



# It's Okay to GROW SLOW

HOW TO EMBRACE LITTLE-  
BY-LITTLE PROGRESS VERSUS  
OVERNIGHT RESULTS



## MAYBE FAST ISN'T THE GOAL.

Maybe cultivating an intentional life means aiming for what happens over time—like the richness of relationships—rather than getting to the finish line.

When something matters to you, you don't focus on how slow the journey is to get there; you keep moving forward because the path forward is worth it.

The world says do more, grow fast, be big, use these tricks, analyze, do it like those people, get ahead. But that's not how good things take root.

New homeowners like trees labeled “fast growing” to fill in a space quickly. But fast-growing trees don't have deep enough roots to last through storms and drought. Good things grow and take root, little by little.

Maybe, despite everything everyone tells you, slow is richer than fast.

Maybe a slower pace will help your roots stretch deep and wide. It's okay to grow slowly.

LARA CASEY, *CULTIVATE: A GRACE-FILLED GUIDE TO GROWING AN INTENTIONAL LIFE*



I'm Lara. I'm a mom to three—one through the gift of adoption, a grateful wife, and a believer in the impossible (we have quite the story!). If we were having tea together right now, you'd find out quickly that I'm passionate about helping people get unstuck, unrushed, and living on purpose instead of by accident. To help with those things, I created the PowerSheets™ grace-filled goal setting planner, the Write the Word™ journals, and I founded Southern Weddings a decade ago. None of these things grew overnight, and I'm so grateful they didn't! If they did, I would have missed so much in the in-between. In the wait, in the challenges, in the tension, I have been changed and readied.

**LIFE HAPPENS IN THE IN-BETWEEN.  
AND LITTLE-BY-LITTLE PROGRESS ADDS UP.**



I hope the stories and encouragement in these pages helps you to embrace the season you're in, and I hope it helps you look at "slow growth" in a whole new light!

Cultivating what matters alongside you,

*Lara* ♥

♥ FOLLOW ALONG!

@LaraCasey  
FB.com/LaraCasey  
LaraCasey.com





**AMBER HOUSLEY**  
[amberhousley.com](http://amberhousley.com)



**ASHLEE PROFFITT**  
[ashleeproffitt.com](http://ashleeproffitt.com)



**ASHLYN CARTER**  
[ashlynwrites.com](http://ashlynwrites.com)



**KAITLIN HOLLAND**  
[theschoolofstyling.com](http://theschoolofstyling.com)



**HAYLEY MORGAN**  
[hayleymorgan.com](http://hayleymorgan.com)



**KRISTY RICE**  
[momentaldesigns.com](http://momentaldesigns.com)



**SHAY COCHRANE**  
[scstockshop.com](http://scstockshop.com)



**JESSICA TURNER**  
[themomcreative.com](http://themomcreative.com)



**KAYSE PRATT**  
[intentionalmoms.com](http://intentionalmoms.com)



**LAUREN HOOKER**  
[elleandcompanydesign.com](http://elleandcompanydesign.com)



**NANCY RAY**  
[nancyrayblog.com](http://nancyrayblog.com)



**RACHAEL KINCAID**  
[rachkincaid.com](http://rachkincaid.com)



**RENEE SWOPE**  
[reneeswope.com](http://reneeswope.com)



**CHEYENNE SCHULTZ**  
[cheyenneschultzphotography.com](http://cheyenneschultzphotography.com)



**VALERIE WOERNER**  
[valmariepaper.com](http://valmariepaper.com)



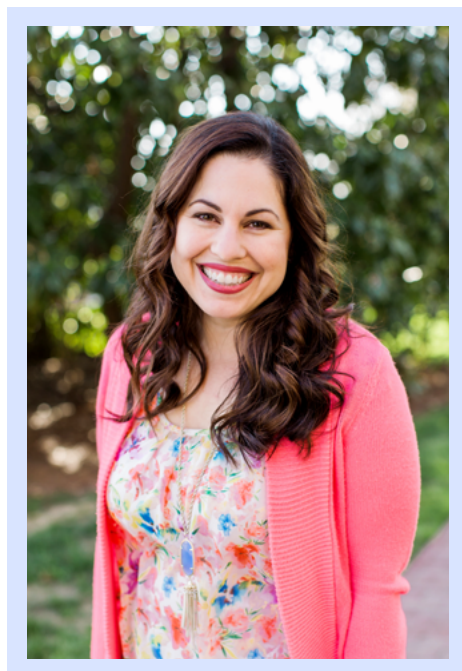
**TELL US A STORY OF  
IMPERFECT PROGRESS, AND  
WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM  
THAT EXPERIENCE.**



