

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE NUMBER 61**. On today's episode, we are going to talk with YouTuber, influencer, and best-selling author Mindy McKnight about viral parenting and finding your path one step at a time.

Intro: Welcome to the Do It Scared podcast. I'm your host, **RUTH SOUKUP**, and each week on the show we will talk about how to face your fears, overcome obstacles, and, most importantly, how to take action and create a life you love.

Hey, there, guys, welcome back to the show. As always, my name is Ruth Soukup, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the New York Times' bestselling author of six books, including my newest book, Do It Scared.

In today's episode, we are going to be talking to hair guru extraordinaire, plus YouTuber, influencer, and mom of six amazing kiddos, Mindy McKnight, about bringing your best self to the opportunities right in front of you and about how to safely navigate the world of social media with your kids.

Mindy is the founder of Cute Girl Hairstyles, which has more than five million subscribers on YouTube—almost six million—and more than a million followers on Instagram. Several of her kids, including her twin daughters, Brooklyn and Bailey, and daughter, Kamri Noel, have millions of followers as well. This family is rocking it out on social media.

And the thing is, she has so much insight to share, not just about what it takes to build a successful online business but what it takes to build a successful family in an increasingly online world. I love that she is so successful and yet so genuine and so real and is still daring to take risks in her life and in her business.

And ultimately, that's exactly what this podcast is all about. It's about taking the steps that will help us make necessary changes so that we can create a life we love, because in the end, courage doesn't mean we're never afraid; instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It's putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path is going to lead.

Okay, guys, so, just a couple more quick things before we dive into today's episode. First, you can get all the show notes for this episode by visiting [doitscared.com/episode61](https://doitscared.com/episode61). Once again, that's **[doitscared.com/episode61](https://doitscared.com/episode61)**.

Also, if you have any questions, or you just want to share feedback on this episode, you can send me a message on Instagram, or better yet, tag me in your story, and if I share your post, we will send you a "Do it Scared" T-shirt.

And now, without further ado, I am so happy to introduce you to my friend, the incredibly talented Mindy McKnight.

Mindy, oh my gosh. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm so excited to talk to you. Seriously, I cannot even tell you, I am kind of a little bit of a fangirl, and I'm a little bit in awe of you. So, thank you for being here.

**MINDY:** No, thank you, guys, for having me.

**RUTH:** So, I just want to start, because I know not everybody that's listening right now knows you or knows who you are, what you do, or how amazing you are, that you basically rule the Internet and YouTube, I would love to just start at the beginning. If you can start with maybe a brief introduction of what you do but then tell us a little bit more about your journey and how you got to where you are right now.

**MINDY:** Sure. I am a YouTuber, I guess is my title that most people use. For the journey part, I started as a stay-at-home mom of five, and I had four girls at the time, started doing their hair in the mornings on the counter in the bathroom and decided one day I could put this up as a blog and just save the pictures from what I was already doing. So, we started uploading it to a blog, and then we had a hairstyle that just didn't quite fit in with the blog and the pictures, so we decided to upload a video to this random space called YouTube at the time, and—

**RUTH:** What year was this?

**MINDY:** 2008, so 10 years ago, 11 years ago. And it just blew up. And I think it just related and resonated with a lot of moms that were out there experiencing the same things, doing hair in the morning, and it just took off. So, from that, now we have six YouTube channels, four of which have at least a million subscribers.

**RUTH:** Which is crazy.

**MINDY:** I've written my book, obviously. My girls have their own channel, and they have a store that's full of merchandising and their own mascara line. We do brands that—

**RUTH:** Which is amazing. I talk about your mascara every time I get interviewed and somebody's like, "What's your favorite product?" I'm like, "That's the mascara." I pull it out.

**MINDY:** Well, genuinely, I'm thrilled to hear it because it seriously took us two years to develop that, so it was a long project.

