

You're listening to the Your Next Best Step podcast, episode number nine and if you've heard things about self awareness, self acceptance and how that really fits into leadership, because I know you hear all kinds of things about it out there on the internet. Well today's topic is going to be for you. So stay tuned because we're going to be digging in and talking all about how you can become more self aware and how this can actually help you to grow your business. So let's get started.

Hey there, welcome back to, we are on episode nine, can you believe? Episode number nine. It is so amazing to have this dream of mine come true and be able to sit here and chat with you virtually. I have my cup of coffee and just talk all about real life experiences, real life stories and just share all kinds of things with you, to really help you to grow your business, to become a better leader and to really build a business and a life that you love, to do the things that you love and be with the people that you love.

And I am just so, so, so grateful for all of the support and the feedback and the comments that I've gotten from people about the podcast so far. So in case you haven't done so already, make sure you hit the subscribe button and share it with your friends and get them to subscribe too, especially if they're business owners and entrepreneur's of course. But even if they're not, there's something in here for everybody. So make sure you hit the subscribe button, so that you get notifications every Wednesday when we release a new episode. And then also, some other goodies that we have coming down the road, some bonus episodes and some surprise interviews, so definitely make sure you hit the subscribe button, so you get notified when we do have new episodes.

And also, I would love, love, love if you would leave a review and let me know what you think of the podcast. Let me know which ones your favorite episode, what helped you the most, so that I can make sure that I create good content, better content, for you that really helps you to make things better in your business, by making better things, I love that statement.

So make sure, if you can, I would love it if you would leave me a review and let me know what you think. So today's topic, we're talking all about, and I kind of struggled with what to call it, because at first, I wanted to just dig into the whole ... one of my original mentors is Marie Forleo and the thing that she always says, is everything is figure outable. You can figure anything out. And I really wanted to dig into that. What exactly does that mean, because for years and years and years, I always told myself I can figure anything out.

Anytime, I'm the youngest of three, so anytime I wanted to do something, my parents were always, because they were busy. My older brother and sister were doing things and my parents would always just be like, oh you can figure it out or oh, I'll be right there, just try and figure it out. And inevitably, I did. If I wanted to go ride my bike and it was stuck behind something and they didn't have time to come help me, I just figured it out and got the bike out and did whatever.

And anytime in my life, anytime I wanted to do something, because I was always pushing the buttons with my parents, being the third child. It was always yeah, I can figure this out. One time I wanted to buy a car when I was 17 and I was like, oh I can totally figure this out. I went home and I talked to my dad and my dad wasn't completely in favor of it, because I already had a car, but this was my dream car. It was a Volkswagen Cabriolet.

And I thought, you know what? I'm going to figure this out. I'm going to figure out how I'm going to be able to pay for it. I'm going to figure how to get this car and I didn't know how to drive stick and I was

like, yeah I'll figure that out too. But through my life, I always had this, I can figure it out. Even in corporate America, I didn't really have a mentor to teach me anything, so I was always again, pushing the limits and wanting to do more and learn more and constantly wanted to be in that growth mode. So I always had the philosophy of I can figure this out. I can figure this out and I can do anything.

And like I said, I was kind of debating how to do this episode and how to talk about it and I just said, you know what, I'm just going to talk about it. I'm just going to talk about what it really means and that having that ability to just say, you know what, I can figure this out. What it comes down to is just knowing yourself. And knowing your strengths and as I've heard some people say, know thyself.

And what it is, is really self awareness and the more self aware we are, the more we can manage our thoughts and our emotions and our actions and how we interact with other people. And what that, in my mind, embraces is that I can figure it out. I can figure it out and if i can't figure it out, I'm going to find help. And so often in our lives, day to day, we're just constantly on auto pilot. And our thoughts on auto pilot, our actions are on auto pilot, if I can speak.

