

# How to Work from Home with Your Spouse and Not Go Nuts

Tue, Feb 13, 2024 3:42PM 43:41

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

tyler, home, work, meetings, office, christie, slack, talking, desk, big, people, started, long, mike, week, cameras, christy, moving, cook, sit

## SPEAKERS

Christi Ernst, Tyler Ernst, Monica Pitts

---



Christi Ernst 00:04

You have to be flexible and you have to be willing to compromise, I think is a big thing, especially if you're moving into somebody's already established office like I did. When we first started, it was not exactly the smoothest thing. And there were a lot of things that we talked about and disagreed on. But compromising and working through that was a big piece. And so how much are you willing to bend? When you go into that space? How much is the other person willing to bend? Like, really How flexible are you I think is a big piece.



Monica Pitts 00:39

You're on mission, and you just need more people to know about it. And whether you're brand new to marketing or a seasoned pro, we are all looking for answers to make marketing decisions with purpose. I'm Monica Pitts, a techie crafty business owner, mom and aerial dancer who solves communication challenges through technology. This podcast is all about digging in and going digital. I'll share my marketing know how and business experience from almost 20 years of misadventures, I'll be your backup dancer. So you can stop doubting, and get moving towards marketing with purpose. Hello, and welcome back to marketing with purpose. I'm your host, Monica Pitts. And today we're tackling a topic that hits close to home for many of us, quite literally, working from home with your spouse and managing to not go nuts, get your work done, and stay married. Yay. I personally do not know how to do this. When my husband and I worked from home, and well now when we work from home, we occupy separate spaces. And we treat the kitchen like our water cooler. So we like gather in the kitchen. But my guests today, Tyler and Christi Ernst are another story. They have been remote working from the same room for the past four years. And they still like each other. Yeah, I know what a success story right? So Tyler is our lead developer and CO art director at MayeCreate and he's been working remotely since 2014. When he and his wife Christi moved to Belton, Missouri, it's like near Kansas City for her nursing career. So yeah, I was hoping that we could just start this off by first having the two of you introduce yourselves. And then we'll take a trip back in time to uncover

all of this, like co working wisdom that you've gathered through this like work at home journey. So I want to know, where did you meet? How long have you been together? How long have you been married? So that way people know? Can? Like what? What's your story? Tell me.

**T** Tyler Ernst 02:44  
You want to start?

**C** Christi Ernst 02:46  
Tyler, you can go you're better at storytelling.

**T** Tyler Ernst 02:48  
Fair enough? Well, technically, if you want to ask when we first met, it'd be middle school. But we weren't friends until senior year of high school kind

**C** Christi Ernst 02:58  
of thing. I knew who you were other than the rat tail kid in middle school. So we can call it that. Kids with a rat tail.

**T** Tyler Ernst 03:06  
Mainly, mainly van, I would say. Like, that's my it's like, freshman year band, probably marching band. You start to really get to know everyone.

**M** Monica Pitts 03:16  
And you guys, you went to college together, right? Did you guys date in college?

**T** Tyler Ernst 03:20  
We did. We started dating freshman year college. So we I actually went to the Art Institute my freshman year, and she went to UCM. And I was like, well, private school sucks. And and then she was like, well, you can transfer schools and I hadn't even thought that that was an option. And then I was like, Oh, I can't do that. Well, cool. I'm gonna go over there. And so we both have a DCM

**M** Monica Pitts 03:47  
and when do you guys get married?

T Tyler Ernst 03:50  
2023 2023 man, so 11 years ago this summer?

C Christi Ernst 03:55  
Yeah. That's

M Monica Pitts 03:58  
awesome. Kind of makes me feel old but awesome. All the same time. Okay, so

T Tyler Ernst 04:05  
anything about it? I only worked for MayeCreate for a year before, but as a not married person.

M Monica Pitts 04:12  
Now when you started it MayeCreate. Did I have kids yet?

T Tyler Ernst 04:16  
You had Ellis. Okay. All right. She was was pregnant with her first. Man.

M Monica Pitts 04:21  
You got to live through all of that with us. Oh, that's incredible. Thank you for that Tyler. Now, okay, so one other thing I wanted to tell people about because this is a really cool and interesting fact about you guys. Sorry, I told everybody that Tyler's my Co-Art Director and He's our lead developer but you guys, you have like a really interesting hobby we say it MayeCreate we're like, two ticks away from being like a full blown circus, you know, so. Tell everybody what your guys's hobby is. What do you guys do when you're not at work?

