

Intro: This is the Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. Your host, Caitlin Pyle, digs deep with people from all over the world who make money from home. Get ready to wake up to a world of possibility for freedom, flexibility, and a life you'll love.

Caitlin Pyle: Well, hey, everybody. Welcome to the Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. This is Caitlin Pyle. I'm your host, and I'm here with Christina Lantz. She's a stay-at-home mom and copywriter, proofreader, and editor who specialized in the dental industry, and I'm always joking about when you're getting into a niche, it could be dentist, could be golf. Those are my two favorite things to talk about, and I'm actually talking to somebody who's in the dental industry, and she's currently freelancing for a dental software company in Washington State. She also works with the CEO of that company, writing blog posts and rebranding media for his personal consulting agency. She's been working with him for about four months now, and she's been a freelance writer off and on since 2010. Welcome to Work-At-Home Heroes, Christina.

Christina Lantz: Hi. Thank you so much for having me.

Caitlin Pyle: So where are you calling in with us today?

Christina Lantz: I am in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. We're about fifteen minutes from Newport, Rhode Island and maybe an hour and fifteen minutes south of Boston.

Caitlin Pyle: Excellent. So I really want to just get into your back-story. How did you get into working at home?

Christina Lantz: I had my daughter. Prior to that, I had kind of dabbled in some freelance writing, but really when I was pregnant with my daughter, my husband and I decided that I would stay home. Then after a while, I missed not being able to contribute financially to the house, and I really worked on trying to figure out how to be able to do that from home, and it was really difficult, and I kind of

just fell into freelance writing, which I had always loved, and then writing for the dental industry is something that – one of the few things that I had really extensive background in. And I just kind of put feelers out, and I just stumbled into working for this company in Washington.

Caitlin Pyle: That's really, really cool. So – and you spent, was it ten years working for a dentist?

Christina Lantz: I did. I was a chair-side assistant, and I managed the practice for about five years.

Caitlin Pyle: Wow, so you were really in the dental industry. I think that's really cool. I think a lot of us sometimes – we try to reinvent the wheel, and we're like, Okay, we've got to do something completely different than what we've been doing for the last however many years and myself included in that regard. I thought nobody is going to want to learn proofreading, so I almost never started Proofread Anywhere. Then I was like, You know what? I'm just going to do what I'm good at and see what happens. And some cool stuff happened, so it looks like the exact same thing has happened with you, Christina. So what kind of income are you generating each month working at home right now?

Christina Lantz: It varies a little bit, but I can generally count on \$1700 to \$1900 a month, and then from there sometimes it's a little bit more if the man that I work with has some other side projects for me to do.

Caitlin Pyle: That's awesome. I mean for a lot of people that is a life-changing amount of money. So many people, you wouldn't believe – I mean you would believe, but people come to me, and they're like, I just want to make an extra \$500 a month, and there you are, Christina. You're making more than three times that every single month. So what I want to know is about when you first started, what kind of challenges you had. Did you have any mental or emotional challenges when you were getting started, or were you super confident from the get-go?

Christina Lantz: Oh no. I definitely had a lot of self-doubt. Because my daughter conveniently had just transitioned out of napping, it was pretty difficult to try and find something that I could do home with her while she wasn't in school or in daycare. So being able to find something that I was able to do with her around and be able to still focus, that presented a big problem.

Caitlin Pyle: Yeah, yeah, so you ended up, in your application before – everybody fills out an application before they come on the show. You mentioned that you were actually doing the Proofread Anywhere course. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Christina Lantz: I did. That course – it took me a long time to finish, but I stuck with it, and I thought, if I can do this, then I would be able to – when Sarah does nap occasionally or when she does go to sleep at night, I'd be able to do this for people, and I could do it completely from home. What I found a lot of people looking for were work-from-home jobs, but you had to go in a couple days a week, and that wasn't an option for me. I needed something solely from my home. And the Proofread Anywhere course allowed me to do that, but when I got out into actually taking on cases, I thought, you know, this really isn't for me. As much as I love grammar and proofreading, I just – I felt that I wasn't a right fit to be a transcription-type proofreader.

Caitlin Pyle: Yeah, and I think that's really a brave thing, because it's hard sometimes when you invest the time, and you said it took you a long time to do the course, to be able to say – and I can relate to that 100%, having gone to personal training school and then deciding it wasn't for me. And that's not always an easy decision and to kind of pivot, but you did that. So let's talk about that pivoting from getting into what you're doing now from the proofreading thing and realizing it wasn't quite for you. How did you make that transition?

