

Podcast Episode #029
**A Real-Life Reinvention Story
with special guest Kim Wise**

[See the podcast episode online](#)

Pamela: Hi Kim. Welcome today. I'm so thrilled to have you!

Kim: Well thank you. I'm thrilled to be here!

Pamela: Oh, it's so awesome! You know I just loved that you sent me a Facebook message and said "Hey Pamela! You know I had this success." And I was like, "Oh my God, I have got to get her on here because I want to hear the story. I want everybody else to hear the story about how you have made a change.

First, just tell people what you're doing now and what you were doing before.

Kim: Well, now I'm working at a winery.

Pamela: Oh, glam!

Kim: I love it. I have been studying wine for a while. Back to talking with you and taking some of the advice that you gave me: I continued my education with that. I think probably all of the sales and marketing that I did in my previous corporate life certainly helped, but it also helped me appreciate what I'm doing now, too.

Pamela: We spoke a number of years ago. I mean how many years ago was it? Oh my God, I can't remember!

Kim: Oh gosh. I think it was somewhere in 2008-2009.

Pamela: That's what I'm thinking. Yeah. We just really only had one conversation, which is kind of amazing.

Kim: We did. It was impactful.



Pamela: Oh, well that's good to know. Okay, so talk to us first about what you were doing when you and I had that initial conversation and what your impetus was behind your desire to make a change.

Kim: I had been in the corporate life for a long, long time. I was in sales and marketing in medical devices. I had moved a lot with corporate relocations and things like that. I didn't really feel like I had roots anywhere. It was a situation where I had moved again for a job and I had left my home that I had been at for about six years.

Frankly, I just wasn't really that happy. I didn't particularly like where I was living and I was getting that itch of, "There's got to be something more. There's got to be something more that I can do." I had lived outside the US a couple of times for short periods and I knew that there was another world out there. You know, I was kind of stuck doing what I had been doing with my experience and chasing the dollar.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I just wanted to do something else and figured that life was too short.

Pamela: Right. That's right. It was just this feeling that you had of "I've been doing what I'm doing and I'm just not really happy."

Kim: Right.

Pamela: That underlying feeling finally brought you to a moment where you said "I'm just ready to figure out what I want to do next."

Kim: Yeah, absolutely. I knew I loved wine. I had taken a customer to lunch when I was in my mid-twenties, and she ordered a bottle of wine. I thought, "Oh my God, get out!" I'd never ordered a bottle of wine, and I thought, "What am I going to do? It's at lunch." I kind of went with it and I remember at the time taking my first sip of it and then thinking, "That's what wine is supposed to taste like."

I remember it. I could go back to the same place, the same table, and I remember exactly what it was. That was the kind of epiphany moment that made me realize that I actually love wine. We all sort of have an epiphany wine. I started studying wine back then, but not furiously. It was something I always wanted to look into. I had come up to the wine country many times as I traveled in my corporate jobs if I was in an area that was famous for wine. You know, I would take a day or two and kind of explore that. Then as time went on, I started taking classes in it.

Pamela: Okay.



Kim: I never really thought, “Okay, I’m going to do this for a living.” I was doing it just because I loved it, even after I spoke with you and you were giving me advice on expanding horizons and looking into different things and taking small steps. Even then, when I was taking classes, it was for fun. It was just so I could learn more. You know what happened to me. My best friend and her husband were looking to move up here to wine country, and I was thinking that we’d all move up there and grow old together and retire.

My best friend passed away and she had been a powerhouse. She was a VP at a large medical company, and had always been very accomplished and she died suddenly. I mean, everybody’s world changed. Certainly her family’s, but as my best friend she was the one that I always had gone to for advice.

Now she was gone and I could hear her tell me, “If you can do it, do it, and life is too short.” That stuck with me and I could hear her voice. I could hear the inflections in her voice. They were looking for a home and I had actually started looking for a place. I had texted her a number every Friday after five o’clock. At first she was kind of like, “Why are you texting me these numbers?” It was how many weeks before I was going to retire. How many weeks before I was going to do this because I’m single. I needed to hold myself accountable to somebody.

Pamela: Right, right.