**LAUREN HOOKER**

It may sound silly, but one of my goals for this year is to be able to do a pull-up. My husband and I joined CrossFit six months ago, and at that point I could barely hold onto the bar for a second or two without letting go. At first I was embarrassed by the modifications I had to make and impatient with my progress. But little by little, the hard work has started to pay off. I haven't done a pull-up yet, but I'm so close! I think it's hard to embrace little-by-little progress because we live in a world where everything is at our fingertips;

**WE'RE USED TO INSTANT GRATIFICATION. BUT LITTLE-BY-LITTLE PROGRESS OFTEN LEADS TO LASTING RESULTS AND IS SO MUCH MORE REWARDING IN THE LONG-RUN.**



**AMBER HOUSLEY**

For years, I didn't think I was a capable mom. Working full-time, I relegated to the fact that when I was with them, I didn't know how to do "the mom thing" well. **SLOWLY, I STARTED WORKING ON INCORPORATING FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES THAT I KNEW BROUGHT BOTH THEM AND ME JOY.** I now look forward to our little adventures at home that I incorporate once monthly in my goals. Adding seasonal one-on-one "field trips with mom" to my work calendar was also an intentional step forward in this area. I'm feeling more confident in my role now as a mom and the memories are a happy bonus.



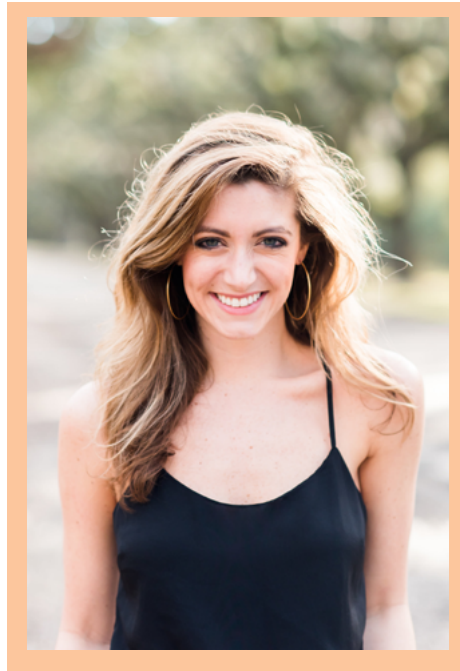


**CHEYENNE SCHULTZ**

Quite a few years ago, my husband and I found ourselves in the darkest of pits of marriage. We were so very broken and were hanging on by the smallest of threads. After months of incredible hardship and setbacks, I can remember praying to God, crying out to Him that I felt like I had done everything I knew to fix things and nothing was changing. I told God that it was going to have to be Him and His power that changed us. It didn't get better over night, but what did happen was that, little by little, day by day, things began to change. And grow. And heal. Until eventually, I knew my heart was different. I could see and feel joy and love between us again.

It was in that "little by little" that an indescribable depth in my soul and my marriage was carved out and that I got to feel God's love for me more than I ever had. **IT WAS IN THE LITTLE BY LITTLE THAT WE GOT TO FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE GOD'S POWER AND ULTIMATELY, WITNESS WHAT I BELIEVE WAS A MIRACLE.** Now and for the rest of my life, as I face hardship, I get to carry this story of God's faithfulness and hope with me and know that nothing is too big or too hard for Him.