**RUTH:** It's amazing. It is amazing. It is the best, is my most favorite makeup product that I've ever used, ever.

- MINDY:** Yeah, I love it. I love it. And it's clean, too, so that's even better for your eyes.
- RUTH:** Amazing.
- MINDY:** But from there, we've just done a ton of projects. We're always working on something. Now we're kind of focusing on diversifying into lots of different things as opposed to just on platform. So that's what we do. We work as a family, which is fun.
- RUTH:** I know, and I want to talk about that. How do you ... As you're diversifying ... I mean, pretty much your story is you started as a stay-at-home mom. You put something out there, it blew up, there was clearly a need for it, but how do you, then, transition into basically running an empire, and how has that journey been going from stay-at-home mom talking about hair to running this multi-million-dollar empire with multiple channels and huge audience and navigating brand relationships and all this stuff that you do? How do you go from there? Has it just been learning along the way?
- MINDY:** I mean, it wasn't easy, honestly. I mean, when I was a stay-at-home mom ... I mean, I have a degree, but it was not in anything that had to do with business. So, my husband has an MBA, and I think initially I leaned on him a lot for the business side of things, and I was more just the creative. But as the years went by, I certainly have developed my own backbone and my own strength and power. And now I manage the team, and I run the contracts, and I'm in the board meetings with people. I mean, it's been a journey, though. I've had to learn how to know myself and know my own power.
- RUTH:** That's awesome. One thing that I find so fascinating about what you do, because it's not just you, as you said, it's your whole family is in this together. You're all kind of doing it together. You've got all these difficult channels. Brooklyn and Bailey have their own channel, which is almost as big as yours. Is it bigger than yours?
- MINDY:** I think it's bigger than ours now.
- RUTH:** Yeah. It's gigantic. And then your daughter Kamri also has a huge channel. So how does that work as a family? How do you navigate that? How do you keep your normalcy as a family unit when you're basically all Internet famous? You're sharing about your life all the time, and people feel like they know you because it's not even just writing; it's videoing, and it's bringing people into your story. How do you walk that line?
- MINDY:** It's difficult. I mean, to be honest, it's very difficult, and there are definitely days that I manage the mom and the manager better than others, but I think that collectively we try really hard as a family to have that moment

where I'm like, "Hey, I'm now talking to you as your manager, and as a boss, this is what needs to happen." And then also stop and be like, "Hey, now I'm talking to you as your mom." So, differentiating the two, at least in our house, helped a lot because the kids could not ... They wouldn't confuse, like, "Mom's telling me I have to do X, Y, and Z for work." It was like, "No, manager's telling you you have to do X, Y, and Z for work. Mom's telling you you need to go clean your room." But it's difficult, especially for kids because they're still navigating the space too. So it's definitely been a learning process as well.

**RUTH:** I mean, my perception of you, just having spent a little bit of time with you and then also just seeing what you post, your family does seem so grounded and normal, and I guess—I don't know if humble is the right word, but that's the word that comes to mind for me. And so, clearly that's coming from you, and it would be easy to get pretty big-headed when you have this much success and you have so many kids who are obsessed with YouTube, which means they're obsessed with your daughters and obsessed with you. How do you work to instill that side of things, just the humility and the ability to just not get so full of yourself?

**MINDY:** I think when initially we started, we just tried really, really hard to always instill an attitude of gratitude in our kids. We just always told them the reason that you get to do all of this is because of your viewers, and so your audience is the most important thing that you have. And so everywhere we go, that's always prominent in our interactions. If you see my girls out and about—and they get stopped frequently, in the middle of dinner, in the bathroom sometimes—I mean, it doesn't matter where they're getting stopped, they will always stay, they will talk to you, they will take a picture because what we do we get to do because of people that watch our shows. So, we have always just been like, how can we then turn around and be like, "Oh, I don't want to talk to you today. Leave me alone"?

So, we just try to really instill that with the kids. And then I think it's just about keeping them grounded by keeping them in traditional schools, they still have chores at home, they're still getting yelled at because their laundry's not done. I mean, just like anyone else.

**RUTH:** Yeah, they're just normal kids.

**MINDY:** Yeah.

**RUTH:** That's amazing. Have you always let it be their choice to be more involved and more on the videos? Do they all want to be part of this family business that you've created? How has that worked?

**MINDY:** Yeah, I think initially the excitement ... There's an excitement about starting your own channel, and they think it's going to be all roses and sunshine, and then there's kind of a point where they hit like, "Holy cow, this is a ton of work." It's that point where we're always like, "Look, if you don't want to do it, we'll stop."

And there's lots of check-ins. We've had lots of checkpoints over the years, especially with the twins. When they went to college, it was another one where it was like, do you want to carry this to college? Do you want to stop? Do you want a gap year? What do you want to do? So, I think it's just having those constant check-ins and letting them know that they have lots of choices and that this needs to be a choice if they want to keep doing it.

**RUTH:** That's amazing. You have been doing all of this, like you said, since 2008, but you just did something brand new, which is writing a book. And there's so many things I want to ask you about this because it's not a book about hair, which probably would have been the thing that would make the most sense. It's a book about parenting kids in the online age.

First of all, I just want to recognize how cool it is that you would take a risk on that. You're at a point where you don't have to really take risks in your business. You know what you do, you know it well, you can kind of coast a little bit if you wanted to, but clearly you decided to take the risk. So, what was your motivation behind that and wanting to branch out, do something completely new and different?