And we don't really stop and ask ourselves, kind of check in with ourselves. And this is just kind of, I mean what I've noticed is it's just people being people, you know, human behaviors. And like I said, the more we can become aware of our emotions and how we feel on a regular basis. What feels right, what doesn't feel right and I mean, that comes down to really trusting out intuition and our instinct.

The more we can understand and know, like really know, what our strengths are and know what our strengths are not, the more we can choose where we want to focus our energy and we can choose things that we want to do, that feel good, that align with whatever we're doing in our business. Whatever we're doing in our management role or in our role in our jobs. We can choose those things that will move us forward.

Those things that are really in our strengths and we can also, the more self aware we become, we can monitor that inner world that we have and that's really embracing and understanding our thoughts and our emotions, but then also, our outer world. And often, and you've heard me talk about this before, is so many people want to move in the direction of, once I have this, okay. So that's managing that outer world.

Once I have this, then I'll be able to do this. So once I have the promotion or once I have the car or once I have the project or once I have the client, then I will be able to do this work or then the business will do this. And then, the last piece is that being. So they're moving from the external portion, the external world, the outer world, into the inner world, instead of moving from that place of I'm going to be the person that I want to be or that I am. That I want to show up as a certain ... I want to show up in a certain way.

And then I will, once I'm showing up in a certain way and I'm being that person that I want to be, I'm being confident, I'm being courageous, I'm being brave. I am being the person that can figure anything out, then I will do. So then, now we're moving from that internal to our actions, so that's the external. And we're taking the right actions then.

And then eventually we will have the things that we want to have, okay? So when we can really stay connected and have that awareness, that self awareness of who we are and who we want to be or who

we need to be, that's how we can really start to manage our thoughts, manage our emotions and then also, focus, make sure that we're focusing on the right tasks in our business.

And this whole concept, I mean even though I've always had a lot of self awareness, people used to say, wow she's really aware of who she is, what she wants, what she wants to do. But this whole concept of really focusing on that inner piece first and really monitoring those and how powerful our thoughts can be, to shift those emotions and how we feel about ourselves. It took me a long time to really understand that and then focus it to the actions that I was taking in my business every day.

And when we focus on the outside and we're focusing and just ... when we're focusing on the outside first, that's how we get into that pattern of focusing on and just functioning on auto pilot. And just, we have certain things that we believe and thoughts that we believe and actions that we do every day and we don't necessarily want to take the time to, like I said, to check in and be aware of these things and really monitor those internal things first, so that we can make sure that we're doing the right actions and the right things.

So like I said, it took me a long time to figure this out because as I said, I always had that philosophy of I can figure anything out. I can figure anything out, I can do anything, I know I can do this. But I also was not necessarily checking in with myself and saying okay, the things that I'm working on, the things that I'm figuring out, are they the right things? And along the way of becoming more self aware, one of the first things that we have to do is being ... because, you're probably thinking okay, wait a second.

So how does this all fit together? How do I become more self aware, okay? So like I said, along the way to becoming more self aware, the first thing that we need to do and I, this was the first thing that I asked myself because like I said, I can do anything, I can figure anything out, I've figured everything out so far, I never had a mentor, I can do this and what happens is, is we start from that, when we are not being self aware.

And we don't have that awareness. That's when we start to fill our day, our schedule, with busyness. So this is the whole thing that we need to be aware of our distractions and make sure that we're choosing our distractions and they're not choosing us. We need to make sure that we're choosing where to focus our energy and not just focusing our time and our energy on all kinds of random things, because along the way of having that thought of, oh I can figure anything out, we also tend to get into many distractions.

Filling our day up. How many times have you said, you know what, I'm going to take five minutes and I'm just going to go in and check email and then you go in and guess what, you become someone on everybody else's agenda and you end up spending an hour, two hours, three hours in your email, answering questions, answering phone calls, having people constantly email you back and forth and back and forth and then guess what?

That feeling of, yeah I can do this, I'm just going to go in for five minutes, we end up getting distracted. So the more aware we are about those distractions and where we get distracted, understanding that for me, one of my biggest distractions was checking my phone all the time. Checking my phone for email. I mean I would have the little buzz go off, because I always keep it on vibrate, because I thought oh yeah, I'll just put it on vibrate, I'll be fine.

