three words. And I really spent a lot of time thinking about what I wanted those three words to be. And I settled on worthy, valuable, perspective, worthy, valuable perspective. The journey towards finding those things for myself, my own worth, my own value, my own perspective. See if we spend all of our time with somebody else. We don't know if it's our perspective or if it's their perspective. Right. So this separation, the solitude, this opportunity to really sit with your own thoughts, and your own heart and your own emotion gives you a perspective that you cannot get if there's something else happening around you. So I'm celebrating my solo trip, I'm making us some new friends and wonderful new connections, getting a better understanding of who I want to be in the world and how I want to impact the world and how I want to support all of you. amazing, wonderful, brave listeners, I really want to know how you are out choosing bravely, what is bravery to you, how are you defining it? Remember that we are here to create a revolution of everyday brave, every day brave? What does that mean to you? Maybe it means spending a little time alone in the car without any sound on or taking a walk or going on a solo trip. Maybe it means sitting in the park. Maybe it means just shutting down the noise. Just like me, I want you to realize that your voice matters even to yourself. One of the things that has really been coming home to me this week is that my voice can help spark a little light for someone else. And I'm hoping that there's a little light that's been sparked for you. And I'd love to hear about your experiences doing things alone. Do you love it or hate it? How often do you do it? What comes up for you when you think about this. And I invite you to email me at Heather@Vickeryandco.com or connect with me on social media. I'm on Twitter and Instagram. My username is at VickeryandCo. Come and join us in the Brave on Purpose collective, it's brave on its [facebook.com/groups/BraveonPurpose](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BraveonPurpose). We can, you can also find the link in all of the show notes here, which is awesome. But I want to

hear how you're doing this. And what do you think and feel about being alone being solo? How does it resonate with you? What do you find for yourself? do you prioritize time alone, something that I find to be so impactful, and I know that it's wildly brave across the board. So I cannot wait to hear what you all think about it. We are all on the precipice of some change or growth. And when we don't take the time to be quiet and alone and hear it, we may very well miss the sight. So I want you to be here now and be intentional. This is Heather Vickery reminding you today and every single day to go out and choose bravely. We'll be back next week with our regular interview style episode. I can't wait to share it with you. Let's be sure to connect. Talk to you soon. Bye.

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show in general. Or maybe share with us how you're out choosing bravely. This episode is brought to you by Vickery and Co Success Coaching, coaching that helps you maintain a life well lived and a business well run. Learn more at [VickeryandCo.com](https://vickeryandco.com). Our music was created and produced in a custom collaboration with Matt Lewis from ML Creative Consulting, a boutique firm dedicated to helping clients identify their unique sound and amplify their brand with custom delivered soundtracks. We couldn't do any of this without our extraordinary audio engineer Andrew Olsen. Learn more about him and check out his work at [FineAndrewOlsen.com](https://fineandrewolsen.com) and special thanks to everyone on Team BRAVE from our producers, associate producers, copy editors, writers and support team. Special thanks to Molly, Mary, Kim, Sabra, and Sabrina. I'm your host and Executive Producer Heather Vickery. Thanks for tuning in. And we'll talk to you next week.

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