**MINDY:** Well, I think if you watch the channel, you see that the family's always there. It's kind of secondary to the hair, but over the years, we've brought the family more forward, I feel like, and this book was just a need. I felt like there was just such a huge hole; people were always asking me those questions. How do you keep them grounded? What do you do about this? I don't understand how to use Instagram, or whatever. I just feel like we're not talking about it enough, and it's doing this huge disservice to our kids because it feels like there's two camps. There's the parents that their kids are online, and they have no clue what their kids are doing; or the parents that are so afraid of it that they're just pulling their kids completely offline, and then their kids are really being underserved, quite frankly, because they're—

**RUTH:** Not learning how to navigate it.

**MINDY:** —they're not learning how to navigate it, and our world is just not conducive anymore to not being online. So, I feel it was just like, there needs to be a voice of reason, somewhere in the middle, somebody that's like, "Hey, you can have both. You can be a good parent that knows what's going on and have kids on the Internet." So, that's kind of where

it came from.

**RUTH:** So good. The book is so practical. I love that about it. You give people checklists and contracts. You actually lay it all out there. Here's how to talk to your kids. Can you just tell us a little bit about the book, the book itself, what someone could expect, what is it going to help you do?

**MINDY:** Yeah, I think it starts out pretty basic. It starts out with, what is the Internet? How to use Facebook, how to use Instagram, but then it moves into more, how to have conversations with your kids, what a contract about Internet usage might look like, what does a contract about phone usage look like? It gives you spelled-out talking points, one after another, kind of a ridiculous amount, to be honest, but it was done intentionally because I thought, "I'll just put all of it in the book, and then if the parents don't want it, they can just skip it. Just cross it out if it doesn't work for them." But then it kind of gives, I think, on the back half of the book, it gives more analog moments. It talks about the importance of family dinners and creating family traditions and some of the things that you do offline as a family that help keep the balance of healthy Internet and family analog moments.

**RUTH:** Teaching people how to interact, teaching your kids how to interact in real life, which a lot of kids don't actually know how to do, which is really scary. We had a situation a couple of weeks ago, this just happened. My kids are not totally online. They're the opposite of your kids because they see me doing blogging and Internet stuff and Instagram, and they're like, "Mommy, that's stupid. We don't want to have anything to do with it." They're so uninterested because that's what I do right now. But one of their really good friends, whose parents are our really good friends, is on Instagram, and I was like, "I know her parents aren't on Instagram, so I'm going to make sure I'm following just to see what she's doing, what she's posting."

And she was fine up until a couple of weeks ago, and then she posted a picture that was a little provocative. This is an 11-year-old girl, and all of a sudden I was like, "Oh, no, no, no." So I showed her parents. I'm like, "Hey, I don't know how much you monitor Hannah's Instagram." They're like, "What?" They had no idea she was even on there, and that opened up a huge conversation for them but also for us. And I actually gave her your book, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, you got to get this book and start having this conversation." But it was such a huge thing for me too to go, "I don't think I'm doing a great job of having this conversation with my kids."

So, what advice would you share for parents, especially parents who are listening? What is the first thing every parent needs to do to make sure that they're keeping their kids safe online?

**MINDY:** Just be online with their kids. If their kids are online, they need to be online. And I think parents need to recognize that there's no such thing as digital privacy. So, if their kids are online, they need to assume that their kids are talking to a stranger—they just need to be having convos, which is why I love the contracts for me because the contracts force us into a situation where we're going bullet by bullet by bullet of this could happen or what if this happens or, hey, if you get a text like this or here's our family rules, so that the kids go into those situations knowing exactly how we feel about everything, and they're not surprised when they bump into those.

**RUTH:** That's so good. And how has that worked in your family? Have there been actual times where the contracts and the conversations that you have had have come into play?

**MINDY:** For sure. I mean, 100%. As soon as your kid breaks one of the rules, you're like, "Hey, remember the contract? Here, look, look." But also, I've had my kids use it on me because part of the contract is also a parent's responsibility section. It talks about your responsibilities to your kids on how you're going to react and not overreact when they bump into things. So, sometimes my kids will be like, "Hey, remember the contract, when you said you wouldn't freak out if I told you something? Here's what I'm seeing, so don't have a heart attack."

**RUTH:** Oh, that's amazing.

**MINDY:** So it's good for both sides to keep us just on the same page and accountable to each other.

**RUTH:** Oh my gosh, that's amazing. I definitely need to start having the conversation with my kids. When you start thinking about it, I think it's easy to bury your head in the sand and go, "Oh, it's fine. I'm sure it's no big deal." But it really is.