**ASHLYN CARTER**

Imperfect progress for me looks like ever learning how to sabbath when work and striving are my drugs of choice. We don't often grasp the gravity of how we were created for and commanded to cease our striving and our drive towards perfectionism. To get specific on how I've had to learn that, most glaringly it looked like medical leave of absence from work, and right into partial hospitalization from anorexia and generalized anxiety. I was 27 and certainly thought I was past the eating disorder thing, and 3 months into marriage—this shook our marriage to its bedrock, fledgling foundation. You see the Lord literally stopped me in my busy, hustle-minded tracks. He arrests and he halts when He sees fit ... and in His sweetness, God continues to teach me what “enoughness” in Him looks like, little by little, day by day. **A LIFE OF CHASING PERFECTION, FIGHTING WORKAHOLICISM, AND SEEING MYSELF AS ENOUGH WILL NEVER END, BUT I'VE LEARNED THAT RECOVERY DOESN'T MEAN CURED AS MUCH AS EQUIPPED.** And that's progress. Your equipping is progress too, friend.



**ASHLEE PROFFITT**

A few years ago I trained for and ran my first half marathon. My first “long” run of the training schedule was 4 miles. I wept the entire last 2 miles of that run. Feeling depleted and exhausted and like an utter failure I legitimately questioned how I could possibly run 5 miles the following Saturday. Midway through the training my “short runs” were 5-6 miles two times a week and I could do those easily and with joy.

I wanted immediate results. I wanted to be able to run each run perfectly, faster than the run before, with no set-backs. Instead of viewing the early hard runs as progress I viewed them as a failure. That I was failure. I struggled to see that those hard runs were what made the easier runs easy. They worked to prepare my mind and my heart and my legs for the job of running a little further and a little faster, and all with a little more joy each time.

The same is true with life. **THE HARD MOMENTS ARE NOT A SIGN OF FAILURE; INSTEAD THE HARD MOMENTS ARE A REMINDER OF GROWTH. WE HAVE TO DIG IN, GET SWEATY, GET MESSY, LET THE TEARS COME AND REMEMBER THAT IT'S IN THE LITTLE BY LITTLE THAT REAL PROGRESS HAPPENS.**



**SHAY COCHRANE**

Sometimes it can be so hard to see other women with more time, energy, or resources pull off exciting big things at what seems like break-neck speed. As a work-from-home mom with only two 7-hour days to run two businesses, I often describe it as feeling like the sweet old lady driving 30 mph in the middle lane of a 70 mph highway. It feels like everyone is flying past me building bigger, better and faster than I can in my limited amount of dedicated work time. **AT THE HEART OF IT THOUGH, IT IS ONLY MY PRIDE THAT IS “HURT” BY THE SLOW PROGRESS.** The truth is that I am choosing, sometimes daily, to say “no” to faster, bigger business growth so that I can say “yes” to being a present wife and mom 5 other days of the week which has much more value to me. Slow growth means that you are saying yes to other things. I have also learned on a very practical level that slow and steady growth allows you to work out the kinks as you go and let good ideas have time to fully develop so that you know how best to steward them. **THERE ARE FEW, IF ANY, TRULY VALUABLE THINGS IN LIFE THAT ARE CREATED OVERNIGHT.**



**KRISTY RICE**

My entire career has been little by little, bit by bit. While I firmly believe there are times to take big leaps of faith, I also rooted in the bounty that slow and steady can offer. **FAST AND LOUD HAS NEVER BEEN MY THING. TO BE MORE SPECIFIC, FAST CAN MEAN SLOPPY AND LOUD CAN MEAN A LACK OF AUTHENTICITY.** Staying the course of your dreams all the while feeling your peers are passing you by, however, can be daunting. But small, calculated steps will guide you through a life's work instead of simply dropping you off at a destination.

Your life's work isn't a means to an end, it is a means to live... bountifully. Slow down. Feel each step. Learn what it means to really experience solid growth over the long haul. Relish in the satisfaction that only the steadiness of good planning and strong values can bring.



WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT DO  
YOU HAVE FOR WOMEN WHO  
ARE IN A SEASON OF WAITING  
OR TENSION OR UNRESOLVED  
CIRCUMSTANCES?