C Christi Ernst 05:00  
I think the biggest thing that Monique was alluding to is that we're both competitive power lifters. And so we like to lift heavy circles for fun is about the best way to put it. And not just like some heavy circles, but a lot of heavy circles. Like my best benchpress is something that everybody always talks about. Like what do you bench bro? I bench 275 pounds at least once. We go

T Tyler Ernst 05:24  
twice now. Yeah, I

C Christi Ernst 05:26  
have no 275 just wants to 65 I've done like three or four times. But yeah, powerlifting something that we do together. So not only do we work from home together most days of the week, and we live together in the same home but we go to the same gym at the same time and train together too. So there's a lot of like, a lot of togetherness. Be like we share that same hobby. So yeah. That's one of our big circus things. I guess you could also say another circus thing is a I've started to dabble into the sourdough realm of things. Yeah, I

M Monica Pitts 06:00  
was gonna ask you about your sourdough.

C Christi Ernst 06:02  
Yeah, I've got some starter in the fridge and I've got some discard in the fridge. I want to make some English muffins with later. So yeah, I've

M Monica Pitts 06:10  
heard that sourdough is actually like better for you than normal bread. Like it's supposed to digest better. Is that true?

C Christi Ernst 06:16  
It's a lot like sauerkraut or like fermented foods, that sort of thing. It's got all that like good gut bacteria in there. So it helps your good gut health and that sort of thing. That's why it's better for you.

T Tyler Ernst 06:27  
We were like reverse hipsters. For sourdough. We came into that trend way later, because when everyone else is making sourdough in 2020, we're making pizza dough.

M Monica Pitts 06:40  
So um, Tyler, I know that when you both decided to move for Christi's jobs, originally, like you thought that you were going to work in an office, you were going to move to Kansas City, you

thought that you were going to work in an office, you were going to move to Kansas City, you were going to work in an office, you were looking for other jobs, we were devastated. That MayeCreate. And then you decided to stay on and work remotely for MayeCreate. So that was a big transition. So I want to kind of start there with the remote work theme like, how was that? Was that a hard decision? Like how was it at first?

**T** Tyler Ernst 07:14

I got a lot of questions from people because it wasn't a normal thing then. And so like when we started looking at at moving, I started looking at jobs, like you said, and then like nothing was really panning out. And I remember the moment I was standing in your office, and I was talking about it. And we were talking and I was like, I'm like freaking out right now. You know, we're moving in a couple of weeks. And nothing's panned out yet. And I have a job, like, that's a little freaky. And you're like, well, most of what you do is online, you can just keep working for us. And I was like, I had not thought about that. And you're like I hadn't either until just now we're like, let's do it. Why not? You know? And so it was it was a little frightening, because it was like, there isn't really a norm for this. And like I remember my uncle asked me he's like, Well, how long do you think that game is gonna last? And I was like, I don't know, you know, I really don't. It's gonna, it's gonna last until I can hopefully find something else. And then lo and behold, 10 years later, it lasted pretty well, I would say,

**M** Monica Pitts 08:19

Well, we had a trial period at first and we like checked in a bunch because it isn't for everybody like working from home is not for everybody like I, I don't do it super well, I can do it for a while. But after a few months, I kind of just need to leave the house and have to have a reason to put on real clothes to feel good about myself. Not everybody needs that though. I mean, so

**T** Tyler Ernst 08:42

yeah, definitely helps with that the gym is a good excuse to leave the house, you know, four or five times a week. And that that helped. When we first moved to an exhale, we weren't super into lifting. I was there were points where it'd be like Friday night, and I'd be like, I haven't left the house in four days, we need to go do something.

**C** Christi Ernst 09:00

Not only had you not left the house, she hadn't seen sunlight because you were working out of the basement in like a little corner and you would like Come upstairs for lunch and then go back down and eat your lunch in the basement. So it was just you and solely chillin out down there.

**T** Tyler Ernst 09:13

Yeah, and if it was winter, and you know, the sun was in there, like just coming up as I was going downstairs. And then by the time I came upstairs after work, it was down already.

M Monica Pitts 09:24

Is there anything? I mean, you've spent more of your career now working from home than you have in an office. So is there anything that you miss about being in an office environment at this point?