And if kids don't know how to navigate that at a young age ... I mean, I can't imagine, actually—do you ever think about this? I can't imagine if I had grown up in a world of social media when I was a kid, because I was so screwed up, especially in my early 20s when I went through all my depression and everything. Oh my gosh, if social media had been documenting my thoughts and actions at that point, I would have ... I don't know if I would have been able to come back from that, because as an employer, I don't know how you feel, but as an employer, everybody that we hire, I look them up on every social-media channel, and I also monitor my own employees. And you better believe that if they say something that is not in line with where we are as a company, that's a big deal. If kids don't learn how to—something they post when they're 15, that stays there forever.

**MINDY:** Yeah. And it comes back to haunt them. I mean, we have so many friends that say, like, just in passing made a racial comment when they're 13 years old, and now they're 28, and that somehow gets resurrected, and their career at 28, brands are disappearing from underneath them because they said something when they were 13. It's just like yeah, you have to have, to have to have those conversations with your kids. And I always tell parents you think that they're not on them just because they're not on it at your house, but if they have friends with cellphones, they can access it. If they're at school with Google Drive, they can text each other back and forth. I mean, there's so many other possibilities that aren't within your home that you have to prepare them.

**RUTH:** So, so true.

**MINDY:** There was a woman recently in an article I read that her son had unfortunately committed suicide because he had been sextorted online. And when they asked her later, "You have other kids, will you allow them online?" her response was super interesting because she said, "Yes, I will. I will definitely monitor very carefully." She said, "But my mistake with my first son was not giving him the exposure, because then he was super naïve, and when this person approached him, he fell for everything because he didn't know any different."

And so, I thought it was really eye-opening and very deep, really, for her even in that terrible situation to recognize that pulling him off of that and not giving him those exposures actually hurt him.

**RUTH:** Wow, ugh, and that's the kind of situation where you just go, "Oh my gosh, what can I do? If there's anything that you can do to prevent something like that from happening." Can you give some examples of some of the bullet points in the contracts?

**MINDY:** Oh, I mean it can be anything from just what time you end your texting, your kids are off their phones at a certain time. Or it can be if I bump into something online, I'll talk to my parents. If somebody sends me a picture that's not appropriate, I'll tell my parents. I mean, it's just a whole list of stuff like that, so—

**RUTH:** And then you can, obviously, customize it to fit things. Do you ever recommend any monitoring software or anything like that?

**MINDY:** I do, yeah. I mean, I definitely, on my kids' phones, I have Screen Time completely hooked up and using and working every day, but then I also use Bark as an app to kind of monitor their emails, their videos, their ... I mean, anything like that, because I can't be everywhere all the time where Bark can be. The nice thing about Bark is you just put in certain words, and it just red flags to you if it's catching those words.

**RUTH:** Oh, so it's called Bark?

**MINDY:** Uh-huh, Bark. So what it does is it will monitor even pictures or images or videos, but if you put in the word suicide and then it sees a video come across your kid's phone from somebody else, it would send you an email that was like, "Hey, this thing popped on your child's phone." So I still go in and manually check my kids' phones, but this is a good way to just, in case I miss something, is there.

**RUTH:** Yeah. That's really cool. I haven't heard of that but definitely installing it soon. Is part of your contract that you have access to their accounts, and you can check anything at any time? You have full access.

**MINDY:** Again, going back to the note, there's no such thing as digital privacy. So if my kids do the—which every kid says, "It's my private space. It's like my journal." And I'm like, "No, if you want a journal, I'll give you a book with a pen, and you can keep it locked. But if you're doing it online, your friends can screenshot it; they can share things." If they're not monitoring, companies are. Brands are watching where you're going. They're cooking things, they're sending you ads based on where you're searching. So, it's not private. There's nothing about your cellphone that's private. So, if I can't see it, you shouldn't be doing it. The end.

And the little teenage stuff, I mean, none of us really care. I tell them all the time, "I take no joy in reading your text messages. They're very boring most of the time."

**RUTH:** I take a little bit of joy, a little bit of joy, because my daughter has a few boys that like her, and so they text her, but she's so not interested, and so I actually take joy in seeing her one-word responses.

**MINDY:** And you're like, "That's right, she's giving the later."

**RUTH:** And she does not let them down easily. It's so funny. Oh my gosh, this is so, so helpful. The name of the book is Viral Parenting. I don't think we said that. I want to make sure that we say Viral Parenting, and it is A Guide to Setting Boundaries, Building Trust, and Raising Responsible Kids in an Online World, which I think it's such an important message to hear, and it's a little outside of the stuff that we normally talk about here on the podcast, and I actually want to talk to you just about the business side of what you do too because I feel like that's so interesting to me and so valuable. But I think it's so, so important, and I love that you give such practical tips for exactly how to do it. Here's how to have the conversation, here's what to say, here's what a contract should look like, here's exactly how to do it. I mean, gosh, what better expert is there? Somebody that's in this world day in and day out but has also managed to find a way to navigate it so successfully with your kids.