Kim: That text every Friday was my way of holding myself accountable to someone. You know it... Those texts continued certainly up until when she passed away. Even though her phone didn’t work

Pamela: Wow.

Kim: I was coming up on the number, just shortly after she passed away, and it was so shocking. I thought, “Don’t do anything rash right now. Making a decision like this, when you’re emotional, is not good.” I knew that when my mother had passed away and I had moved to Belgium for a job and it was just hard. I thought, “Don’t do anything, don’t move.” Then I started to count again, and that text went through every week.

Pamela: Wow.

Kim: For two years. I know it’s weird. It’s just weird. I was still accountable to her.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: Still. Gosh, I’ll get emotional.

Pamela: Yeah, no no.



Kim: I'm sorry.

Pamela: No, no do because this is it. It is to this level.

Kim: It's kind of wild. People are like, "Well okay, so you texted your friend who had passed away." But I did. You know on all kinds of things, but certainly that number every Friday after five o'clock. At that point in time too... Well I had been working with a financial planner for 20 years and she's been great. A lot of us who had worked with this company used her. Every time I'd talk to her it'd be like, "If it all fell apart tomorrow, would I be okay?" I know it sounds... I didn't want to come across as a desitus, but it was like, "Can I do this?"

Pamela: Right.

Kim: At the same time, I'd been looking for a home. You know, my friend passed away and I was working with a financial planner. Then it all became somewhat real.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I thought, "I've got to do what I want to do."

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I was still taking classes in wine for my own knowledge, but there was a little point in the back of my head that was like, "You know this could be what you want to do. You love it, you know. You're taking classes because you love it. You're taking these really difficult tests because you love it, not because you have to. It's just because you want to do it." Then I even got to a point where I started auditing classes.

Luckily I was working and taking classes with a master sommelier who was allowing me to audit his classes. Because I didn't care at that point in time to get a diploma. I just wanted to learn and I think he realized that. I think those things kind of came together. At the same time, I was coming up to wine country. I had met a few people who worked in tasting rooms. I wanted nothing more than to just work in a tasting room. People would ask me, "So you want to be in management?" And I'd say, "Nope, I just want to pour wine."

I told people I wanted to start my day off every day at work with, "Would you like to start with a sauvignon blanc?" And I learned that phrase in like four languages, you know. It was just as a joke. But that's really the first thing I want to say every day.

Pamela: Wow.

Kim: I practiced it.

Pamela: I love it.



Kim: I know, it's so funny. Even my friends who live in France, they thought I was just joking around. They said, "You learned it in languages because you wanted to say that." I met some people up here in wine country, and some of them had been in corporate lives before and some of them had been in wine and food. I stayed in touch with them. Then it started getting like, "Okay, I think I might really want to do this. I called them and said, "Would you have some time that you could spend with me on the phone and tell me the good, the bad, and the ugly? Things that I should really prepare for?" I tried to get myself in that mindset even to the point of telling myself, "You're really not going to be making the money."

Pamela: Right, right. Which is a big piece of it.

Kim: I'm talking about in a good way.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: We don't make a lot of money. That's just business. When I still was working the corporate job, I liked knowing what I was going to be making, knowing what I was going to be doing, talking to my financial planner. There's a lot of things to consider and I still now have the problem, but it's like "Okay, do you really need that? Do you really need an extra handbag?" Even when Ingrid was alive, I was like, "Will I need this in Sonoma?" And the answer was no.

Pamela: Right, right.

Kim: You don't need that. You don't need those shoes.

Pamela: Right, right.

Kim: It was being accountable like that too. I think a lot of things came together and got me to the point of realizing the dream is doable even though it was really, really, really scary and when it happened it was difficult.

Pamela: Okay.

Kim: Now, it was ok. I was pretty burned out and it was just something that I needed to make happen and I did. I'm happier than I've ever been in my whole life.

Pamela: Oh that is so amazing!

Kim: Best decision ever.

Pamela: Oh. That is so amazing and there's so much in your story. There are so many points that I want to pull out from a reinvention perspective about holding yourself accountable and using your friend as basically an accountability partner in spirit.



Kim: Yeah.

Pamela: Cause we all need that.

Kim: She was. It's still there.

Pamela: Still is.