No. Not so much. So my biggest distraction is my phone. Picking my phone up all the time. Checking social media, checking emails. So being aware of where those distractions are helps me to make sure that I choose my energy wisely, because our energy is what is our biggest capital and we need to make sure that we're taking care of that energy and if we are filling our day with distractions, another distraction for me is getting lost in everybody else's, trying to fix everybody else's problems. Trying to repair all kinds of issues that are going on in my-

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Kinds of issues that are going on in my client work, which I love to do. I mean I love to help, I love to help my clients, I love to work with them, I love to talk to them. But that also I have to make sure that I also have time and energy to create the content that I need to create on a regular basis and make sure that I am going live with my coaching programs and going live with doing my Facebook lives and my Instagram lives. And making sure, again, that I am putting out valuable content that can reach more businesses and can impact more people.

So if I am spending all day every day with my one on one clients answering questions and just spending all of my time there, well that takes it away from the other things that I need to do that are going to impact more people. So it's just being aware of your distractions. I have a client that I work with on a regular basis and she has an Apple iPhone, or an Apple Watch. She's got her phone. And then when she would come to meetings, she would be looking at her watch, she would be checking ... Cause the watch would ding, the phone would ding. And then she would also be ... She would have a pile of papers there. So it was like mega distractions and her biggest thing was she never felt like she got anything done. Well, because she like her biggest distraction is sitting on her wrist and right in front of her with the pile of papers of work that she has to do and the phone, and her phone. So removing those distractions so you can stay focused and choose where you want to spend your energy.

Leaders know where to spend their energy, what things they need to focus on. They know and understand how to remove to distractions. And if they are going to have a distraction, it's a good distraction. And they choose what those distractions are. So if you choose, like for me, if I know that I need to do, like I need to spend, I have to clean up my email, or I have to go through my Asana projects and make sure that I get certain things over to my team to make sure that they're keeping up with things, yes. I can get lost in those tasks. I can get lost in tech. Tech is another one of my big distractions. I can get totally lost in figuring out funnels, in putting software together, and connecting stuff and researching. Like I can get totally lost in that.

And there are times, and I choose those distractions when I need to dig into my project management software, into Asana, which is what we use. Dig in there, and yes, get all of the nitty gritty stuff over to my team so that they can finish things when they have questions. Or I will choose when I want to spend an hour looking at a new piece of software, figuring out how it works and how I can tie it into my business so that yes, then I can introduce it to my team and they can do what they need to do.

But, I'm not having that distraction choose ... I'm not letting it choose me, I'm choosing it. And that's where that self awareness comes in. So being aware of your distractions and choosing where to focus your energy and not having that choose it for you, having those distractions choose it for you.

I always tell people do not open your email first thing in the morning. Have your morning routine, do the things that you need to do that are going to set you up for the day, set you for success. Because as soon as you open up that email, and this was like I said, this was one of my biggest problems. As soon as you open up that email, you get on everybody else's agenda and next thing you know, two hours, three hours later you haven't gotten anything done but you've spent a ton of time in email. And probably have more frustration than you really need to start your day. So being aware of your distractions.

The second thing is being also aware, and we talked about this in the beginning of this episode, of who you want to be, what you want to do, and how you want to feel. And a lot of people ... This is a big one. So a lot of people don't, and I think it's a fear, but don't want to ask themselves that question of what is it that I want to do? And I know I didn't ask myself this question for a long time. One of my mentors asked me, he said, "Theresa, what is it that Theresa wants? You know, you've spent all ... You've built two businesses, you've done all these things, you've helped all these other small business owners to become successful. What is it that Theresa wants?" And I couldn't answer that question. And that's how I knew like I was kind of going down a road that I needed to course correct and get back on the right path.