**MINDY:** I also want to just—the point of part of the book was just letting people know what a positive space it is. I mean, we always get hung up on talking about the negatives. They're obviously very real and need to be talked about, but we've been doing this a really long time, and if you ask my family, take all the bad that we've dealt with—the trolls and the nasty comments—and take all the good, which one outweighs? And it's the good 1,000 times over. And I just think—

**RUTH:** That's such a great point.

**MINDY:** —parents need to have their—I mean, part of it is, get your kids online and get them giving positive messaging. Let's make it a great space instead of a negative space.

**RUTH:** Oh, so true.

**MINDY:** We need to be aware of the negative, we need to be able to protect them from that, but at the same time, there's so much good. They can find community, information, knowledge. I mean, there's so many things about the Internet that are amazing and powerful, but if we're not putting them on there at all, they're not seeing any of those things.

**RUTH:** Right. And they're not getting—and the opportunities that are out there too, as you know. I tell people this all the time. We've never lived in an age like this. Yes, there scary aspects to this, but we also live in an age where there are more opportunities for anyone to go out and become successful and to create an income working from home, just starting with what you have. There's never been a time like this. It's so exciting, and if you can teach your kids how to navigate the potential pitfalls, you can also teach them how to navigate all the opportunities out there, too—

**MINDY:** I totally agree.

**RUTH:** —which you've done amazingly well. Do you talk about that in the book, too?

**MINDY:** Yeah, I do.

**RUTH:** That's so cool. So, I just want to ask you a few other personal questions. The first one is—you know, this is the Do It Scared podcast, so I would love to hear a little bit about the role that fear has played for you in your own life and in your business. What is something that's really scared you, and how did you move past that fear?

**MINDY:** So I got asked to speak at Brandcast a couple of years ago. Brandcast is a huge event in New York City, where they bring in all of the advertisers from all of the major companies, and YouTube asked me to speak on their

behalf. And I am not a trained public speaker. In my mind, there were plenty of other people that could have done a much better job and that would have been much better prepared. It terrified me, terrified me. I was in the back room literally just shaking. They worked me through it and they—we practiced, but still every time I went on stage and practiced, they were like, “Okay, could you do it a little faster next time? Okay, could you slow down next time?” So, anyway, it was a terrifying moment for me. And as I went out, the guy goes, “Don’t worry, just all the brand dollars are hinging on you making YouTube sound amazing.” I was just like, “Oh my gosh.”

**RUTH:** No pressure.

**MINDY:** In my mind, I think my problem I still view myself as the stay-at-home mom that’s not educated enough or—I mean, I didn’t have a career for 20 years in corporate, and so I still feel that when I’m in that setting, and I feel very underprepared for doing that, but I went out and I did great. Afterwards, since then, I have heard several people say that it was one of the most impactful Brandcast speeches they’ve heard, simply because they think I was different. I was coming from a place of very authentic realism to them like, “Hey, I’m a mom. This is how YouTube’s changed my life.” It was just so authentic to them to hear.

**RUTH:** That’s awesome. How long ago was that?

**MINDY:** Probably three years. But it was terrifying. It was terrifying.

**RUTH:** Oh my gosh. I can understand that terror. That was one of my worst fears too, speaking in front of people, that I’ve really had to work hard to overcome. But it’s amazing once you start to do it because I’m sure you’ve spoken probably multiple times since then, right?

**MINDY:** Yeah.

**RUTH:** Or was that the last time?

**MINDY:** No, no, no, I’ve spoken since then. Every time, I’m still nervous, but I don’t think I’m as nervous as that. I mean, it was just such a—

**RUTH:** Big deal.

**MINDY:** —pressure cooker to put me in front of that many people in that type of setting, and it was just like, “Oh my gosh. I really don’t have a great story.” That’s what I felt like, was just like, “They came to hear something amazing, and I’m telling them about my kids, doing hair in the bathroom. Doesn’t sound that great.”

**RUTH:** I think it's a great story. I find it so inspiring because, I mean, what kind of world do we live in where that can turn into a business? How amazing is that, that you were doing, as a mom, you're doing your kids' hair. You're talking about it, you're sharing what you know, that was what you knew. And here you are 10 years later, and you've built this completely crazy empire. If that's not a story of hope for any mom who's listening to this right now to go, "There's something that I do right now that I could make a video about or I could start writing about or I could help somebody with." Start where you are, and that's what you did too. And then I think people sometimes also look at this, look at the journey and they think—well, they look at where you are now and forget that it took 10 years to get there.