T Tyler Ernst 09:37

Um, I mean, we work somewhere long enough. Like Like, I haven't made great like, you know, you guys are actual genuine friends. So I miss seeing people like that in person. But also like I'm so much more productive when I'm at home. That like the heat. When you do it long enough. You get into a rhythm of like, this is how I work. This is my Day. Oh, I don't know if I could ever really go back to an office quite frankly. There's

M Monica Pitts 10:05

lots of distractions I do miss you popping my back for me though. I have to go to a chiropractor for that now. Much more expensive Christi you're a health care professional tell us what you do and how you ended up working from home. How'd that happen? So

C Christi Ernst 10:25

I guess it kind of starts when we moved to Lenexa, I worked in a cath lab. So I worked around like cardiology outpatients, essentially, busy hustle bustle, worked a job where I carried a pager, worked a job where had to be within a range of certain hospitals. So I worked there for just shy of five years. But at the end of that five years, man Was I feeling all of the extra hours I worked Was I feeling, I like to call myself an extrovert piece of toast. At the end. It was very emotionally exhausting, very physically exhausting, looked for something different. So then I started working basically within the healthcare IT space. And when I started there, I actually started working from home one day a week, but it was mostly in the office. And that started in 2018. So I worked in an office and worked from home one day a week, for a couple of years, until March of 2020, where the transition to work from home happened and everybody was forced to work from home. So I had been kind of used to like working from home once a day. But let's be honest, when you work from home, once a day, it's not the same sort of situation, you're still going back to the office for the other days, you honestly kind of use that day to make your appointments like your doctor's appointments to kind of flex your time around a little bit. And I worked from the recliner. So that's where that's where I worked, I did my work that way, or I'd go work at a coffee shop. But then when the pandemic happened, and everybody was forced to work from home, at first, it was a weird transition, because you didn't know how long that was going to last like the initial thought was. And it was really weird, even because we were potentially moving to a new office location. So it was like, do I take all my stuff out of my desk in these moments? Or do I not? And so I actually left a few things at the office. But I took most of like my personal items with me when we got the email at a start working remotely. And initially, it was supposed to just be for a couple weeks, I thought, okay, cool. I can work from my chair for a couple of weeks, no big deal. This big recliner had it, you

know, I can use my mouse, my job was very easy to do that from. And then you know that two weeks goes by and you get another email and it's like, oh, we're not going to return to office until the middle of the summer. And then you get another email in another email. Basically, the summer of 2020 was when I decided, okay, I need an actual desk to work at. I'm moving in. So I moved into the office with Tyler. Um, I don't think he was very excited about that initially, but I was like, I need a hard space to at least work to put this extra monitor up. And to work from time to time I think we tried working toward me working in like the dining room table, essentially where I'm sitting right now for a little bit but it just wasn't the same. And so I got a desk you can see it's right behind Tyler but and then we transition to a sit to stand desk even so I kind of just made myself at home and moved right on in and that was kind of a shock for Tyler at first. I'm

**T** Tyler Ernst 13:30

a creature of habit. So like, like you're moving things around in here in my office. That's now our office. Okay, I guess you're gonna do that. And I guess I'm gonna be okay with it.

**M** Monica Pitts 13:43

Well, you're really laid back like you're about as low drama as they come. And I'm sure that that's not all the time Christi but me hear you know, it's kind of like my kids go to school and they're, like, really functional at school and they come home and are like a complete sideshow. It's I feel like it's the same with spouses versus bosses, right? But so like, like, what were some of the thoughts going through your head as Christi's moving into your office that's like your space in the house.

**T** Tyler Ernst 14:18

So one of the like, the big points of contention that we had to work through. And this is gonna sound so stupid, but I had like a schedule for I listen to this podcast on this day, this podcasts on this day, this one this way and these times because when they released and she was like, I can't focus on you're listening to those now. It's like that's too bad, I guess. I don't know.

**C** Christi Ernst 14:43

So you're missing the point that you don't listen to anything through a set of headphones. And so everything is through speakers that are loud. i We didn't really discover that I wasn't being able to like I wasn't able to focus while podcasts were playing. I probably didn't realize that till for like three solid months, so I realized, like, it took a long time. But I was like searching the internet scrolling social media, like my brain did not like listening to podcasts and I didn't realize it, but I tolerated it for so long, simply because I had to, you

**M** Monica Pitts 15:20

know what, Christi? I can't do it either. So like, if, when we were before we came on, I said, Hey, oh, so my, my office is in like 120 year old building, and it's over the top of a bar, that space

okay, so my, my office is in like 120 year old building, and it's over the top of a bar, that opens it too. And it's one o'clock, you know, so sometimes the people come in and have really loud discussions below me. But somehow that doesn't really bother me, because it's like weird, muffled ambient noise. But if I have music with words on, or a podcast rolling, like with a podcast rolling, I cannot work with music with words on I can design but I can't write at all, like I can't write because my brain just latches on to the words. And so I have to, I literally have a whole playlist that's filled with songs with no words on them for when I have to write. So what I'm saying is, I feel you really hard there because I could not have done it. Like, at all, I would have been erupting.