So being aware of who you want to be, and that comes from that like I said focusing on the internal world first. Focusing on like ... I'm going back to that statement. Know thyself. There's also a really great statement, as within so without, as above so below. So as within. So who do you want to be? As within so without. So as you have control and you're aware of your internal how you want to be from the internal piece, how you want to show up everyday. This is also something that when I start working with managers and leaders in organizations one of the first things that we start with, and people kind of look at me like oh boy, is we start with who are you? Like who is it that you want to be? How do you need to be to be a better leader in this organization? And we work on setting some visual triggers, some alarms on your phone, to remind you of who you want to be.

And doing that, I know when I first started it with a mentor of mine and really having that in front of you all the time, knowing that yes I am a thought leader, I am confident, I am brave, I am bold. Like having that in front of you all the time, you can just see how understanding that internal piece can then dictate and help you to do the actions that you need to do. If you're walking around and you're saying, "Oh, I'm not good enough. I don't know how to do this. I'm a terrible leader. I'm a bad manager. I'm frustrated. I'm overwhelmed." I hear that when I work with people a lot. I'm frustrated, I'm struggling, I'm overwhelmed. So if you're walking around and you're saying, again as within so without, and you're walking around and you're saying, "I'm frustrated, I'm struggling, I'm overwhelmed. These people drive me nuts." Like what is that going to ... Like how are you then going to be doing the work that you need to do? Not very well, right?

But also, asking yourself what is it that you really want? And being aware of that. So if you were being and showing up from an internal state, and again this goes along with your energy, conserving and protecting your energy because it is your biggest capital. And you are starting there, then the actions that you are going to take are going to be the right actions, the focused actions, and actions that are actually going to move you forward. And you can see how number one, being aware of your distractions fits into number two, being aware of who you are and how you want to be.

And a lot of, like I said, a lot of people don't want to focus on this piece. They solely want to move from that external piece first and doing the actions first, and then working on the internal. Or maybe not even

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ever addressing the internal. And that's why you see a lot of successful business people who made a lot of money and they are miserable. Miserable, miserable, miserable. So I don't want to be like that. Being aware of I want to be bold, I want to be brave, I am bold, I am brave, I am confident, I am a thought leader, and really stepping into that first and then being aware of okay, like I am brave, I am bold. You know what? I want to impact the lives of a million businesses. I want to bring connection and emotion and positive interaction back into business so that we can move it out into the world.

You can see how shifting that and monitoring that internal, that inner world, so as within, then that starts to help us to say, "Okay, this is the impact that I want to make. These are the things that I want to do with my business. This is the higher purpose that my business has. This is how I want to make a difference in this world with my thought leadership." So you can see how that starts to being aware of that, how that starts to direct things.

When I struggled several years ago when I was working on ... I had my first business. My business partner had gotten diagnosed with cancer, my husband had gotten diagnosed with cancer, and I was building the business that I have now. And I was starting to really face overwhelm and really asking myself some really, really hard questions. I think that was one of the first times that I really had to ask myself, "Who am I? And who do I want to be?"

When I left corporate and I was dealing with a lot of really difficult situations in corporate and making the decision of what, you know, doing the right thing is not always the easy thing. But it is the right thing. And again, asking myself, "Who am I? What am I made of?" And being aware of that. Like who am I and how am I showing up? And really what am I made of? What do I want to be known for? And good leaders are aware of that internal ... What's the word? The internal conversation that they're having with themselves. And again, as within so without.

So the third thing that goes along with this, with becoming more self aware is really knowing your strengths and functioning in those strengths. So often we when we're not self aware and we're just trying to do everything and be everything and we think that we need to control everything, that is not being self aware of really what our strengths are and what are not our strengths. We can learn to do things better but the bigger thing is surrounding ourselves with people who may have things that are their strengths that aren't necessarily ours and collectively we can move things forward together.