**MINDY:** Yeah, that's true.

**RUTH:** And that there were so many different struggles and obstacles that you had to learn along the way. I'm curious. How have you moved past this "I'm just a mom" limiting belief for yourself? Is that something you still struggle with, or how has that been in your business?

**MINDY:** I think that it's not like it just went away one day. I think that it's like a sliding scale. In the beginning, it was very large, and over the years, it gets smaller and smaller and smaller. So, I think that it's still there in certain situations. If I'm in a board room full of very educated, very specialized people, I may still feel that. I would feel that still if I was in a room full of actual hair stylists that are professionally trained because I'm not. I am not professionally trained. So, I would still maybe feel a little piece of that, but at this point, it's so small it doesn't overwhelm me, and it doesn't overtake what I know I can do, because now I have all this experience and I have all these other things in my resume too. So, it's like, "Yeah, I am. I am just a stay-at-home mom, but that's also my story and that's what makes me different and unique. And I think that's maybe some of my magic in a way." You know?

**RUTH:** Totally.

**MINDY:** So, now I can own it, and I can accept it. It's still there, but I can own it and accept it and use it to propel my story.

**RUTH:** That's amazing. So, I can't even imagine you not being the most amazing person in the room, but I do know what it's like, and I think that's so funny too when you look at people who are super successful and you think, "Oh my gosh, they have it all together." When I met you, I was like, "She's so cool. I can't believe she's talking to me." I had this impression. I was like, "She's so brilliant." You were just totally chill, too, because we were in a group, and some of the things are being said I was like, "Oh, this is not the best business advice." And you were just chill and soaking it all in and

not saying a ton, and to me, the way that you came across to me was you were just biding your time because you were just like, “I know. I know I got this. I don’t need to prove myself.” Like, that’s how it came across to me. And I don’t know how you felt in the same room. Was it a totally different perception of yourself versus that?

**MINDY:** I think my perception in that room was just that I am a firm believer that you continue to learn your entire life. And so for me it was like, “Wow, give me everything.” I remember when I met you, I was like, “Ruth, teach me how to sell a book. How do I do this? Sell and market a book.” And this was you, you were like, “Do you have a pen?” And I was like, “Okay, I’m ready.” And you were like, “Step one ...” I was like, “Okay.” So, for me being around people like you, where you are the expert to me about books. So, for me to just be able to glean ... And I can’t tell you how many times I used that when I was publishing and things I was doing for my book. I 100 times was like, “No, but Ruth told me step four is this.” And my publisher was like, “Whoa, okay. This lady knows what she’s talking about.”

**RUTH:** That’s so funny.

**MINDY:** When really I didn’t. I was just gleaning from your knowledge, you know?

**RUTH:** Yeah, which is so true. And clearly that comes out in everything that you do, that humility. I interviewed Kat Cole—do you know who that is?—for the podcast a while back. And that was one of the things that she talked about, always having a hunger to learn and always being humble enough to know that you don’t have all the answers. That’s humble confidence, and you remind me so much of her because you have that same thing, the humility and the confidence together. And it’s such a great quality to see because you are so successful, but I think that’s so good for people to see and hear too, because we always have this idea of people that we see who are out there rocking it, that oh my gosh, they must always feel like they have it all together, they must be so confident, and they must know everything. But everybody has imposter syndrome sometimes. It happens to all of us. There’s those moments where you go, “Oh my gosh, I have no idea what I’m doing, and if anybody knew this right now, I would be so embarrassed.” It’s so, so true.

So, what is one of the hardest lessons that you’ve had to learn, either in life or in business or as a parent? It’s pretty broad.

**MINDY:** I think one of the hardest lessons I’ve had to learn is to follow my gut. A lot of times, I feel like your gut tells you the opposite sometimes of logic, and so it’s hard to do that. If you’re working with somebody and everything logically tells you that you should continue to work with this person but your gut is like, “I don’t want to be here. I don’t like this person. I don’t like where this is heading,” and it’s that struggle between logic,

my head, and my heart, my head and my heart. And I feel like the more mature I get in my profession and my career, the better I am about just saying, “Uh-uh—”

**RUTH:** It’s wrong.

**MINDY:** “—nope, something’s off. Something is off. I don’t know what it is, but I’m not doing this.”

**RUTH:** So true.

**MINDY:** When I was at the beginning, it was very difficult for me to do that because everything was telling me I should do this, and then I would end up later being like, “Oh, I knew I should ...” Later down the road you’re sorry that you’ve been doing it, and you’re like, “Dang it, why didn’t I just follow my gut?”