**T** Tyler Ernst 16:17

And so what ended up happening is eventually we figured out, you know, the certain set of circumstances that it was like, Okay, well, this isn't working here. That's why I have a nice pair of headphones now, because I was like, alright, well, I'm not going to not listen to these because I really enjoy them. And they helped me focus. So I got a nice pair of headphones. And then, you know, just figured out the schedule a little differently for when I listen to him.

**M** Monica Pitts 16:42

Are there other bumpy patches that you guys had to figure out? I mean, especially working in the same room, I salon,

**C** Christi Ernst 16:48

he didn't talk about the desk. So Tyler has a tendency that things have certain places, and they have to go certain ways, my desk overlaps our window a little bit in the office space. And that drove him absolutely insane. When I was ordering this desk initially, he said it's going to overlap the window, it's too long. I said, well, I need the space. Like I need to be able to have my monitor on my laptop. And you know, space. It's not a big desk, it's very small. But the fact that it overlaps a window drove him insane. He wanted it to sit to where it angled against the wall, but I wanted to see out the window. And at that time, we had this big beautiful tree that blossomed to every spring. And so it was just nice to be able to see out of a window, especially coming from that clinical background where I worked in a little rural LED Room. You can see the sunlight at all. So it was just nice to be able to have my window in my office or our office. And, you know, it was our space, not just his space. So that transition was a little bit much too.

**T** Tyler Ernst 17:49

I think it's it's, it's a lot of the like little stupid victory arguments that you have as a married couple, except for about a room that you spend your entire day and came down to. But

**M** Monica Pitts 18:01

you guys are good communicators. You guys have been like friends and married obviously for a long time now, which is kind of where I was going for the beginning here. And when I asked you



guys how long you've been together, so you know how to communicate with one another and how to respect each other's triggers? For sure. Okay, so is there anything that you miss about being in an office Christi, that you don't feel like you get working at home with Tyler.

**C** Christi Ernst 18:31

So honestly, I actually am in a new role that's actually hybrid. So I am in an office two to three days a week. With that being said, it's not the same going back to that office, because most of my team is still remote. So I don't get to like go to office and collaborate with those individuals have whiteboard sessions, where you talk, those are the things that I really enjoyed about being in person having that face to face. Now, obviously, you can meet over video chat, but a lot of people within healthcare IT that you'll find, especially individuals that are behind the scenes, so engineers, even people that work on the solution side of things don't turn their cameras on. So it's a lot of like cameras off. And so you don't even get to see facial reactions to what you're saying. So that can make it hard. There were a couple of meetings when I worked at my previous company that we always had cameras on it was super laid back. But for most of the cameras were off. So currently, sometimes I feel like I might be in an office but I'm still working remotely, but I still had to drive somewhere every day sort of thing. I don't. One thing I don't like about working in the office other than the fact that it feels like I'm working remotely sometimes at the office is the drive. For some people I think driving to and from an office is nice, but because of where we live. I have to take almost a different way to and from work every day and sometimes I take different ways home from work depending on traffic, like I have to ask Google which way to, you know, guide me home, because one week could take an hour and the other one could take 30 minutes. So yeah. But what I have found that I really enjoyed working from home that is different is I get to do like, I can cook my lunch like I don't have to worry or stress about prepping my meals for the week as much on Sunday night. Like, if I didn't get the opportunity to do that, then I can like grill a steak during my lunch break and prep my meals for the week during my lunch break. Right at Home. It's really nice.

**M** Monica Pitts 20:34

Yeah, or unload the dishwasher. That's what I found like, because now I like deal with it before and after dinner, which is just one more nighttime task but and I am nodding my head over here. I also when I work from home, really like I can make eggs for lunch. That makes me very happy. You know

**T** Tyler Ernst 20:52

that back to the our hobby, when you're when you're lifting, you have a decently specific diet, not like we're not super strict, like bodybuilders or anything. But it is like I need higher protein, higher carbs. So like, usually that involves cooking specific things and prepping them ahead of time. So you don't have to cook that stuff. And if you're at home, like I, I'll start rice at 11 o'clock. So it's ready whenever I'm ready for lunch at noon.

