

You're listening to the Your Next Best Step podcast, episode number 17, and today we are talking all about how to empower your people, especially when things are not going well. So stay tuned because we're getting started.

Well, hello there everyone and thank you for joining me again for another week of this podcast episode as my chair is rolling out from underneath me. Ah, I hope you all had a great weekend. This past weekend was actually my anniversary and my husband and I went to one of our most favorite places on this planet, which is Washington DC. And for some reason, and we've been doing this ever since I've known him for the past 20 years. But Washington has just always... It's something that when we go back and look at all of the monuments, the Lincoln Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial and this time we went into the national archives and we were able to view the declaration of the original declaration of independence and the original constitution, the original act documents, not replicas or anything but the original documents and then the bill of rights.

I mean, it was just amazing. Absolutely amazing to see these things and to just go back to what the founding fathers stood for and draw some inspiration. I mean, I know there's a lot of turmoil in our government today, we don't focus on that, but just kind of going back to and seeing like the FDR memorial and we walked through the Martin Luther King Memorial. I mean, it's just amazing to see those things and read. They have all these inspirational quotes like all over the place that you don't even realize. And then you're standing there and there's like quotes engraved on the sides of buildings and things. And like the Department of Treasury, we saw these amazing quotes. So it's just really cool to go back and see those things and kind of get grounded again.

And we celebrated our anniversary, which is fabulous. We are married for six years. We've been together for 20. My husband doesn't do anything fast, so anyway, but I hope you all had a wonderful, wonderful weekend. And the topic that I wanted to talk about today is something that I've been exposed to a lot lately, especially with businesses who have achieved a level of success. And then they've gotten to a certain level, they've met a lot of their original goals and then things kind of start to fall flat or they're not seeing the growth that they were seeing before.

And they start to see that their team is getting comfortable and people aren't doing what they're supposed to be doing. And people are starting to focus on things that they shouldn't focus on because they're things that really don't matter in the grand scheme of things. They focus on the drama and they focus on just the petty stuff and they kind of go backwards. I've seen this a lot because when we do get to a level of success in our business, and especially when we've worked really hard to get there, we've been focusing on things for the longest time and we've been focusing on the right stuff and we've gotten to a level of success, what ends up happening, and I think it's human nature; I mean, I've seen it in myself, I've seen it in places that I've worked, I've seen it with people that I've worked with.

We get to a level of success in our business and then we think, "Oh, okay, we've achieved this. The struggles go away," and that's not what happens. The struggles get harder, and as you go to the next level, the next level of success is greater, but the next level of suck gets harder. And people, when they get to a level of success and they have achieved the things that they've wanted to achieve, people start to get really comfortable, and they kind of slip back into their comfort zones. They slip back into old habits. They say, "Oh, I don't want to do that new thing." I heard this last week, "I don't want to do that new thing, that new project that we have because I know it's going to be a lot of work and I don't want

to have to do that work and I have this new schedule and I've worked to get this new schedule and I don't want to do that because it's kind of I know it's going to be a lot of work."

Like I said, I think it is part of getting to a level of success and getting to a place where we wanted to get to this level and then people are like "Hmm," and they get comfortable and it's like well, and they think that the struggles are going to go away and they don't. To get to the next level, the struggles get harder, but the successes get bigger. So I've heard this a lot where people... I've been working with managers and leaders and organizations and I've heard, "How do we get our people to do what we need them to do?" Again, like "How do we empower them? Because our team seems to be out of alignment and things are starting to kind of breakdown and we're trying to figure out where it broke down and I'm so frustrated and I'm not really sure what I need to do."

And my answer is to them, well first of all, in order to be an icon, you have to hire and empower and build iconic people. So if you're going to the next level, you have to do the things that you need to do to coach your people to go to the next level with you. And my answer to them is, you have to give up being good because you've gotten to this level. You've got to give that up to get to being great, whatever that next level of greatness is. Of course like the next phrase right after that is, "What got you to this point?" Isn't going to get you to the next step. So you've empowered people, you've done the things that you need to do to get to this level and now all of a sudden there's breakdowns.

