You're listening to the Your Next Best Step Podcast with your host Theresa Cantley, that's me. And we are on episode number 11. Today we're talking all about the difference between working harder, and doing the hard work in your business. So stay tuned because we've got lots of really good information. Hey there, I'm Theresa Cantley. And welcome, welcome, welcome. I am so excited to have you here on episode number 11. 11 is a power number. I am so excited for this episode. It's a topic that a lot of business owners, that I talk about with a lot of business owners, and that you've probably heard a lot about out there on the internet, maybe articles that you've read. And it's this whole thing of working harder versus doing the hard work.

But before we get there, I just wanted to remind you that if you haven't done so already, make sure that you subscribe to this podcast, so that you can get notifications when I release episodes every Wednesday. I mean, you can always check back, you can always go out and search me, and find the new episodes. But if you subscribe, and also if you have a friend subscribe too, they can get notifications as well. Every Wednesday we release new episodes, and I want to make sure that you don't miss any of the goodness that is coming in these episodes, especially when I have some guests on, some surprise guests, and we talk all about how they, different things that they went through, shifting from corporate thinking to being an entrepreneur, as well as just really what it's like to build a business, to be an entrepreneur and build a business from scratch.

So make sure that you subscribe so that you get notifications when new episodes are being released, because they're going to be amazing. So, today, as I said, we are talking about this whole topic of working harder. Because the question that I get is, "Theresa, my business isn't growing," or, "I want to start this business, and I am working so hard, I am working 12 to 14 hour days, and I'm working so hard, I'm doing all the things, and I don't seem to be getting anywhere." And my question always is, "Okay, so if working 12 to 14 hour days and working harder on your business, would you think that every entrepreneur out there that works 12 to 14, 16 hour days, seven days a week, will be successful?"

And inevitably the answer is, I get that puzzled look from them. You know that, "Let me think about that for a minute." But seriously, give it some thought. I mean, so often we think that working harder means that we need to work longer hours. Okay, and I know that a lot of times, in corporate, there are ... that is kind of a philosophy that you need to stay longer, you need to come in earlier, and stay longer, and work harder to get something done. I've seen it, I used to see it when we used to manage projects all the time, and when we had big things going on. It was like, "Oh, we're going to be working longer, we're going to be working on the weekends, we're going to be doing all this stuff."

When I look back now, and I think about it, a lot of the things that we ended up having to work on, especially when we were doing software migrations, we were doing data migrations, and things. It was, there was a lot of down time, and a lot of wasted time. So here we are thinking that we need to work longer hours, and work harder on stuff, and push ourselves further, and further, and further, and if we think about it, a lot of that work ends up being random work, and isn't super, super focused.

So, when I've had conversations with business owners, and they come to me to build a marketing strategy, or build a brand strategy, or even just get clear on what their goals are, the first thing that we talk about is, what do you think you need to do to grow your business? And inevitably the answer I always get is, "Well, I need to work harder. If I just work harder, and I work longer, because my dad did it, or that's how I grew up. I was in corporate, that's what we always did, we always worked longer." You know, I shared my own story. "Then, I will finally be successful."

Again, my question is always, "Well, if that's the case, do you think that every entrepreneur, I mean, just look around you in the area that you're in, every entrepreneur that works 12 to 14 hour days, seven days a week, are they all successful?" The answer is, after the puzzled look, the answer is, "No. They're not." And really what happens when we are pushing ourselves to that limit, our health normally suffers, our mental capacity suffers, and we actually start to burn out. Then what happens, when you go through that burnout period, is you start to resent the people that you work with, the clients that you have, the customers that you have. You start to resent your business. That passion that you have for your business really starts to fade. Then, you have to ask yourself, "What's the point of having a business then?"

And many entrepreneurs that I've worked with, and I was there myself, when you first start your business, you are working, working, working, you're taking any business that you can get, and anybody that you can help, and you're burning the candle up both ends and filling your schedule up with tons of stuff, and you realize that you're not even really sure what you're doing anymore. You've lost that passion, you've lost that get up and go, because it got up and went, and you just, that's when you start to spiral, and really burn out, and start asking the question of, "Maybe I should go back and get a job, because this is just not worth it. Because I've actually created a job, but an even worse job than I had."

When you're coming from, coming out of corporate, or even when you're first starting your business, and if you went from being a manager in a business to then owning the business, we get stuck in that mindset of we need to work longer and harder in order to be successful. So in other words, the amount of effort and time that we're putting in will lead to major amounts of success. And it's just not true. That's why so many businesses that start only make it 18 months, maybe three years, maybe, and then they end up closing, or they sell, or they end up being miserable and burned out.

So, what we need to do is start to shift our thinking. And like I said, when we used to manage projects, software, data migrations, software, when we used to upgrade software and stuff, we used to plan for these long weekends, and we need to work longer hours because if we work longer hours, this project will be successful. Inevitably, it never was. It always turned out to be where we had long periods of wait time, and then you're asking yourself, "Okay, why am I sitting here, this is a waste." Then you're ending up doing work that you really didn't need to do, or maybe you already did, and you didn't realize you did. It's just like crazy. Because you're spending all this time instead of doing something different.