**RUTH:** I can relate to that so much. There have been so many times where I have done the same thing. For me, I think a lot of times it’s when I am struggling with that imposter syndrome. I don’t know what I’m doing, and I look to someone who I perceive as being more of an expert or more of an authority than I am, and then I trust them or reach out to them, even though my gut is saying, “No, it needs to be this way.” And it never ends up good. It never does. Trusting your gut, that’s great advice.

**MINDY:** So many times we’ve been working with brands, and they’ll be like, “Oh, we need to do this, or we need to do that,” and it’s like, “No. I know my audience. I know how to speak to them. You’re going to have to just trust me on this one that this is the way we need to do it.” And if you can get the brands on board—the ones that aren’t going to be on board, I don’t want to work with.

**RUTH:** So smart.

**MINDY:** And the ones that are onboard, then it’s like, “We’re awesome.”

**RUTH:** It’s golden. Oh, that’s amazing. So, as someone with such a successful online business, what is the most common mistake that you see new influencers or online business owners making, and what advice would you give to somebody who’s just starting out?

**MINDY:** Ooh, maybe just not taking themselves seriously enough at the beginning. I feel like there’s a lot of—especially YouTubers, but brands in general, that they just see it as like, “Oh, I’m just doing this for fun or a side hobby.” And so they don’t have, maybe the back end isn’t set up correctly or efficiently for growth, and so that ends up hurting them in the long run because then when they do take off, then they’re vastly underprepared. So, I mean,

I think we were maybe overprepared. We were the ones that were like, “We’re not doing anything until we have everything in place.” So, maybe we could have been a little more relaxed or jumped a little sooner, but I do think predominantly the problem is the opposite.

**RUTH:** That’s really good advice. One of the things that I tell people in my online course for blogging, which can include YouTubing, any sort of content creation, is you really need to focus, know who you’re talking to and what you’re going to say and how you’re going to say it, before you start worrying about all the other stuff, because if haven’t established that core message and that core who you are, there’s nothing for anybody to connect to. And if people don’t connect to you, then you’re not going to grow, and the money’s not going to come. It has to happen in a sequence, so I love that.

So, what are you working on right now that has you really fired up?

**MINDY:** I mean, the book, obviously. We’re just past the launch on the book. But I actually have a 16-SKU hair line coming out in a big-box store—

**RUTH:** What?!

**MINDY:** —at the end of the year. Yeah.

**RUTH:** That’s amazing.

**MINDY:** So I’m super excited about that, yeah.

**RUTH:** So what does that look like? Hair products, that’s—

**MINDY:** Yeah. Hair products, shampoo, conditioner, hairspray, dry shampoo. I mean, it’s a whole styling range. It’s awesome. I’m super excited about it.

**RUTH:** Well, if your dry shampoo is as good as your daughters’ mascara, I’m already a fan.

**MINDY:** It’s going to be awesome. We’re making it super naturally based stuff that’s still ... I should say naturally based but in a budget, because you can go natural-based and it’s like \$50 a bottle, which is ridiculous. So we’re doing naturally based that’s very affordable, but I wanted to be able to use it across all different types of hair, because in our family, we are a trans-racial family, so I wanted to be able to have product that I can put in my hair and then put in my daughter’s hair that’s got uber texture.

**RUTH:** That’s amazing. So, is this your own line that you’re developing, or you’re working with another company to develop it? Or how has that worked?

**MINDY:** No, I have a partner, but it's my line. It's ours.

**RUTH:** That's amazing. That's so exciting. So, when is that coming out?

**MINDY:** It will be in January of 2020.

**RUTH:** Oh my gosh, I don't want to wait that long.

**MINDY:** I know. I know. It's so fast, though. It's going to be here before—

**RUTH:** How long have you been working on it?

**MINDY:** When it launches, it will have been just over a year and a half, so a while.

**RUTH:** Wow, so cool. That is a long time. I love hearing stuff like this too because when you look at that and you go, "Oh my gosh, that's amazing." I want to get to the point in my business where I can launch my own hair-care line or whatever it is that you want to launch. But again, you've been doing this now for 10 years, and it's been a slow process. There's no way in year one you would have thought "I want to launch my own hair-care line." You probably could have never imagined that.

**MINDY:** Yeah, no. I could never have imagined it.

**RUTH:** That's so cool. Well, congratulations on that. Oh my gosh.

**MINDY:** Thanks. Thank you.

**RUTH:** I'm very excited. So, how do you practice self-care in your life and in your business? Is there anything that you do to just take care of yourself or to protect your confidence as a business owner?

