

You're listening to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast with your host, yours truly, Theresa Cantley. This is episode number 29 where we're talking all about learning to look for the lessons in the biggest struggles. So stay tuned.

Hey there, and welcome back. I hope you are doing well. I am doing amazing this morning. I am reading this new book called A Happy Pocket Full of Money. If you haven't read it, I highly, highly, highly suggest getting it. It is such a good book. I am not a fast reader. It takes me a long time to read because I need to read sentences couple times and let it sink in, and I've just never been this super fast reader, but this book is amazing. I mean, I just ordered ... My husband's like, "What the heck are you doing?" I ordered six new books from Amazon, and I have six on my nightstand I need to finish, but I said, "I just felt like I just needed some new books, and everybody's been recommending books to me, and it takes me forever to go through books. So I'm just going to order them all and I'll get through them." So I started, like I said, I started with this book, Happy Pocket Full of Money, great, great book. I highly, highly recommend it.

So, anyway, I am amazing. I have my coffee, and before we get started where we're going to be talking about learning to look for the lessons in the biggest struggles or when things aren't going right, we're going to talk all about that, but before we get started, I wanted to just let you know about a virtual class, a live virtual class, that I am teaching called The Restaurant Growth Formula. You can register for it at theresacantley.com/restaurantgrowth. If you would like to join me, we are going to be talking. It's just going to be amazing. It is jam packed full of valuable information from the past 20, my 20 years experience. I have a lot in there about my experience working with restaurant owners and the exponential growth that they have seen and how we were able to get them to that point. I am going to be giving my seven ... It's the seven strategies, which are based on the seven mistakes, the common mistakes, that I see restaurant owners and really business owners making and the strategies that you can make to really turn things around, to get you out of the kitchen so you're not in there 10, 12, 15 hours a day, seven days a week, so that you can really focus on being the visionary, being extraordinary and building extraordinary things into your business.

It is titled The Restaurant Growth Formula, but if you listen to this podcast and you own a brick and mortar business or even if you just own an online business, you can join me, too, but we will be giving a lot of tips and strategies if you do own a restaurant. So if you know somebody who owns a restaurant, spread the word, share the love, but also I would love if you would just come to the class because, like I said, I do work with all different types of businesses. So if you're a business owner, you want to just join me for some fun and some great information, I would love to have you there. So if you go to the theresacantley.com/restaurantgrowth, you can register to join me for the class. I'm going to be doing it every two weeks. So if you miss one, no worries. There'll be another one. They're only about an hour long, but it's going to be an hour filled with amazing information if I must say so myself. So I hope to see you there.

Also, if you haven't done so already, make sure that you subscribe to the podcast because when you subscribe, then you get a heads up when new episodes are released every Wednesday. So I do release episodes every Wednesday. I have a few up my sleeve that we might be releasing an additional day of the week, some bonus material, but you also want to make sure that you get notification when these episodes are released so you don't miss any great content. So make sure you subscribe, and I would also love if you could leave me a review. Let me know what you think about the podcast. Let me know which

episode was your favorite or maybe what you would like to hear. I've got all kinds of topics and information that come to me at all hours of the day and night. So let me know what you would like to hear about or let me know what you liked. Let me know what episodes resonated with you the most so that I can make sure that I put more content out there that can help you.

So let's dive into today's topic, which is all about learning to look for the lessons in our biggest struggles and when things are just not going right. I know this is something that I have had to learn the hard way a lot, particularly when I was going through my own health issues, when I was going through a really rough period before I left corporate America, I was working full time. My business partner and I were trying to get our store up and running and I had this other business on the side, and I just felt so many times like things were coming crashing down, and I couldn't understand why. At that time, I hadn't really done the hard work, like I like to call it, on resetting my identity and resetting the beliefs that I have and the limiting beliefs that I carried through my life that I learned at a very young age about struggles and hardships and things that happen that carried through with me to my adult life. Back then, when things were happening and I was going through these really rough patches, I just kept thinking, "Oh, my gosh, why is this happening to me? Poor me." I think when things happen, when big struggles happen and things happen, most of us think like that. We think, "Why is this happening? Why is it? Why is this happening to me?"