Christina Lantz: I took all of the skills that I had learned from the course, and I thought, Okay, well, now I know how to proofread, and there's a

little bit of editing involved. When you do take that course, you see how things are written verbatim, and you go, Oh my goodness, if I could just change the way it was written, I could make it perfect. But I had a problem not being able to do that. So I figured, all right, well, there's some light editing involved, so I started pitching myself as a freelance writer with skills in proofreading and light editing, which some freelancers don't have. That really opened up a whole new field for me to be able to work with people, and I've actually – I've done it for friends and family who have small businesses, and it's been really, really an asset.

Caitlin Pyle: That's excellent. So talk about the first time you put yourself out there because everybody is always afraid, as you know firsthand. You guys listening may be thinking the same thing. I just am scared to put myself out there. What was it like putting yourself out there to get your first client?

Christina Lantz: It was nerve wracking.

Caitlin Pyle: Of course, yeah.

Christina Lantz: I tried four or five different pitches. I sent them out, and they all kind of came back with a hmm, I don't know. And then I finally – I stumbled into somebody wanting some freelance writing for their dental company, and I said, Oh, I can do that. So I pitched out there, and I just said, Look – and I kind of got to a point in my head where I said, You know what? It doesn't matter. If something is going to happen, I just have to roll with it. So I said, Look, this is my dental experience. This is what I need financially, and this is what I can bring to you, and I have the best of both worlds. I have skills in dentistry, and I have skills as a writer. And they wrote back, and they said, Well, that's pretty interesting. A lot of our freelancers don't have that dental background. And so I sent him a couple of articles that I had written for the dentist that I worked for, and he said, Oh, this is great! And it just kind of snowballed from there.

Caitlin Pyle:

I love that. So this is a prime example, you guys tuning in right now. Christina went a mile deep instead of a mile wide. Instead of trying to be a writer for everybody and everything because she wanted to make the most amount of money possible, she specialized in dentistry. And I'm just so thrilled to death because I joke about finding your niche, and I always say dentist. I always say golf and stuff because that's kind of an obscure niche for many people, but to talk to somebody who's actually doing dentistry as their specialty with their freelance writing, I'm just thrilled to death about that. So, Christina, I want to know what your life looks like now. How has your life improved since you achieved your dream of working at home?

Christina Lantz:

I have so much less financial stress obviously, but professionally, being – there's that satisfaction to me. I had my daughter a little later than most. I was 38 when I had my daughter. She'll be 4 in a couple of months, so I'd had that twenty years of work experience, and then all of a sudden to not have that as part of my identity – I felt that there was something missing. So I have that back, and I can stay home with my daughter. I don't have to put her in daycare. I don't have to find friends that can watch her while I go to work, so it's really made a fullness in my life that was lacking before.

And there's a lot of guilt I think for a lot of moms that feel like if they're not working, they're not contributing. There's guilt for not having that child with you be enough. I feel that completeness, that wholeness is there again and, as a bonus, I can stay home and take care of Sarah, and if I'm burnt out and my eyes are going cross because I'm staring at a computer screen, I can take a break, and Sarah and I can go to a park, and we can go to a playground, and I don't feel guilty about taking that time away from my work because I know it will be there as soon as I come home.

Caitlin Pyle:

I love it. It's living the dream, man. I know there's people that are like, I want that, and you're inspiring them right now, so I love that. Well, when you got started wanting to work from home, I'm sure you told some people about it, and so what I'm curious about now is did you have to deal with any unsolicited feedback from people in your sphere of influence, your friends, your family? Did

people have negative things to say to you about you getting started working at home, or do they still say those things now?

Christina Lantz: A couple. I think a lot of people were surprised that you can work from home and have a successful job from home that pays well that isn't putting yourself out there and having to do home parties and things like that, which is traditionally what a lot of stay-at-home moms end up doing. And at first when they questioned the legitimacy of what I was doing – wait a minute; you're writing blogs? Isn't that a hobby? How are you making money from that? And now that they see months down the line that it provides a steady, reliable income, but I live in a small town with a lot of small businesses, and there are a lot of people that don't see the value in a freelance writer. So that was a lot to overcome, too, with them kind of looking side-eyed at you when you say, Well, I'm a freelance writer, and they just go, Who would pay for a writer? And a lot of people actually.

Caitlin Pyle: Yeah. The best part is that you get to prove them wrong.

Christina Lantz: Exactly.