**M** Monica Pitts 21:21

So I just to know, your guys both have meetings. Right? So how do you handle meetings? How

So I got to know, you guys both have meetings. Right? So how do you handle meetings? How does that work? Because like, I mean, I'm in one space with my marketing assistant sometimes. But she doesn't take meetings unless she's on the meeting with me. So there's not like people's voices jockeying. And I remember when Mike and I worked from the basement, and Mike is on the phone all day long with his job and he talks really loud, he would have to go into the laundry room and shut the door and have all of his professional conversations in the laundry room because no one could hear anything except for Mike talking. So how do you guys do it, I got to know.

C

Christi Ernst 22:03

So this is one of the big things that I just kind of took upon myself. So Tyler, Tyler works from a desktop computer, he's at a desk, there's no mobility to that he's just kind of stuck in the office, there's, like, Sure, he could maybe take some of his calls from a phone, but most of his stuff, like he's sharing his screen, he's you know, working with clients and, you know, rearranging their websites for them. Whereas I have a laptop, so I am super mobile. So that's just one thing I started from the beginning was coming to the living room and taking my meetings, you know, I used to work from the living room. So I'll just take my meetings from the living room. Now, previous roles that I had, I didn't have as many meetings. So it wasn't as big of a deal. But like today, already, I've spent most of my day out in the living room, because I've been in meetings all day. Now there are some instances where I enjoy having my second screen. Like if I'm presenting on a call, but most of the time, I don't necessarily need it. But if I do need it, that's where I'm like, Hey, Tyler, just so you know, I have to you know, I'm gonna take this meeting from the office. And so we just kind of respect each other's boundaries, big communication there. I like to share my calendar with him every day too. So even if it's just a screenshot of like, Hey, these are the meetings I have all day like these are this is my schedule. It's just so that way we can kind of like that way we don't interrupt each other's meetings, or like there's been a couple instances where I've been working out in the living room, and I walk back to the office, and I'm like, Oh, I forgot he was in a meeting. And he's got a camera on. I'm like, Oh.

T

Tyler Ernst 23:43

I mentioned earlier, sometimes I think people think we're weird. That MayeCreate because we always have our cameras on like all the time. And that's not super normal. But like, I told Christi when she because she asked me once and I was like, well, we just kind of did when I started working remotely because again, no one was doing it. We just kind of did that. And now we just keep doing that. It

M

Monica Pitts 24:07

is it is unacceptable. I'm gonna sound like a real boss here. It's unacceptable to me when I have a meeting with an employee and they do not have their video on. Nope, no, like not gonna work. I gotta be able to look you in the eye. Because some people like their nonverbal cues are really loud. And so like there's people where I tell them instructions, and they're like, Yeah, but their face says no, like it says I do not understand what you're talking about. And I can tell immediately even through video that you don't understand what I'm talking about. And so that means that we need to go to plan B and I'm like drawing pictures and holding it up to the

camera so you understand like, I would say like Rebecca can be one of the was one of those people early on until she learned how to really ask questions and see her own cues when she doesn't understand something but like Gotta I can't tell if you're just saying yeah,

**T** Tyler Ernst 25:03

yeah, way, it's way better in like in Ralph's meetings when clients will turn on their their cameras, which like it happens, that's just the norm sometimes. But when you get a client that will turn on their camera, it's like, it's like, I can't tell if you're happy about the changes I'm making right now or not like, I genuinely have no idea because you're not talking either. Well,

**M** Monica Pitts 25:24

it's also a liability, because you don't know if they're actually paying attention. Yeah, that too, they can be checking their email. And if they're like, Christi, your I, I'm assuming Christine, you're probably the same way. I can pay attention to like one thing at a time, any more than one thing at a time. And I'm not going to remember anything that happened with one of the things and so there's not a whole lot of multitasking that goes on in my universe, like,

**C** Christi Ernst 25:48

I can multitask. But if I'm trying to do something else, at the same time, say pay attention to a meeting most of the time, I don't actually hear what's going on. Or I could be trying to pay attention to said meeting and I still don't hear what's going on. Sometimes it's very interesting.

**M** Monica Pitts 26:03

But I always wonder if that's really multitasking, you're ignoring something and doing something. But yeah, I do think I wrote that down cameras on is definitely a trick for like remote work. And I like to Christi your comment earlier about like going from not like sitting in the recliner, to being at the kitchen table to setting up a desk to having a raise and lower desk because having a work environment that actually works for you is pretty vague. It doesn't matter whether you're at home or had an office, you need something that works for you, you know, and it's not the same for everyone. I know when Tyler first started working from home, we got the raise and lower desks at MayeCreate. And then he was like, I don't want to raise and lower desk. I want a great chair, which he's sitting in it right now. Yeah. And so we bought him a baller chair, you know, that cost the same as a standing desk.