The first place really that we need to go back and we need to take a look at is, okay, how are we showing up as a leader? How are we showing up to our team, to our customers, to the people in our organization, the employees? The three things that we need to level up on are number one our mindset, which is how we are being; number two, our behavior, which is what we are doing and number three, our perspective, which is what we want to achieve. When we start there, we really start to discover that or what I've discovered is... Well, first of all, most of the managers like or leaders when we talk about this, they're like, "Oh no, like it's not me." Okay, well yeah it is. So let's start there.

If you want to figure out how to empower your people, you have to first take a look at yourself and say, do an assessment of, "How am I being? Am I being the leader that is going to take this organization to the next level?" In my conversation last week with someone who is leading an organization, the answer to that question was no. The answer to that question was they didn't want to do some new projects and were kind of fighting it because they had worked hard to get to the point where they were today and were able to let stuff go and delegate and do different things and they didn't want to start a new project because they didn't want to do the work. They didn't want it because they thought it was going to be a lot of hard work.

That was the old way of thinking that they had. So that's the whole are we up leveling who we are being? Are we asking ourselves, are we the leader that is the leader of an organization that's achieved our new level of goals? That's the second thing is what do we want to achieve? Our perspective needs to shift. If we're still thinking that like if we're a \$2 million business and that was our goal to get to 2 million, in order to get to our new goal, so let's say our new goal is 5 million, you cannot get to 5 million with the same thinking behavior acting perspective that you got to 2 million. You need to up-level it to get to that new level of success.

That means letting go of being good so that you can be great, and that's the first place that people need to look. And I've talked in previous episodes. When we get to this level, the things that end up

happening with our team, because if we start being complacent with things and we start getting comfortable and we think, "Oh, we've achieved all that we've been able to achieve," well, guess what happens? It starts to trickle downward. So that's where miscommunication starts to happen.

I have one person, one client that I work with. What happens with them is they go back into, "I have to control everything mode." When the breakdown start to happen and things start to shift, that's when they go into, okay, "I need to control it because I need to push it all through just like I did in the beginning." And they forget all the new stuff that they learned and all the new things that they've done to get to this level. And they just go back to that old comfort zone of, "I need to control everything and do everything." And that's okay. It's human nature. It's total human nature. But we need to recognize it so that we can move forward.

The three things, and I've talked about this on a previous podcast episode, there's three things that block us from growth; one is lack of consistency with learning and implementing. When we get to a new level of success in our business, we think, "Oh, we're done learning. We're done doing what we need to do. We're done implementing new things." Not so. Remember, if we want to go from 2 million to 5 million... Or I coach people where we're working on getting them to eight figures; 10 million, 11 million, 12 million, you cannot get to that level with the same things that you've done to get to 2 million. You have to up-level it. There are things that you need to do differently and it's not a matter of doing more, it's actually a matter of doing less.

It's a matter of really getting clear on what it is that you need to do and learning to empower your people on a whole new level, and really, really focusing on that vision that you have for your business and staying in that place and directing things from that place of that vision. When a lot of people, people that I've worked with, when they achieve that level of success that they originally set out, they start forgetting about the vision that they had. They start getting comfortable and they're like, "Okay, well I'm just going to glide along here. I like my new schedule. I delegated this stuff out," and it's like, "We're going to glide along." And then when the numbers start to slip, the numbers are flat, they're not getting the same kind of growth that they had, then they start wondering, "What's going on?" And reactively, they go into reactive mode.

When we have that lack of consistency with learning and implementing new things, that's one block. The second block is the breakdown, the lack of connection. When we start to get comfortable again, we start to slip back into old behavior and the connection starts to suffer. And the third thing is that lack of focus. Going back to when we get to that next level of success in our business, when we want to scale, we really need to stay focused. We really need to move from a place of that vision and consistently ask ourselves, "What does that next level look like? What does that new level of success in our business look like? What impact would we be making?" And, "What decisions would we make differently?" Then, "Who do we need to be?" And consistently staying in that place and learning how to empower and delegate on a whole new level to our teams. So that as we rise and as the business grows, these people are growing too.

Being a leader doesn't mean that you're just consistently telling people what to do. That's a manager. If you're just telling people what to do, you're managing tasks and you're just managing people. And a lot of times that people don't respond to that. Being a leader and really stepping into leadership means that we learn how to empower our people, and if they make mistakes, we empower them to make decisions. And if they make mistakes, we're there to help them pick up the pieces. We empower them to be

creative. We empower them to collaborate. We empower them to really tap into their own strengths so that the business can move forward.