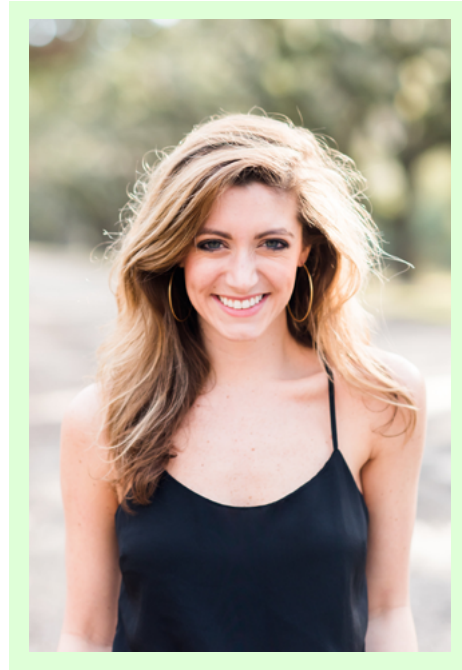


**HAYLEY MORGAN**

Tension has a tendency to bring us to the end of our rope. This will inevitably lead to us breaking down or us bending low toward the Lord. Waiting in the unresolved tension is one of the most uncomfortable things for our spirits. But, the Lord promises to be near, and it's been my experience that our hearts are very aware during these seasons. We're open and we're listening because we're desperate for movement of any kind. We just want to be "unstuck."

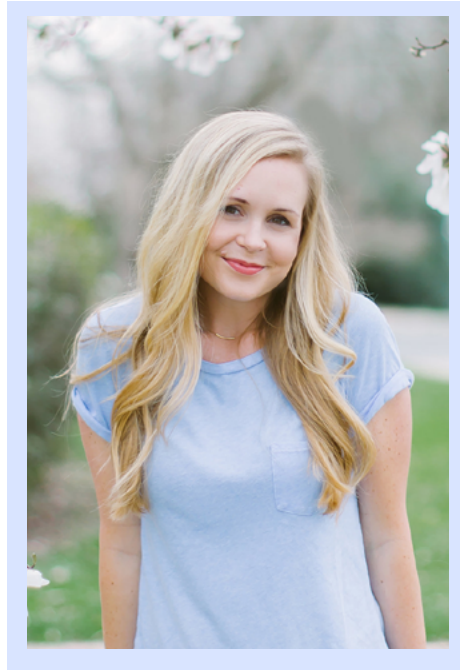
When we're listening and watching for the Lord to move, we're walking in step with Him. This is the place where we experience the most of God. We wake and He is there. We rest and He's encouraging us in it. We make imperfect progress and He assures us it's enough. He leaves little clues along the way of His heart and the way He'd have us to go.

**YOU GET TO BE ALIVE TO THE WORK OF GOD IN YOUR WAITING. HE'S STILL WORKING WHILE YOU'RE WAITING. ALL IS NOT QUIET ON HIS END. KEEP LISTENING AND LOOKING.**



**ASHLYN CARTER**

**MY SISTER, REMEMBER—AND CERTAINLY REMIND ME IN MY FORGETFULNESS—THAT IT’S NOT GOING TO LOOK LIKE WHAT WE PLANNED FOR OURSELVES.** Never. And oh, how that’s a beautiful thing! I hold dear a quote from Tim Keller, “God will only give you what you would have asked for if you knew everything He does.” Yes. Oh, how our Lord in His creative glory wants to do more with you—and me—than what we ever dreamed. We wait. We obey. We pray. And we remember that God doesn’t waste His giftings.



**ASHLEE PROFFITT**

In the wait, look for the hope. Dig in where you are. Invest where you are. Seek the good for those around you.

One of my most favorite passages from the Bible is Jeremiah 29 where we find the people of Israel in a season of waiting (exiled in a country not their own). God speak to His people and give them this instruction: “Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce. Find wives for yourselves, and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. Pursue the well-being of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the Lord on its behalf, for when it thrives, you will thrive.”

So we do the same. **IN OUR SEASONS OF WAITING WE INVEST RIGHT WHERE HE HAS US. EVEN WHEN IT'S HARD.** Even when it's uncomfortable. Or as Jill Brisco says it “Go where we're sent. Say where're put. Unpack. And give what you've got.”