Again, it's the shift in mindset from it doesn't take working harder and longer to make your business successful, what it requires is doing the hard work. And people say, "Okay, what's the difference between working harder and doing the hard work?" Well, there's a huge amount of difference. Because working harder many times, many times more than not, but many times leads to random action, it leads to randomness, and busyness, and just filling our time with stuff. And it also what is kind of the underlying thing underneath that is fear. It's a fear that keeps us hiding, it's a fear that, "Well, if they see that I'm busy, and I'm constantly busy, that I am actually doing something and therefore I am valuable."

Again, it's that backwards thinking of have, do, be instead of be, do, have. I just had a conversation with somebody two weeks ago where they're really stepping into a leadership role, and thinking, "Wait a second. If I'm really stepping into this leadership role, but if I'm working from home, or I'm working remotely, or I'm traveling, and people don't see me, and they don't see me there 12, 14 hour days in the business all the time, then they're going to think that I'm not doing anything. So I need to work harder. I need to work longer." And that's not the case. In order to grow our business, and to really move things along, anybody can work harder, and longer, anybody can.

I mean, I used to say to people, "I'm not afraid to work. I'm a workaholic," which bad, bad, bad. But anybody can work longer and harder. But not everybody will choose to do the hard work. The hard work requires a lot of effort, and it requires getting really vulnerable with yourself, and really building up your courage muscles. Really having the courage to put yourself out there, and really having the courage to do what you need to do, what it takes, to really grow a business. Again, it doesn't mean more time and the amount of effort that we put into it, it means doing the hard work of staying focused, getting super clear on what it is that we want, and how we're going to get there.

So, that hard work, number one, requires asking yourself some really hard questions. Questions that most people won't ask themselves. So, the first question is what is it that you really want? What is it that you really want to be known for in your business? So a lot of business owners only want to focus on the product or service, and they think, "Okay, we're just going to focus on that, we're going to compete against everybody else around us, and everybody that's on the internet, and we'll be good." No. Asking yourself the hard question of what do we want to be known for? What is that deeper thing that we really excel at, and we really want to be known for in our industry and beyond, in our local area and beyond? Again, asking yourself the hard question of what is it that you really want?

Along with this, doing the hard work and really stepping into our courage, and really getting super clear on what it is, and sometimes it takes a little while to answer that question of what is it that you want, or what it is that you really want to be known for? But when things get hard in our business, when things get hard, and they don't go our way, being willing to, or be willing if I could speak, be willing to look at things that don't go right, failures, mistakes, look at them as learning opportunities for a chance to do things better, for a chance to discover a new way of doing things instead of just blaming external circumstances, or internal circumstances, blaming other people, blaming teammates, blaming whatever and never really getting to the core of what's happening so that you can improve it and make it better.

Focusing on what's important and not necessarily what's popular. Making those decisions that are right, but not necessarily the popular ones. And again, some of this comes with that fear of rejection that a lot of people have. I mean, we're all human, it's a human thing. Having that fear of rejection that if I make this decision that's best for the company, people won't necessarily like it. But it's actually what's best for the company, and it's going to move the company forward. So being able to do that hard work, and the clearer you are as far as what it is that you want, what you want to be known for, what is the most important things that you need to focus on in your business, that makes making those hard decisions that are right, but not necessarily popular. That's what makes those hard decisions a little bit easier to move through.

Again, when things don't go right, and you have stuff that just blows up, contracts fall through, you lose customers, the sales weren't necessarily what you want it to be for that day, we can look at it like, "Okay, these are all experiences that are happening to help us grow and help us move forward." Not, "Why is this happening to us?" And then just sitting in that swirl and being miserable and everybody else around us is miserable. Being able to look at those things and say, "These things are happening to us because it's moving us forward, and because it's allowing us to see a better way, to see something different that we may not have seen before," maybe even to discover a deeper purpose in the business that you never even thought of and never was apparent to you until then.

So, those are things that we need to do. That's the hard work that a lot of people won't do. Again, when we run into those situations where we really have to pull in that courage, that's when we can really

discover what we are made of inside. That's when we can really get okay being uncomfortable. Get comfortable being uncomfortable. And, my husband was at an event a couple weeks ago, and it was kind of like a round table event, and he made that statement that a lot of times when change happens, okay, and you really need to take a look at yourself, and what you're doing, and what's happening in the business, a lot of people get afraid.

But if you stay in that space of fear when change happens, you'll never grow. But if you get comfortable being uncomfortable, that enables you, that means that you need to have some growth that says that you're okay with that growth. Because when we're uncomfortable, that's when we know that we are growing. We can also stay open to those changes, and that growth that happens, so that we can do the hard work not work harder. Working harder comes from a place of fear and uncertainty. And we continue to function out of fear, that's why we fill our schedules up, that's why we keep ourselves busy. But when we can do the hard work, and we can get comfortable being uncomfortable, asking ourselves these difficult questions, that's when we can really grow our business.