And like I said, when things fail, we don't look at those failures as failures, we look at them as lessons and we help them to pick up the pieces and keep moving forward, but I think one of the biggest things that starts to happen, like I said, when we achieve those levels of success and even if a business isn't getting to that level of success that they want to get to, I think one of the key things that really suffers is number one, the connection; the connection that you have with your people.

I think we stop making people part of the process, part of this like getting their feedback or having them have input in creating the process in the first place, I think we stop doing that because again, if the business isn't getting to a level of success or if you've gotten to the level of success and then you think you're going to get to the next level by doing what you did to get to that first level and things aren't happening, people start to go back to that comfort zone because that fear starts to creep in, and fear tells us that we need to stay comfortable because if we stay comfortable, then we don't have to worry about going into the unknown, so that's where that fear creeps in. That's where perfectionism and controlling starts to happen again. That's where people start to, and I've seen this, they look at failure as failure, they don't look at it as... They stop finding the lesson in it.

These are the things that happen when the business starts to, like I said when we get to a level of success or maybe if we haven't achieved that level. The other thing is that in these times when that connection is suffering and when the breakdown start happening in our business that's when also as a leader, we start showing up in a way that becomes not empowering to our team. Because again, the controlling comes in, the perfectionism comes in, the being afraid to try things new because, "Oh, it's going to mean a lot of work." Instead of going back to the things that you did to get here, but doing it on a whole new level.

What it comes down to is to empower people, it's not a matter of what you do, it's a matter of who you are and who you're being as a leader. When we're showing up on that new level and when we're showing up and fully stepping into that vision, that is how we can really start to empower them. Because when we're showing up as that amazing leader that is going to take the business to 5 million, 10 million, 20 million, 100 million, and making an impact where you are building community and building an amazing culture in your business and really making an impact on 100,000 lives, 200,000, a million, 10 million lives, when we are being that person, people see that.

And when they see us being a certain way, then guess what? They start to rise up and it's that whole rising tide lifts all boats. It's that whole thing like stepping into our ability to be a good leader is going to then trickle out to our team and it helps them to be part of the process. When people feel like they are part of the process, people want to know that you hear them, they want to know that what they're saying is important and they want to know that they matter. And when we slip back and we go into that place of fear, that place of... And fear, like I said, it shows up as perfectionism, it shows up as controlling, it shows up as looking at failures as failures, not as lessons. It shows up as saying, "I don't have time." That's all fear.

And when we do that and when we slip back into that, that's when like breakdowns start to happen. We don't even realize it, they happen very small and then all of a sudden they get bigger and bigger and bigger. And then the next thing you know, you're saying, "I'm so frustrated. My team is not doing the

things that they need to do. They're not stepping up. I don't understand. How do I fix this? How do I get people to do what they need to do?" And it's very simple. The first thing you need to do is look at yourself. Okay, look at yourself and realize that "Am I being the person that I need to be in order to take this business to the next level?"

Allow yourself some grace that you're not going to have all the answers. When we slip back into fear, we think, "I'm the manager, I'm the leader. I need to know everything. I need to have all of the answers," and in reality, you don't because that's how we can empower our team. If we don't have the answer, we can empower them to figure out the answer. You don't need to know everything. You need to be the person that is driving the boat with the vision and every decision that is made has to completely support that vision and support that drive that you have to go to the next level in your business. But that doesn't mean that you need to know everything. It's not humanly possible for you need to know everything.

What happens is when we think we need to know everything and we think we need to make absolutely every decision in the business, when we do that, guess what happens? You become the bottleneck and guess what that is? That's a form of fear. That's how fear shows up because fear says, "If I don't know all the answers, then they're going to think that I don't know anything." And we start to tell ourselves a story about it. So allow yourself some grace that you're not going to have all the answers and that you can delegate that out to your team and empower them.

The five things that I teach people that you need to have to build a team that is really the foundation of having a team that's aligned are communication, connection, creativity, collaboration, and consistency. And I think personally, the biggest one is the connection. Because the connection, if we can have connection with everybody, we can communicate better and everybody can be creative and we can allow to be creative. When we try and think that we have to do everything or we try and think that we have to know everything or when we're not embracing the struggle and we're not embracing the suck, because you know when things get tough like they suck. But when we don't embrace that and we try and block it from happening, people can't be creative.