**JESSICA TURNER**

I promise that you will look back on this season one year, two years, ten years from now and say, ah! THAT is why I experienced that. **EVERYTHING IN LIFE HAS A PURPOSE, EVEN THE MOST CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES.**



**SHAY COCHRANE**

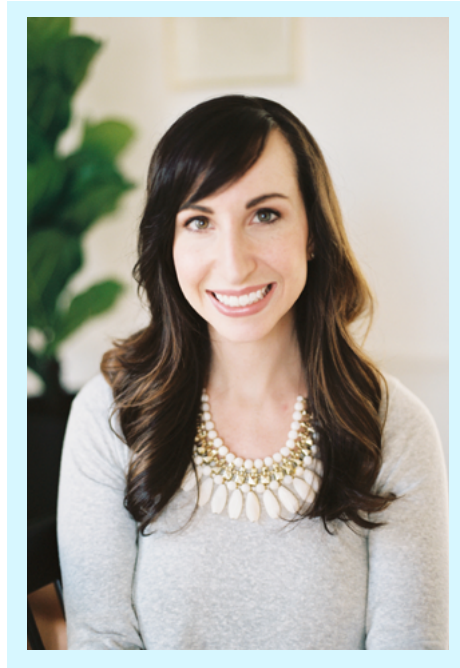
**IT ALWAYS ENCOURAGES ME IN SEASONS OF WAITING TO KNOW THAT WHILE I MAY FEEL LIKE “NOTHING” IS HAPPENING, THE TRUTH IS THAT GOD IS ALWAYS SIMULTANEOUSLY ORCHESTRATING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF THINGS RELATING TO OUR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCE THAT WE CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO FATHOM THE SCOPE OF.** Everything from where we will live, to who we will meet at just the right moment, to who will be impacted by what he does through us, to who our children will interact with in the future, even how and where they will meet their future spouse. Maybe he has “slowed your progress” because the timing needs to be just right for the other good things that he is working out for you and for other people that you will impact that you cannot even begin to see now. I am comforted to know that the person orchestrating it all has the birds eye view while I am down on the ground trying to make sense of whats in front of me.





**RENEE SWOPE**

Good things never grow overnight. Our character, our success and even our stamina are refined and strengthened in learning and growing from our mistakes, difficult circumstances, and waiting seasons. **WHAT WE GAIN IN THOSE SEASONS IS SOMETIMES EVEN BETTER THAN WHAT WE GAIN WHEN WE GET WHAT WE'RE WAITING FOR, IF WE'RE WILLING TO LEAN IN, LISTEN AND LEARN FORM IT ALL.**



**KAITLIN HOLLAND**

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43: 18-19) I tend to have anxiety during seasons of uncertainty or waiting. **EVERY SINGLE TIME I TRACE THE SMOKE (MY ANXIETY) TO THE FIRE (THE LIE I’M BELIEVING), I FIND A TRUST ISSUE. I’M NOT BELIEVING AND TRUSTING THAT GOD IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS AND I’M NOT REMEMBERING ALL HE HAS DONE.** He was faithful before, why wouldn’t He be faithful now? The reminder found in Isaiah 43 is like a cool drink of water for my soul. He is making ALL things new. Through the tension, through the tears, through the doubt. A new thing is springing forth!



PEP TALKS FOR WOMEN  
WHO WANT TO CULTIVATE  
WHAT MATTERS.



**NANCY RAY**

Don't get overwhelmed by your massive to do list and crawl back in bed. Instead, write it all out on paper. It really only takes about 15 minutes at most to make a game plan, but that's usually where we get stuck - in the overwhelm. **DON'T LET LIFE HAPPEN TO YOU, FRIEND! HAPPEN TO YOUR LIFE.** You absolutely can.

Once you start writing out the things that have to be done, and the things you want to make happen, it will become clearer. The next step is simply to assign time in your life to tackle ONE of those items. That's it. Start with one, then move forward. And if you get overwhelmed again? Take another 15 minutes to sit down and write it out. Re-make that game plan. It will inspire you to move forward.