Caitlin Pyle: Yeah, and even though they roll their eyes, I think a lot of times they roll their eyes because they don't understand, and I just recall from my own journey getting into working at home, people are like, Oh, well, then you're in your pajamas all day. You don't have a real job. You can come out and meet me for lunch whenever you want. And my mother-in-law would drop by unannounced because I wasn't really working so to speak. And she stopped doing that, thank goodness, because she gets it now, but in the beginning it's hard for people because they just don't understand, and that's a big reason why we're doing the Work-At-Home Heroes podcast.

It's why the group exists. It's why I do what I do is to change what it means when people hear the words work at home because, the fact is, people think you have to have house parties. You have to

have products, and it's all that stuff. But the reality is it's a lot more than that. What about your husband? What did your husband think when you decided you wanted to take the leap into working at home?

Christina Lantz:

When I first told him, he kind of just looked at me and went, Oh, okay. So then he was trying to figure out in his head, Wait, so now are we going to put Sarah in daycare? And when I said, No, I need to find something that I can do from home with her here, he said, Oh, okay, and he didn't really feel the need for me to have a job, too. And so when I finally explained to him, Look, this is more than just me bringing in money. This is also part of trying to be fulfilled in all of the aspects of my life.

My family is great. I love my home life, but I'm missing that professional part of myself that I used to love. And then he kind of went, Oh, okay. But I could see that he still kind of didn't get it, but now, months down the line, I'll email him. I'll go, They sent me another client to work with. They sent me another client to work with. And now he just texts back the huge smiley faces with the heart eyes, and so now he's totally on board, and he loves it just as much as I do because now he can say to his friends at work, My wife is a freelance writer. She works from home, and she does really well.

Caitlin Pyle:

Yes, I love that. I just got some chills, man. It's not even cold here. I'm in Florida, and it's warming up, but I just got chills, Christina. That's amazing that you were able to turn your husband's mind around just by doing your thing, and I think something key to just kind of highlight there in what you just said was that it's about more than you just being a mom. Even though your husband didn't think it was necessary for you to work at home, you knew it was necessary because you knew you wanted more than that, so I want to congratulate you on sticking with your guns there. And your husband has come a long way it sounds like, so he's happy with the fruits of your labor, and I'm sure he loves to brag on you as well.

Christina Lantz: He totally does, yes, and that – of course, it makes me happy, and it makes me proud, and then it makes me want to do more. It really – it's brought a fullness to our lives that we didn't have, and as the added bonus, we also have our daughter that we can both be home with if we want to off and on and take care of her. It really – it has done wonders being able to work from home and have that aspect of our lives fulfilled.

Caitlin Pyle: Happy wife, happy life, and we talk extensively in the Work-At-Home Heroes community about happiness being a result of solving problems, and so it's not the toil. It's not the money that we earn necessarily. You might not have needed the money that you are now earning working at home, but you're solving problems for people. You have this sense of fulfillment and purpose, and I think that that is a happiness that we long for, and maybe that's what you were missing is this joy of achievement as FDR – it's a famous quote by FDR. It's the joy of achievement that we long for, and that makes it all worth it. So switching gears just a little bit, Christina, I want to talk about your average day. I just want to know to start out with your typical morning routine. Now that you're in charge of your day, you've got some more stuff to kind of juggle, what does your day look like when you first wake up in the morning?

Christina Lantz: Usually it's getting my daughter up. She's an early riser, so we're usually up by about 6 a.m., and I get her set with some breakfast, and we talk a little bit. We play a little bit, and as she's doing that, I kind of go through my email, and I see if anyone has sent me anything overnight. And then I map out my day. I write – I have pen and paper. I just list everything that I need to get done. I put little boxes next to it, sometimes even things I've already done just so I can cross it off. I love that sense of achievement there, so I just put everything down, and then I try to get all of my work done by noon.

So the afternoon after lunch is totally me and Sarah, and I can pop laundry in if I need to. We can play, if we have errands to run, and I find that getting my work done first thing in the morning and having the rest of the day really frees up my brain to be able to

focus on what I need to get done, and then I know once I push through that, the rest of the day is a play time.

Caitlin Pyle:

Yes, I love that. I think that's a great incentive that you use your playtime with Sarah, the fact that you get to have the rest of the day for whatever you want to do whether – I mean you do your housework, and I think housework is fun, or you play with Sarah. I have a dog. We can go out for walks, stuff like that. I think that's a great incentive, but is that how you would say you keep yourself on track all day is that you kind of just keep that as your goal, and you're like, Okay, let's get this work done as quickly as possible and do the best job I can, and then, when I'm free? Would you say that's how you keep yourself on track?