So some things that you can do to really figure out that hard work that [inaudible 00:16:56] need to do in your business, number one, and I already said, is asking yourself really those hard questions. What do you really want? And what do you want to be known for? Okay? So those are like to start asking yourselves those questions. Maybe you can even, while you're listening, maybe you can jot some stuff down, as long as you're not driving, but I mean, maybe if you're sitting in your office, and you're listening to this, or hanging out, maybe doing your morning routine, grab a piece of paper, maybe start answering some of these questions.

So, number one, asking yourself the hard questions. And asking yourself those hard questions pretty frequently. It's not like a once and done deal. Like ask yourself that question pretty frequently, how is this making me feel? I mean, I even ask myself in the morning, what can I create that's going to have a bigger impact on the people that are listening to me that it's going to help them to learn even more? So constantly challenging yourself and asking yourself those hard questions, it's not just like you just ask yourself on a Monday, and then you're not going to ask yourself for three years. It's constantly asking yourself those hard questions to push yourself to the next level.

Number two. Planning out your vision three to five years out. A lot of times business owners only want to focus on what is going on in the current circumstance. And when you do come from a corporate background, and a corporate environment, you function really much in the hear and now, what the current circumstances are right now. Because there's budgets, I mean there's budgets when you own your own business too, but there's a lot of different things happening, and a lot of departments crisscrossing, and numbers that you have to follow, and things. When you own your own business, things are a little different, because obviously you make the rules.

So, being able to have that vision for the future, and even if you are in corporate, and you want to start implementing entrepreneurial thinking, the one thing that you can do is really learn how to plan out that vision, not just for the here and now, but what you want three to five years from now. So if you have a department that you run, you can look at it and say, "Okay, this is where we are right now," so I'm always big on assessing. Okay, assessing where we are. But then where do we want to go? What do we need to let go of to get there? And what do we need to do in order to get there?

Those are some really tough questions, because a lot of times , it leads to, okay, again, looking at our own mistakes, and failures as lessons, and how we can do things better. So planning your vision three to five years out, like what does that look like? And also, kind of going along with that, is getting rid of that excess stuff, because the clearer you are on where you are right now, but also where you want to go, you can also look and say, "Okay, what excess products and services do we have that aren't really working? That don't really align with what that vision is?" And you can do that in your business.

We talked on one of the previous episodes about maybe when things aren't growing, we are adding too much into the business, and what we need to do is we need to remove. And the more we can remove, and prune, the bigger the company can grow, and the faster it can grow. So getting rid of and figuring out what that excess looks like. Also, finding good mentors. Like really saying, "You know what? I'm going to have the courage to invest in my business." Because you don't know what you don't know. And a good mentor is going to help you to figure out what you don't know, and then help you to figure out what you need to do to get to know what you need to know.

So finding and investing, having the courage to invest in your business, and invest in yourself. Whereas, a lot of times people will say, "Oh, I can't afford it, I'm not going to do that." And they stay stuck and they stay hiding. Or, that they, if they're working in a corporation, "Oh, my boss won't sign for that." So, having the courage to step out and be a stand for your business, and be a stand for your dreams. Be a stand for something. And having that courage to invest in yourself, and invest in your dream. And also finding great people and leading them. Not telling them what to do, not managing them, but leading them. Leading them again [inaudible 00:21:51] back, this all ties together, asking yourself what is it that you want, what is it that you want your business to be known for.

Having that vision for the future. Even if you're running a department, it's the same thing. Having a vision for where you want to go and what you want to do, and how you're going to get there. Finding those great people not to tell them what to do, and give them orders, but to lead them, to have that vision that they will follow, and to lead them, to empower them to make decisions, to empower them to learn, and also empower them to give you honest feedback, but also that you give them honest feedback as far as what they can do better.

Because leaders get people to rise up, they understand their strengths, they understand their own strengths, but they understand how the strengths of the team come together to rise everybody up, and to get things moving in the right direction. So you can see if you follow these things, it's not about working harder and longer, because if that were the case, every business out there of people who are working hours, and hours, and hours, and hours, and hours, they would all be successful. But that's just not the case, right. So what it comes down to is doing the hard work. The hard work that is going to connect you to what is at the core of your business, and move you and your team forward faster.

That hard work is not what everybody is willing to do. But it's what you're willing to do, because I know that you have dreams, I know you have goals, and I know you are ready to let go of thinking corporately, and start thinking entrepreneurially. This is how, this is one of the first steps to doing it, is learning who you need to be and how you need to show up. Focusing on what's important and making sure that you're doing those things, a couple things every day, what's important, and letting go of the excess, the stuff that's keeping you distracted, the stuff that's random, and just keeping you busy. And really stepping into that courage, having the courage to ask yourself the hard questions, and to do the hard work.

So, I hope this episode helped you. Maybe you're one of those people that you think that you have to just work harder, and longer and that eventually you'll be successful. But hopefully after this episode you know that that's not the case. You know that there's a better way. So, until next time, keep striving for your dreams, keep fighting for your dreams. And remember, get really focused and clear on what's important and what's not important, and let go of what's not important. Remember also, be okay with ... be comfortable with getting uncomfortable. Because when we're uncomfortable, that's how we can grow and experience the next level in our business. So, I hope this episode helped you, and until next time, until next week. I will see you soon. Take care.