**MINDY:** I've gotten better over the years at, I call it the sad syndrome, almost. When I'm looking or comparing myself to others and I start to feel that heaviness come over me, I just stop. And it's hard. It was harder initially than it is now, but I've gotten better about—especially I feel like it's easy to get on Instagram and just be like, "Oh, she's so pretty. Oh look, she's perfectly dressed, and she has her whole life together." When I start feeling that way, I just put my phone down, and I'm just like, "No." Because I've learned that protecting my confidence is so important because I'm my brand, and if I'm not confident in my brand, nobody else is going to be, so I have to put that away and just go, "I don't care if I'm not the expert in hair styling and hair cut and color. I am the expert in moms that are doing kids' hair. And that's what I'm going to speak to." And I just have to put everything else away.

**RUTH:** I love that. Isn't it so funny that ... I mean, you're online, you're an

influencer, that's what you do for a living, same thing with me, and yet I go on Instagram, and in my head, I know that so much of it is crafted and not representative of reality because it's what I do day in and day out. It's so hard not to get caught up in it. And I can't imagine if you're not in the industry or in the business doing this for a living how much harder then it would be. So, take that and realize that. Instagram is not reality. What you see on social media is just such a tiny snippet of every person's life. I get it. I get that heaviness too when I'm spending too much time on social media. It really affects me, and I have to take that step back too, so I totally get that.

So, last question. We always ask this. What is the best piece of advice you've ever received, and why? I know I'm putting you on the spot.

**MINDY:** Oh, man. Okay, I mean, this sounds silly, but when I was a kid, my dad would always call me average, and he did it, joking, because he knew it drove me crazy. And, I mean, it was in a weird, funny, joking way, but I think that he instilled very early in me this belief that I was way above average and that average wasn't good enough and that I didn't want to be average. His way of doing that, of course, was teasing me, so I would come home and find a piece of paper that had the word average typed on it, slid under my pillow. He knew it was just going to get my goat, and he was like, "Ah, this is so funny." And it became this huge joke, and I still to this day will get things mailed to me where he'll find some magazine article with average in giant letters, and he'll rip it out and send it to me.

**RUTH:** That's so funny. Oh my gosh.

**MINDY:** But I think that just the belief that you're better than average; you're better than that; you're more than average; average isn't good enough; you can do better.

**RUTH:** I love that. I love that. And clearly you've lived that out. I lied, because that's not the last question. I just want to know where we can find you online.

**MINDY:** Oh, okay. On Instagram, I'm mindymcknight, and on YouTube, it's Cute Girls Hairstyles.

**RUTH:** Okay. And anything else you want us to know?

**MINDY:** No. This was awesome.

**RUTH:** Well, thank you so much, Mindy. This was awesome, such good advice. I'm so excited for your new book. Guys, you go to get it, Viral Parenting. It is so practical, hands-on, and useful and something literally every parent needs to have that conversation with their kids. So, thank you for writing

for it, actually, because it's so, so essential.

**MINDY:** Thanks. That was definitely out of my comfort zone.

**RUTH:** So, way to do it scared. Thanks, Mindy.

**MINDY:** That's right.

All right, guys, so don't forget that if you would like to get all the show notes for this episode, along with the links to everything that we just talked about, you can find it all at [doitscared.com/episode61](https://doitscared.com/episode61). Once again, get all the show notes and links at our website at **[doitscared.com/episode61](https://doitscared.com/episode61)**.

And then, while you're there, if you haven't already, be sure to grab a copy of my new book, *Do It Scared*, or if you haven't done this already, be sure to take our fear assessment and find out your fear archetype.

All right, guys, and then before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I love hearing from you. So if you have any questions about what we talked about today, or any topics that you would like to see addressed on the *Do It Scared* podcast, please feel free to reach out either via email or just by messaging me on Instagram.

All right, guys, that does it for this episode of the *Do It Scared* with Ruth Soukup podcast. Thank you so much for joining me today. And if you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes—I would love that—or you can also share this episode on your Insta story and tag me just to let me know. And you know what? If you decide to do both of those, that's even better, but I'll tell you, if I repost your story on Instagram, we will send you a "Do It Scared" T-shirt just for fun. Also, be sure to subscribe either on iTunes or wherever else you like to listen to be notified on new episodes.

And then, speaking of upcoming episodes, please be sure to join me next week as we continue our "summer of courage stories" by talking with bestselling author and life coach Kate Swoboda about making courage a habit. Kate is the author of *The Courage Habit*, and her practical advice on how to reset your brain and make practicing courage on a daily basis part of your life is definitely advice we all need to hear. It is a can't-miss episode, and I will catch you then.