From the biggest breakdowns and the biggest mistakes and the biggest failures comes the biggest amount of creativity and inspiration. And when we try and prevent that from happening in times of struggle, we prevent creativity. We prevent people from being their most creative selves because in those moments that's when they can really tap into finding the solution and collaborating; using their collaboration to find even more solutions. Maybe it's even collaborating with someone outside of your business. And I've seen this too, when businesses are not getting to a certain level and they're looking at all their competition and they're saying, "That's my competitor. I don't want to share my information because that's my competitor."

Well, from collaborations with people, even if you're just having a conversation with somebody just saying, "Hey, what do you think of this?" Or "What's new? What's going on with you?" Because you can use that to be inspired. Not copy because copying is terrible but be inspired. Be inspired by... And you can inspire people and within your organization and even like people who are in your community. I work with a lot of local businesses and I have some local businesses who embrace community and want to collaborate and want to work together with people. And I see other local businesses that are just like, "I'm not having it. Like this is my world, this is my box. I don't want anybody in it. They're competitors. Everybody in the town is competitors," and it's just silly. It's silly. All that does is just keep you stuck and keep you in one spot and it totally prevents growth. Absolutely 100%.

Like I said, the five Cs that I teach people, communication, connection, creativity, collaboration and being consistent. And when all those things come into alignment, that's how we can really make people part of the process, we can really have them embrace and step into being totally responsible for their position in the organization. Being responsible for being part of the process, being responsible for their job and being responsible to themselves and to the team to make sure that they get stuff done and that they also hold their other team members responsible to make sure that they're doing what they need to do.

The other thing that is a really strong foundation value is integrity. Are you doing what you say you're going to do and is your team doing what they say they're going to do? So the more we stay in that place of comfort, whatever that is for you, whenever we stay in that place of comfort, whenever we stay in that place of control, whenever we say in that place of fear, these things can't exist. Responsibility and integrity and communicating with your team, connecting with your team, letting people be creative, collaborating and staying consistent, none of that stuff can exist because it all starts to get squelched.

I've seen it time and time again where the person at the head of the organization, when they start to feel like that, then it's the energy; like people's thoughts and beliefs about things start to shift and then people's focus starts to shift and they start focusing on things that they really don't need to focus on. Like I said, the drama in an organization and little things, they focus on little tasks that don't mean anything, they get back into that overwhelm. I just had a meeting with somebody last week and it was like they walk in and the first thing that they do when they walk into work is they check email, and then they can't figure out why they're so overwhelmed and they can't get the stuff done that they need to get done.

Well, okay, you're focusing on, yes, email is important to check when you get in, but take some time to set your schedule first. People go back to old behaviors and old habits. But if we can step into being a leader and up-leveling our own mindset and our behaviors and our perspective, if we can do that, then we can start to push that out into our team, our leadership team or management team who can then push it out to the employees. I work with one client where they kind of... It's human nature. People ebb and flow, and they go through periods where the person who is running the organization gets super controlling and doesn't want to hear anything else. And even if they hear other people's ideas, it's like, "No, we're just gonna do it my way."

And they think that they're doing the right thing, they think that they're pushing everything along and that they're moving things forward. And they can see on the outside it might look like that because the business is growing, but what they don't understand is how that, sitting there and when someone says, "Oh, I have this idea," "Okay, what's your idea?" They tell their idea, "Okay. Well, we're not going to do it that way, we're just going to do it my way." And you can see, I mean even just saying that like repeating that story even, it starts to make my gut sink and that's a trickle down. So then of course people start to say, "Well, she doesn't want to hear my idea," "He doesn't want to hear my idea," "They never want to hear my idea." And then things start to kind of break down from there.

Again, it's more about who you are than what you do. It's more about leading and empowering people to be part of the process versus just telling them what to do, and when we can step into that new way of being, when we can give up that good to get to the great, that's when things can really, really start to shift. Some things that you can do to really, when we can step into that new way of being and really learning how to empower our team and really building that connection again, some things that we can

do to really like push that forward and really empower our people, number one is to be vulnerable and transparent.