And there's one, there's ... The five Cs of teamwork that I teach people which are communications, connection, collaborative, creativity, and consistency. And that collaboration piece, that connection piece, the creativity, everybody brings their own strengths and their own form of that together. But together when things are working together, you can move things forward so fast. And many times, business owners who are struggling and are frustrated and are overwhelmed are trying to control everything and do everything themselves because they think that if they do that that again, it's that once I have this I'll do this then I'll be this.

So they think that if they do this that then everything will be start moving forward and their business will start growing and people will be happy and then they'll be successful. So you can see how number two of being self aware, being aware of who you want to be first, and then really understanding your strengths and functioning in those strengths and learning to find people, good people, people on your team that may have strengths that you don't have that can help you to move things forward.

And knowing those strengths and knowing that's the whole part of I can figure something out, I can figure it out because I understand what I can do. I understand what my strengths are and if I can't figure it out, well you know what? The next piece of I can figure it out is I can figure it out because I can find resources to help me. Or I can figure it out because I have, I know I have resources already, and I'm going to reach out to them to help me. You don't have to figure everything out on your own. You don't have to do everything yourself. You just have to understand where like what you can do and when to ask for help. And that, also, is part of figuring out.

That statement that I said at the beginning, everything is figure out able. Everything is figure out able if you can understand your own strengths. But you can also understand where to go to figure stuff out. It doesn't mean you have to figure it out all yourself. It means that you know where to go and what to do to figure out a problem. It means that when mistakes happen or something doesn't go so well, something doesn't go right, we don't reach our goal, we can take ... We can step back and say, "You know what? I know myself."

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Can step back and say, "You know what? I know myself and I know there's a lesson in here somewhere and we're going to figure it out and we're going to keep moving forward." And from that, we know that things like possibilities come from those mistakes and new opportunities come from those things. But understanding and knowing that, "You know what? These are my strengths. This is my zone of genius and this didn't work out so well, but I can use those strengths that I have. I can use that zone of genius or I have team members here and collectively we can put our heads together and bring our strengths together and align them so that we can find new solutions to things." So the three things here are being aware of your distractions. Don't let your distractions choose you. You choose them. Making sure that you are choosing where to focus your time and energy because, again, your energy is your biggest capital, your most valuable capital.

Your energy is what you need to grow your business. Which brings us to number two, being aware of who you want to be, how you want to show up in this world, what you want to do, what impact do you want to make, and also really asking yourself, how do you want to feel? Because when we ask ourselves that, if we are doing something that doesn't align with and doesn't make us feel good, there's this, there's something there and that's where we can really start to again know thyself, trust thyself that you know what's right and what's not right and when we don't have self awareness, we can't make those decisions.

And the third thing is really knowing your strengths. Knowing your strengths, knowing what you can do really, really well, and then also knowing what your team members do really, really well and if you don't have a team member that does something that you really need, then you can go out and find someone. It's a great ... the strengths finder. If you've never taken it, it's a really good test to understand what your strengths are and like things that you do well, but then also looking at it to determine what team members you need and how you work well with others and things that you ... your dominant strengths. It's a really good test to take. So if you haven't ever taken it or you haven't read the book, the book's great. I would highly recommend it. It's called the StrengthsFinder. But from this, from having that self awareness, we can also really start to have self acceptance and when we can have self acceptance, that's how we can really build empathy. From there, that is where empathy comes from.

That's when we can really learn to become a really good listener. That's when we can learn when problems come up in our business and when we have a difficult employee, we can learn to get to the root cause of issues. When we have that self awareness and we are focusing on all of these things, that gives us the space to be a good listener and to listen to hear and not just to spout something back off at somebody. To have that empathy. To be able to be vulnerable because we have that confidence in ourselves, but to be able to be vulnerable, to lead and show up when things aren't going well when they're really kind of sucking, to really still show up as that strong leader, that bold leader, that empathetic leader and to say, "You know what? Yeah, does this situation scare me? Absolutely. But I am showing up anyway in the best way that I can." And to be there and to really get to the root cause of issues and not just heard like you have a difficult situation with an employee and just either ignore the situation or not spend time talking to them so that you can understand where they're coming from.