**T** Tyler Ernst 27:00

She was like, she's like, we're getting everyone saying desk, do you want one and I was like, I got my I have a six foot wide giant. This thing. So heavy wooden desk, I got off Craigslist for \$20. And it's like the best thing ever. And I was like, I really liked my desk, actually.

**M** Monica Pitts 27:18

So yeah. So all right. So the other thing that I feel like we haven't quite touched on yet is okay. So let's say that somebody comes to you, and they're like, Hey, I've never worked from home with my spouse before or such and so is going to start working from home. What would you say to them? What would like what are some questions you might ask them to see if they're going to explode themselves? Because like, that's really what we're all guarding against, right? So the relationship explosion, like it's not not going to work. You can be like Mike and I and just work in separate areas of the house.

**C** Christi Ernst 27:57

You can totally do you basically work in an office without working in an office when you're doing that.

**M** Monica Pitts 28:02

Yeah. But with your spouse where your filters are lower. And so what would you ask them?

**T** Tyler Ernst 28:10

I think, are you flexible? Yeah, you

**C** Christi Ernst 28:13

have like, you have to be flexible, and you have to be willing to compromise, I think is a big thing. Especially if you're moving into somebody's already established office, like I did. It was you know, like when we first started, it was not exactly the smoothest thing. And there were a lot of things that we talked about and disagreed on. But compromising and working through that was a big piece. And so how much are you willing to bend when you go into that space? How much is the other person willing to bend? Like, really? How flexible are you I think is a big piece. Yeah.

**T** Tyler Ernst 28:49

And then communication off of that is like, How well can you talk about those things that you're willing to bend about?

**M** Monica Pitts 29:00

One thing that I mentioned earlier was can you work in the kitchen together? Yeah. Oh,


**C** Christi Ernst 29:06

 CHRIS ERNST 29:00

100%. So Tyler is my sous chef in the kitchen. I am basically I'm the pickiest one, so I kind of take lead. And that's just something that we've learned as we've been together for so long Tyler's cooked meals and I haven't been happy with them. I personally think I'm a better cook. But he's taken on that role of like, cleaning up after me because I'm not the greatest of cleaning up as I go when I cook. And I've done the like, I'll do like the nitty gritty like making sure the steaks don't cook too long on the grill or making sure the air fryer set to the right time, that sort of thing. So I think if you can work together in the kitchen and cut like, cook a meal together, whether that's when I say cook a meal that includes doing the dishes, like are you doing the dishes as the other ones cleaning or cleaning the island office, that sort of thing. Can you work together in the kitchen, then you can probably We work together in an office.

 Monica Pitts 30:02

I would, I would agree with that. I mean, like, so we're actually designing a new kitchen. Mike and I are and I'm like, I'm always the one at the sink. Okay, so I'm the Tyler, I'm the owl cut stuff. And I, you know, and he's always in front of the stove. And I'm like, no, no, no, the stove and the sink cannot be opposite one another, like, the plans came back and there was a sink in the island with a stove right behind it. And I'm like this, ah, I want my own space, I want my does this give you some insight into our universe. I'm like, I want my own sink with my own dishwasher next to it. And then over there, you can have your beautiful range, but it cannot be close to my sink.

 Christi Ernst 30:43

See, I just want a booty bump. And that's what would happen in our houses, like you just bump into, over and over again. So

 Tyler Ernst 30:54

we're not small people.

 Monica Pitts 30:58

Yeah, I do understand from an aesthetic standpoint, why people put things together like that. But then like, yeah, so we like to have our own space at the pits household. And it's totally okay. I wonder too. So this is something you guys haven't mentioned before. Now, I feel like both of you guys are very respectful of each other's careers and work roles. Does that make sense? Like, I always have felt like you guys are pretty equal in that and you sacrifice for each other. Especially as Tyler has grown into his role. I wonder if it would be challenging to share workspace with your spouse if they felt like their role was superior to your role? And then it would be like butting heads all the time. Does that make sense? Because I remember when, when Mike was like, at his job initially, and it was like, he had the ability to make way more money than I did. And so like, it was our agreement that any doctor's appointment, I took the

kids to anytime they were sick, I stayed at home with them, because I knew that he was the one that could make the most money. And so I was gonna, like, take that hit for us. I wonder how that will go down if you were sharing space, like when meetings came up. And I

T

Tyler Ernst 32:13

feel like that could be really hard. Because it'd be like, like, well, I'm more important. So I should be able to use the office for my meetings. First, like for us, it's literally just a functional thing. Like, I like she said, I have a desktop. If this doesn't work, I'm not going to carry it into the kitchen every time there's a meeting.