Christina Lantz:

Absolutely. It helps keep me on track, and it also helps with my daughter. She's three and a half, so she doesn't quite have that understanding that Mommy has got to get this work done. She just sees me playing on my laptop, but when I say to her, Sarah, Mama's got to get her work done in the morning, and then I can spend the rest of the day with you. Just give me a few more minutes. I just need a little bit more time. And that seems to really help rather than we're playing. We're doing everything, and then in the back of my mind, I've got to get this work done. But if I do it the other way around, then I also catch her when she's fresh from the morning, when she's cooperative, and then when the afternoon drags on and she's getting a little tired and she's getting a little cranky and she's getting a little clingy or needy, my work is already done, so I can be there for her 100%.

Caitlin Pyle:

I love that, and I'm just curious, in doing that work in the morning, how many hours does that add up during your typical week?

Christina Lantz:

During a typical week, it kind of varies. It's usually a few hours a morning when I really – the time that I spend, the actual working hours, maybe nine, ten hours a week, but it's spanned out over a couple of hours because there's always little interruptions.

Caitlin Pyle:

Yeah, wow, so eight or nine hours a week, and that's between \$1500 and \$1900 a month. For eight to nine hours a week of work, that is a really, really good amount, and you're that much happier for it, and you guys get to do more. You have more freedom because it's really about the freedom. You guys have so much more freedom now. You have this extra money. I mean you feel more fulfilled. It sounds like a win/win. So what's next for you, Christina? Do you have any measures in place to grow your business, or are you planning on staying where you are? What's next?

Christina Lantz:

Absolutely I want to grow my business. I'm working with one client right now. Ideally, I would love to have another couple of clients. As Sarah gets older, as her attention span gets a little bigger, I can take on a little bit more work here and a little bit more work there, and by the time she's in school, I wouldn't mind doing this five, six hours a day. It would be wonderful to be able to supplement not only my husband's income but have more than that, so then if he wanted to change gears or change jobs or change careers, we would have that freedom, too. If he wanted to take time off, we could go to New Hampshire for a month, and it doesn't matter. As long as I've got my laptop and my internet, I can do it anywhere.

Caitlin Pyle:

Yes, that's what it's all about to be a work-at-home hero. So I know that the folks listening at home or on the road or anywhere they are right now listening to this podcast are super inspired by the way that you have taken steps to become the work-at-home hero in your life, in your home despite what people had to say about it, despite any hiccups that you came across, the self-doubt, things like that. We all experience that. I experience that before I do anything in my life, but I know there's probably people that are listening, and they're like, Well, that's great for you, Christina. It's great for you, Caitlin. But what about me? I'm scared to death to get started. And we ask this question at the end of every interview. I just want to know what your advice is for people who are at home and they're scared to get started. What would you say to those people right now?

Christina Lantz: Try it. Just take baby steps. If it takes you a year to get just a little bit of traction, just write down your goal. Write down what you want. Even if it seems completely far-fetched, write it down. Then say, Okay, six months from now, where can I be in achieving this goal? And then write that down, and then write it down week by week if you have to, and wherever you are, write down on your calendar, on your daybook. Put it in your phone as a daily reminder if you have to what you want, what you want that end goal to be, and then just chip away at it. And eventually you'll gain traction, and where your energy flows is where you end up, so where you want to be if you really, really want that, it'll happen. It might take time, but give it the time that it will take.

Caitlin Pyle: Excellent, excellent advice, so you said take action and get some traction, and you have to take action to get traction. And we talk about that all the time at Work-At-Home Heroes, and I was on Facebook Live. At the time of this recording, we just wrapped up our very first launch of Work-At-Home School, and I was on Facebook Live for about fifteen hours throughout the whole week just on. We talked about this exact thing a lot, that people want to have confidence before they get started. They want to have traction. They want to have momentum. They want to have motivation, but you have to have action first before you get any traction. It's by definition. It's a law of physics. You've got to have action before you have traction. And so thank you so much for being on the show, Christina. If there's anybody who has a question, where can they find you?

Christina Lantz: I have a website. It's a work in progress. It's christinalantz.com. They can reach out to be there, send me an email. If anyone has any personal questions about freelance writing or about working from home, I'm happy to answer them.

Caitlin Pyle: Perfect. Well, thank you so much for being at Work-At-Home Heroes, Christina.

Christina Lantz: Thank you so much.

Caitlin Pyle:

Well, thanks, guys. I sure hope you're enjoying the Work-At-Home Heroes podcast. I sure enjoy hosting it. I would love it if you would leave us a review if you've been enjoying it and, of course, you are all invited to join the Work-At-Home Heroes Facebook community where we will continue the conversation about working at home and finding your fit. Thanks again, and we'll talk to you next time.

Outro:

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