Having that self awareness and that self acceptance leads to that vulnerability and that courage to do the things that we need to do to lead our business, to lead our team, to make things happen and continue to connect to our audience and to appreciate the uniqueness in everyone and really to embrace it even when things are not going well. To have that self awareness and be able to manage our thoughts and manage our actions on a daily basis and to create space to give us the ability to do all of that.

When we are self aware, we have the ability to gain a different perspective on things. We have the ability to stop and to be open to new perspectives and be open to new possibilities. We can, and like I said, we can become a really good listener and to really shift into being an amazing leader, to staying humble and when other people on our team are doing amazing things, to celebrate their successes because their successes are everyone's successes and to really stay humble and like share in the wins, celebrate the wins no matter how big and small and just really step into being the amazing leader that we are capable of being. And like I said, self awareness when we're aware of the distractions because distractions lead to frustration and overwhelm and randomness. When we're aware of who we want to be, who we need to be to move things forward and to stand in that greatness, our own greatness every single day, to create our legacy every single day with every single thing that we do, and to really understand our strengths and how we can use other people's strengths, how we can really get them to stand in their strengths. That's how we also can achieve self acceptance. That with all of our flaws and imperfections and our strengths, that's how we are the amazing, amazing people that we are.

Really quick, some of the things that I really recommend that you do to start becoming more self aware are the three things that we talked about. Like looking at your day, where are your distractions coming in? What can you let go of? What can you recommit from? What can you not focus on? And what can you focus on? Last episode we talked about goals. What processes and systems can you set up so that you don't have random distractions creep in? The other thing is making sure that you have a really good morning routine. Taking time to create space for yourself. Every successful business owner, Richard Branson, Warren Buffet, Marie Forleo, Brendan Bouchard, any of them, they all have ... even Steve Jobs, they all have morning routines, a good morning routine. A morning routine where they are taking time and creating space to think about what it is that they want to do, how they want to feel, what they want to do moving forward, what impact they want to make. They create that space to brainstorm, to be creative, to really tap into their vision so that they can then set themselves up for a great day. They can do the things that they want to do to share their ideas with their team.

So creating space for yourself as part of your morning routine and to also spend time listening to people, your customers, your team, clients, colleagues, spend time listening and learning. There's so much you can gain from feedback from others and just listening to others to help you and that also helps you to figure out what you want to do next. You're already being the person that you want to be, that helps you to stay focused and really connect to that bigger impact that you want to make. So I hope this helped you. Like I said, anything and everything is figureoutable. You can figure anything out. And part of doing that is learning how to be more aware of who we are and what we want to do, how we want to feel on a regular basis, and taking the right actions, focused actions to move us forward. So I hope this episode helped you and I would love it if you would leave me a comment if you're listening to this through the website, if you've downloaded the episode or if you're listening to it on iTunes, I would love to hear from you. What part of this episode really helped you? What takeaways did you get from this episode and maybe what aha moments you had from this episode.

This one, it was a little different in digging more into the leader that we want to be, digging more into that monitoring the inner world so that we can really have it go into the outer world, and like I said, really embracing that, know thyself, because as within, so without, and really honing in on that so that we can be the best leader that we can be and be our best selves. So let me know what aha moments you got from this episode and I look forward to seeing you, hearing you, talking to you on next week's episode. And if you haven't done so already, also if you want to go to theresacantley.com/vision, I have an audio download, which is all about really getting clear on what the vision is that you have for your business.

There's five things in there that that will help you to do so that you can grow your business even faster. So if you haven't downloaded it already, make sure you go to theresacantley.com/vision and make sure that you download the audio, you'll get an audio training, and you'll also get a worksheet that you can work through as well. So until next time, I hope you have an amazing rest of your week, an amazing day and let's all learn how to be more self aware and to accept ourselves fully. All the imperfections, all the amazingness, all the greatness that we have from within and all the amazingness and greatness that we are doing and carrying out into this world. Take care and I'll see you soon.

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