C

Christi Ernst 32:33

But I think you have to prioritize sorry, I think it's a prioritize like what the purpose of that meeting. So I think obviously, one thing I thought about as we were talking is we kind of almost have like a Scrum is how we call it in like the IT world, where we talk about what we have for the day, like Tyler will tell me he has this meeting at two o'clock or, or I just send him my whole calendar List of Meetings. And so we kind of get a day plan of like, what each other's day looks like. So we can communicate with each other. And like, based on that, too, for me, like, it's all about what type of meeting it is, what layer of meeting is it so when I was in my previous role, I did a lot of present. I did some presentations for clients. And so I made sure that those meetings were held in the office because I liked having two screens. And that's essentially how we prioritize things. So these meetings that you can take from your computer, or like even from a leadership perspective, so like if Tyler has a one on one, or he has a review with one of his, you know, one of his peers, then I give him that privacy in the office because I don't want to be in there. That kind of is also like the HIPAA part of the nurse and me too, is respecting that privacy of the other individual by me not being in there. And same with me when I would have one on ones with with my team and individuals I would always take them out here so that way he wasn't in the room respecting their privacy as well. So you kind of have to look at each meeting and decide from there like especially if both people are mobile, then you just kind of have to you know prioritize it that way.

M

Monica Pitts 34:13

I do feel like though Christi I always value your opinion. And so there are some times where I'm really glad that you're in the room because like we like having an outsider's opinion is really good especially since you're like in a more corporate environment and there are a lot of times where Stacy and I will be having a conversation about stuff even with Tyler and we'll be like we need to go ask Mike my husband or Ryan her husband because they both work in corporate How do you handle this over there because we don't frickin know we're just making the crap up as we go over here and I'm not like offended when you're in the room because I'm like, Haha, maybe she heard a tap Christi on the shoulder and asked

T

Tyler Ernst 34:54

her sometimes when it's when it's like, I don't know if I have an opinion on this. They wouldn't  
You think I'll

YOU THINK IT

**C** Christi Ernst 35:01

be completely transparent, sometimes something will come up that you guys are talking about. And I'll like Slack, Tyler real fast and be like, hey, this might work for you guys. It's like, I'm kind of listening to what you're talking about, but not completely. So that

**T** Tyler Ernst 35:16

was something I was gonna say earlier on the communication front is we actually have a Slack channel, which is the two of us on it. That like, it was like, let's just do this. And because I'm on Slack all the time, you're you guys used to use Slack. You don't anymore, but it was like we're both on Slack. Let's just make a new channel and use that which feels weird using that communicate in the house when you're both there. But same time. It's so useful.

**M** Monica Pitts 35:41

I put mike on Slack too. I'm like this texting back and forth all day does not work for me. If you need me during the workday, you need to be on Slack. This is where I'm at. It's so much easier. I like just don't get on text during work. I only Slack. So if you want me, you should slack me. It's

**C** Christi Ernst 35:59

metal. And if you don't have access to Slack, per se, I think you can I think slack is a free for so many users because we created like our own family. But even like Google chat, you can use that. And you can add that to your you know your taskbar at the bottom. And that was a great tool that we both used for a long time because that was before you guys were even on Slack. We use Google Chat. The two of us did. So what I

**M** Monica Pitts 36:19

haven't installed on my phone too. So like, right, I get the messages when I need them. And it's just yeah. Yeah. It's

**T** Tyler Ernst 36:30

not that this is commercial for slack. But it's pretty great. It's awesome.

**M** Monica Pitts 36:35

Okay, so last question for you guys. Housework. So housework during the workday, this is a contention that Mike and I had when I first started working from home like back in 2000

concentration that Mike and I had when I first started working from home, Mike back in 2008, because I had a stint where I worked from home from like 2008 until like to maybe 2010. And he would be like, Monica, will you move the sprinkler? And you need I need you to like unload the dishwasher. And if you could please switch over the laundry. And I'm like, Dude, I'm working. And I'm not like functional to multitask. And when Mike works from home on Mondays and Fridays, he'll get like 20 loads of laundry done. And put them away and stuff while he's having conversations with people on the phone. And I'm like, wow. So it's totally not fair. It's

**T** Tyler Ernst 37:26

I feel like you I feel like Mike specifically could get away with that if part of your job is talking to people while you're doing stuff. Like, I can't really coat and fold laundry at the same time. That doesn't really work. But that was actually when Chris he started working from home, she was like you don't leave your desk ever.