Kim: She's still there.

Pamela: Because we need accountability partners to make happen what we want to happen, but it doesn't always have to be that person that is there talking to us.

Kim: Yeah.

Pamela: Sometimes spirit is just as powerful and even more powerful. Especially in your case like you know, she's... You hear her voice saying this is what you want to do.

Kim: Yeah.

Pamela: Don't wait.

Kim: Yeah.

Pamela: I want to go back to that moment where you made the decision to finally follow it because that is such a fraught moment in a reinvention. That's like jumping off a cliff, right?

Kim: Yeah. Yeah totally.

Pamela: It's like, "Oh my God, what am I going to do?"

Kim: I even have a photograph in my house. Someone took a photograph that I had found in a gallery of a woman kind of in a 1940's bathing suit and bathing cap jumping off a corporate building.

Pamela: Oh really?

Kim: It's like doing a swan dive.

Pamela: Oh my God. That is so perfect. All right, so that swan dive moment where you jumped off that corporate building into your new life. Take us back to that moment. Take us back to that... The difficult parts of that, the fears. How you worked yourself through those moments.



Kim: You know, not a lot of people knew. I would say certainly from a work standpoint, one person knew. That was it. I mean, for the most part no one knew. Somebody told me that there's actually another word for burn out. Burn out mainly means you can bounce back from it, but there was some other term that it's like you're not bouncing back from it. I don't know if you know it or... I... Whatever that was, there was no going back.

Pamela: Okay.

Kim: I was really, really burned out. There were times I would travel for business and I remember the last place I went thinking, "This is the last flight I'll ever take."

Pamela: Wow.

Kim: The last meeting, I looked around at people and it's like, "Wow, I may never see you again." I remember sitting there one night and having a glass of wine and thinking, "This is it." It was just a situation that I was just very unhappy in and I had planned to leave and I ended up leaving.

Pamela: Okay.

Kim: Well we'll leave it at that. I think that if you don't do something yourself, the universe is going to make it happen for you.

Pamela: That's right. That's correct.

Kim: I've always thought that the universe made it happen.

Pamela: Okay.

Kim: It was hard. Even though having said all of that. That number you know that I had tracked with Ingrid was weeks away. It was just a situation of, "I'm out of it now. Now I can really do it." I still thought I could go back to corporate if it didn't work out. There was another corporation who had offered me a job, before I had left this company. I realized it wasn't right for me when all I could think of was, "Wow, it's in the Bay Area and I'll be close to wine country, so maybe I can buy a house up in wine country and then rent an apartment down in the South Bay." My head wasn't like, "Here's the job you're going to be doing, you're going to be traveling a lot, and being in Europe all the time." It wasn't that at all.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I was interviewing for them. It was going quite well, but my head was in a space of working with wine. I knew then, "Okay, I'm not going to be right for this company because my head isn't in it."



Pamela: Right.

Kim: I thought I should really follow Ingrid's advice that if you can do it, do it. Luckily, probably the one person who was really, really helpful with this was my financial planner. Because I had been using her for 18ish years by that point. You know, we got to a point where she was like, "Yeah you can do it. You can do it; you're going to have to work. You don't have to you know, make what you used to make. You can totally do it." I think probably knowing financially that I could do it, knowing that that was okay helped me. Most likely, I'm going to knock on some wood around here... I'm walking over to my table; I'm going to knock on wood as I say this. You know I'm not going to end up as a bag lady somewhere, that I'm going to be okay.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: Then it was like, "Okay I'm going to do it." I called those folks who worked at wineries and the master sommeliers that I had studied under. I got some advice. I came up here to interview thinking that it would probably be difficult because the hiring cycle was on the downside. Somebody had told me it's actually difficult to get a job where it's not really in the beginning of the season, but probably toward the end it is. Plus, you've got to be the right personality to do this. You're in front of people all the time and... I came up here and I got a job in one day.

Pamela: Oh wow. If you had believed what the other person had said you would not have even...

Kim: The winery didn't have any positions. They called me the next day and they said we're going to hire you anyway.

Pamela: Wow.

Kim: Now it was like uh oh. What have we done?

Pamela: Exactly.

Kim: Is this a reality?