You don't have to tell them absolutely everything, but just to let people know, "I understand. I get you and we're going to work through this together and we're going to move forward." Or to let them know, "This is kind of what's going on in the business. This is what we're going to do. This is kind of what I want to do to fix it, but I want to hear what your ideas are," or "This event didn't go well and I take full responsibility for it and let's talk about what we can do differently the next time." When things do go wrong, encouraging resilience and letting them know that it's not the end of the world, letting them know that, "Yeah, this didn't work out, but that's okay because next time it's going to be better." So encouraging them to get back up.

Again, letting them make their mistakes but being there for them so that you can help them pick up the pieces, so you can really help them to see the lessons in those failures. Teaching and mentoring them. You got to a certain place, you got to a level and there were people that helped you along the way. I've seen this so many times, people forget where they started, they forget where they came from, and we always want to teach and mentor and guide because as managers and leaders in an organization, as a business owner, we want to bring out the strengths in people. We want to hold a space so that people can rise.

I say this to managers all the time, managers and leaders, we want to hold a space so that people can rise up and step into their highest level, not just us, but we want to hold a space for that. And what that means is we need to be the guide. We need to encourage resilience and be vulnerable when we need to be. Be vulnerable and let them know that, "Yeah, you know what? I'm afraid of this. This scares the crap out of me, but we're going to do it anyway. We're going to step into it and we're going to do it anyway. We need to make a hard decision. And it's okay because it's the best decision for the business, but we're going to do it and we're going to do it together." Helping them to break through their own barriers and listening when they need advice.

Helping people to getting to the bottom of, or getting to the core of what is happening in a situation. Is it an emotion? Is it a feeling? Is it a limiting belief? And helping them to move through it. We don't have to be therapists because that's not what I'm encouraging here. What I'm saying is that we need to understand people. We need to understand what their values are, we need to understand what's important to them and kind of going along with this is affirming to them what their strengths are.

An exercise that I have my clients do with their people in the beginning of the year and the middle of the year is we write out what the core values are. We talk about what the core values are of the business, and then what we do is we have... I have big giant pieces of paper and I have each person, we write their name on it and we talk about what their core values are, what is important to them so that everybody on the team understands what's important to each one of them and why. But then what we also do is each person, what we do is we go around the room, each member on the leadership team, and we do it with employees to has to say what they think all the team members strengths are? What is their biggest strength?

We take one person and we go around the room and each team member or each employee in the organization, they will go back and they will say, "Okay, Janet, your strengths are..." And then each person lists it. And then what we do is we keep those papers so that everybody understands what each

person's core values are so that they understand what's important to them. But then everybody understands how the team feels about them and what their own individual strengths are. And what this does is this helps to build that connection. That's the first piece. It helps people to stay responsible to each other and to make them part of the process. And that starts things rolling.

Then what we also do is we talk about the owner of the business and what their core values are and why it's important to have the team aligned, have all the core values aligned so that everybody understands what's important and everybody's moving in the same direction. And when we do that, when we do that exercise, that's how we can get back on track and step into that whole new level so that we can scale way beyond what they ever thought possible. But we can't do it from a place of fear, we have to do it from a place of possibility.

The first thing that needs to happen if you're a leader in an organization is you need to step into that next level and ask yourself, "What is my vision?" "What is my five year, three year, two-year vision?" "One year vision, six-month vision, what does that look like? What would the done business look like? What would the absolute super successful business look like on this next level? What decisions will we make differently? How would I show up differently? And how does everybody else need to show up differently?" And then from there, you can, the sky is the limit as far as what you are capable of doing and what you can do with your team.

Again, to empower people, it's more about who you are than what you do. Because when you're showing up on that next level, people see that, they feel it, they remember it, and they get inspired by it. It's not what you say to them, it's what you do, how you are, how you show up. Because if you're showing up on that next level, everybody else will too. So I hope this episode helped you today. Talking about empowering people and building a culture, building experience is something that I am super, super, super passionate about.

Anyway, I hope that this episode helped you and I am so glad that you joined me today and if you haven't already, make sure that you subscribe to the podcast and also if you would love to, I would love to have a review from you. Get some feedback for new episodes and new content that I'm creating. Would love, love, love to hear just what it is like if there's something you want me to talk about or a question that you have, a struggle that you're having, I would love to get that feedback so that I can make sure that I'm creating awesome content for you every week that will help you to move your business to the next level.

I hope you have a great rest of your week and I look forward to seeing you next week for another episode. Take care and be well, and I will see you soon.