**C** Christi Ernst 37:43

Because he didn't. He didn't even really take bathroom breaks, he would just sit at his desk and he didn't really realize that's what he was doing until it was like you don't even like go for like a 10 minute walk around the house or like, do anything during the day. And he's like, No, I just sit here and eat. He would like even eat encode at the same time. So his brain never got a chance to like step away and refresh itself.

**M** Monica Pitts 38:14

So that's a different thing. Our dial. Yeah, because I get the same way Tyler because I'll sit down and my brain will just be like, clicking along and solving problems and I don't want to stop the flow. Because I'm gonna get to the end. There's like really process driven thing. But then like, if I get stuck, then I'm going to do what Christi says which is get up. Right and go take the dog potty or something. So it sounds like Tyler's not doing housework. That's I'm hearing

**T** Tyler Ernst 38:41

i i have a rule with myself. I'll I'll change around loads of laundry and like little stuff like that. But if it takes more than like 15 minutes, it's not going to happen during the day.

**M** Monica Pitts 38:52

What about USD?

**C** Christi Ernst 38:53

So one thing with him too, is I was like even while you're warming your lunch up in the microwave, you could be unloading the dishwasher at the same time because it's right there like it's just this little simple thing keep our kitchen nice and tidy. Um, so for me like I was very



wifely. Yeah bye but like I don't do I think it just depends on the day and like what I have going on the day. So I like to like I can cook a lunch or I can cook us lunch like there are some days that I cook the both of us a fresh lunch which is really nice. And that's when he shows up like this big bowl of like deliciousness. But I also like to garden during the day so like during the summertime, we would like and I like gardening is a very broad term. I'm talking like watering my plants outside or even like picking some tomatoes. So taking 15 minutes and getting some sunshine that wait in the middle of the morning. Stepping out and doing that or like if you're on a town hall, which is a big corporate thing and then you get like I have a town hall later today actually Hey, um, that's a great opportunity that you like, listen in, and you're not on video. It's more of like a big presentation type thing where you can go around and like you can do things and multitask. Some people like to take walks during those meetings. But housework was I don't, I'm not the greatest housework, just in general, that is not a big piece of me and our relationship and how we work together. Tyler finds a lot of joy and gets a lot of dopamine from doing a lot of household items. And so he does end up doing a lot of that stuff. But like, cooking is one of the things I like to do or even like sourdough, I'll get some of that going. during the work day, I'll do some of the folds or the gardening is a big piece.

**T** Tyler Ernst 40:47

I think I think the best advice for that sort of thing, though, is like finding the balance point of I can do these things, and still get all my work done. Like for me, right? It's like, I'm, I'm always making sure that everything's getting done. And it's like, well, like you said, I'm kind of stuck on this point. I could use a little break like, okay, now's a good time to go over real quick. Yeah. Or take that afternoon walk with the dogs. I'm amazed that you said that out loud. Over there, Christy, because you have the dogs out there with you. She said, Oh,

**C** Christi Ernst 41:23  
they're sleeping. So

**M** Monica Pitts 41:27  
it must be that time of day. Yeah. Well, I think that's good advice. Anyway, like, find your rhythm for me. Like I have a couple of breaks during the day, but it's not. It's because I need a break mentally not not that I can't just walk away from what I'm doing always and pick it right back up where I was, especially if I'm writing

**T** Tyler Ernst 41:50  
Okay, sometimes that I'll work to like, like, six o'clock 615 or so. And it's just because increases like, are you still working on? Like, I was really just in the middle of this book. And I just figured it out. So I'm done now. Because

**M** Monica Pitts 42:04

you find joy in it. Yeah, exactly. I find I find joy in it. Okay, friends. So there you go. Now you have it. Now hopefully, you guys can take away from the the story of Tyler and Christi how to work from home with your spouse and manage to not go nuts, get your work done, and stay married. And hey, you know what, Mike and I when we work from home together, it's a completely different scenario. But it works for us. And it sounds like what we're really all saying is just do what works for you. Right? Absolutely. Okay. So I was gonna make it a goal to tell people what our next episode was going to be. But then I closed airtable. So that's great. Actually, no, wait. Okay. So if you enjoyed this conversation with Tyler and Christi, then you can hang out with me next week, because we have episodes every single week with Chris West. Chris owns West contracting, and it's a success story. He and his team got together and made some big changes over this past year that's really improved their company culture and efficiency. And he's going to talk all about that and working in a family business because he manages a third generation family business. And that is a feat in and of itself. That's tricky. So join us next week for our interview with Chris West with West contracting. And yeah, subscribe so that way you don't miss it. So until next time, go forth and mark it with purpose.