Pamela: Now my dream is real. What?

Kim: Oh it's real. Then it's you know, it was hard to find a place to live.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I'm looking for a place, looking for a place, looking for a place. And I found it. I called my realtor at six in the morning. I saw it online. I called the realtor, go look at it, he looked at it by 8:30, and had enough on it by 11.



Pamela: Wow.

Kim: I hadn't even seen it and so now I'm living here. I love it, but when I made the decision it was all in. That's what was weird. I tend to analyze a lot of stuff. I mean, I'm painting a room. I think I've got eight paint colors on a wall now, and somebody's coming over to paint. It'll take me forever, but boy when I made the decision to move I made the decision to move.

Pamela: Right.

Kim: I'm never going to move again. I've moved too many times. Now I feel like I have lived you know. I'm here. I have a couple of dogs. I'm not traveling all the time and so I can have pets that I'm coming home to everyday or that I'm with everyday. Once I made that decision, it was an all-in jump. And I was ok with it.

Pamela: Yeah, because cause when you're in the air off the corporate building you have to decide: you're all-in or you'll crash. You have to get yourself in position to land I guess.

Kim: Exactly.

Pamela: To get to the water, right?

Kim: As I'm talking to you, I'm walking out to my garage because I have this painting that I need to hang up because I had an artist do this for me. It's this cool kind of metal art piece that says "Fate is believing that one of two things happen. That there will be something solid for you to stand on or that you will be taught to fly." Isn't that cool?

Pamela: That is so cool.

Kim: I know, I know.

Pamela: Oh my gosh. Yeah. That's amazing!

Kim: The artist did this for me as I asked probably right before I even spoke to you. Obviously I needed to make a change.

Pamela: Right!

Kim: It took a while, but you know, I think with proper planning, doing things with a level head, realizing that it's doable really helped a lot. I educated myself a lot with wine. Having said that I probably didn't need all of it, I just loved it.

Pamela: It came from your spirit. It wasn't about "let me just do this for the job." It's that this is the job of my spirit and you know when it's my spirit I always want to be in it.



Kim: I really found what I want to do forever.

Pamela: Oh that's amazing. I love that. That's fabulous and it is possible!

Kim: Yeah it is.

Pamela: It will continue to evolve. That's the beauty of reinvention. Even though we get there, there's a continual, infinite path because when we are pursuing something that we love and we take that step into that life that we want, then we get to step into a whole new evolution of that life. It's not like in the movies where we get to the end and then it's like they run off into the sunset and boom that's it and everything's solved. Because we're still living life everyday, right? There's still more for you.

Kim: Yeah.

Pamela: In the way that you're living your life which is an exciting space to be in.

Kim: Yeah and there's always more to learn. I've really learned that I love. It's kind of like when you're walking into a new industry. This is a completely new industry for me. I've learned things that I really love. I've learned the winery that I work for now that they just have a sense of excellence. I love that about them. And for me, I've learned that's really, really important.

Pamela: That's awesome. I can't believe we have been talking as long as we have! Your story is so compelling I want to keep listening to it. However, I want to wrap up by asking you what advice you have for others who might be sitting on the fence wondering about their own reinvention.

Kim: I think really picturing yourself in that life is important. Even if you get to a point where you volunteer, do it. Maybe you take vacation, and if you want to be a sheep farmer, you go to a sheep farm and volunteer to make sure this something that you can really see yourself doing. Picturing it, talking to people who will support you and believe in you. Planning things out with a level head, not emotionally, but really with a level head. How much money are you going to make? Perhaps start to live on that amount before you make the move.

Pamela: That's great advice!

Kim: You really can do it.

Pamela: I love that. I love that that is such amazing advice. If I were to pull out the true take away from what you've just said, it's that the heart gives us the direction and the head is what helps us bring it into practical reality.

Kim: Oh my God, that's perfect. Wow!



Pamela: Thank you so much, Kim, for talking to us today. This has been fabulous.

Kim: Thank you and thank you for the advice you gave me years ago. I really appreciate it!

Pamela: Oh, you are so welcome!

©2016 THE REINVENTION INSTITUTE; ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
Reproduction of this content, in whole or in part, without written permission is prohibited.