**VALERIE WOERNER**

Good things take time to grow but there can still be small immediate results that happen that can help keep you motivated. If you are starting to work out and the goal is to lose 20 lbs, watching the scale can be excruciatingly slow. Focus on the small immediate results—like the euphoria you feel leaving the gym. Let that feeling carry you to the next day at the gym, not the scale that won't seem to budge. Or planting a garden. It might take weeks or months for flowers to form from a seed. Focus on the joy you get as you touch and smell the fresh soil or the feeling you get just being out in nature. **SEE THE VALUE IN THE PROCESS AND YOU'LL SEE RESULTS DAILY THAT WILL KEEP YOU CULTIVATING WHAT MATTERS.**





**RACHAEL KINCAID**

There are a few areas where I feel women can absolutely grab hold of some victory when they start out trying to cultivate what matters and taking on big lifestyle changes. For example, every woman has five minutes to make their bed. Every woman has five minutes to read their Bible, and five minutes to sip a cup of coffee slowly. Every woman has five minutes to pause and meditate on something for which she's grateful. These are the things with which I began, when I wanted to really take back some of the lightness and brightness that I had let slip away from my life. **WHEN WE LOOK AT LIFE IN INCREMENTAL STAGES, IT BECOMES EMPOWERING, AND NOT DISCOURAGING, TO TACKLE THINGS ONE TINY STEP AT A TIME.**



**KAYSE PRATT**

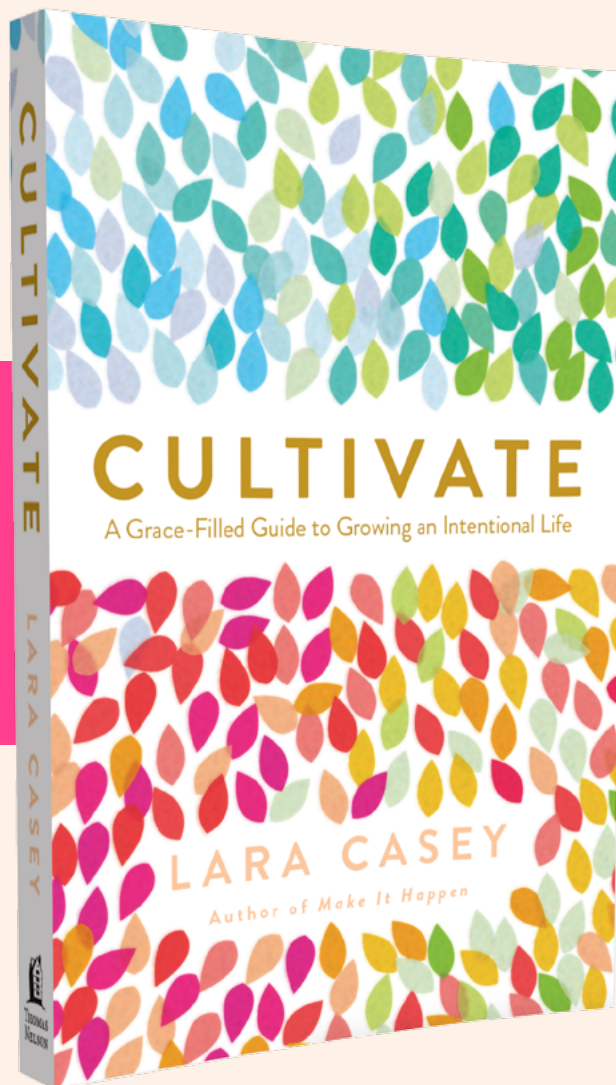
**MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, WE HAVE TO MAKE PROGRESS  
LITTLE-BY-LITTLE. IT'S THE ONLY WAY THE CHANGES WE WANT  
TO MAKE WILL BE LASTING AND TRUE.**

Before you try to change all the things, I would encourage you to really spend some time narrowing down what truly *does* matter to you. Chances are, there are less “important” things on your to-do list than you thought. Once you have those few non-negotiable priorities settled, take a look at your season. What are you really able to handle right now? What things can you let go of?

If you're in a truly busy season of life that you just can't escape at the moment, start small. Focus on one priority and make that thing happen as best you can.

Little-by-little progress is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, it's something worth being proud of! We do what we can, when we can, and we cheer each other on through every tiny step.

Grow an  
Intentional  
Life



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