What I've learned over the years, particularly in the past five years, especially after my husband was diagnosed the first time he was diagnosed with cancer and then after the second time, is that things don't necessarily happen to us. They happen for us. Life doesn't happen to us. It happens for us. When we're in the middle of these hard struggles, it's hard to see that this is happening somehow for a reason, and it's happening, and you know what? It's hard and it sucks and it's crappy. Team members are quitting and things are happening in our business, and it's just really crappy, but I can figure it out. I can figure out ... I can figure this out, I can figure out how to make this better or what I can do to move through this situation. Like I said, when things are going really south, it's really hard to see those, to see the lesson or to realize that things are happening for a reason.

I've talked about this concept with clients of mine, every single one I've ever worked with, but we've talked about this because, inevitably, things in our business don't always go the way that we want them to go. Crappy things happen. It's just a part of life. One of the things that I always talk to people about, because I've learned this myself, and like I said, I learned it the hard way, fighting it really, is that when things happen, they're happening ... Like I said, they don't happen to us. They happen for us. That's hard for people to understand, but at the same time, also, they're also happening to either move us in a direction that we need to go to achieve what it is that we want to achieve.

There's three things. First of all, it's either moving us in the direction that we need to go to achieve the thing that we want to achieve, it's giving us a lesson that we need to learn so that we can move in the direction that we need to go to achieve that thing that we want to achieve, but number three, also, and this is the harder thing for people to understand, it might be moving us, it might be detouring us towards something better, towards something different.

Again, when we're in the middle of these hard situations, it's easy for us to just get into that ... You've probably heard it referenced as this, the victim mentality, to get into that state where we're just like,

"Poor me. Why is this happening?" and we end up taking things super personal, and we end up just getting caught in this massive swirl.

I can say for myself, and this is when I really learned it, like I said, when my husband was diagnosed with cancer after the first time and then the second time, and the reason why it happened the second time is because there was a mistake that the surgeon had. Here nor there. He's all good now. He's three years out, two or three years out that he's had clean scans. It's all good, but I remember going through this period where I was, and at the same time, my business partner had been diagnosed with cancer, and I had just left corporate, and I'm trying to hold things together and I'm trying to move the business forward and be there for everybody, and I just remember feeling like I was just crumbling down, and things were just breaking. I just remember thinking to myself, "Oh, my God, why is this happening to me? Why? I don't understand why." I remember literally just ... I mean, everything that was happening, it was just one of those moments that it just brings you to your knees, and you're like, "Why is this happening? Why? What do I need to do? What am I doing wrong? What the heck? Why is this happening?"

I remember, in that moment, all right, it's two o'clock in the morning, and I woke up and I couldn't sleep because I had gone through this period where I wasn't sleeping very much. I was sleeping maybe two or three hours a night. I know. Crazy, right? I remember waking up and going downstairs and just thinking, "Why? Why? Why? Why is this all happening? I feel like everything is just crumbling around me. Everything that, everything that I do just turns to crap and, and what the heck?"

I remember looking at my phone and seeing this quote. I don't remember exactly what the quote ... I have it on my phone somewhere, but what it said was, basically, "The only person that's going to ... Basically, don't take things personally. The only person that is responsible for your success is you. Don't let the opinions of others derail you. You can figure this out." I remember reading that at two o'clock in the morning and thinking to myself, "Oh, my gosh," because there was all this stuff going on between my business partner and my husband and these personal things. I had a few clients that I actually had to let go of. They were very difficult clients, and it was just everything coming together all at once, and thinking, "Oh, my gosh, can I do this? Maybe I'm just ... Maybe I'm just the worst entrepreneur ever." Like I said, I looked at my phone, and I saw this, and I was like, "Wow."

At that moment, I thought to myself, "All right. Things happen to either give us the lesson that we need to get to the result. To move us in the forward and the direction to get to the result, or to send us on a detour to get us to the result because we're obviously going down a wrong path. So those, in that moment, like I said, I thought, "All right. There's something here. There's something I'm supposed to be learning and I'm not learning." At that time, number one, it was what, really my vision was for my business, number one. Number two, it was to also show me how strong I really am and that I can figure anything out and that I needed to just focus on what was important and stay focused on that, those vital few things that were important, and let everything else go instead of worrying about all this small stuff.

Most recently, I have a client who had seen this huge amounts of growth in their business, and everything was going great, and, all of a sudden, it started to feel like they had gotten ... One of their employees had quit, and they had gotten a note from the employee, an email, that was a little bit of a slap in the face from ... I mean, because this client, they do so much for their employees, and they bend over backwards and they treat them so well, and this employee had sent this message after they quit,

and it was, like I said, a slap in the face, and they had a series of other not so great things start to happen with the business.

I was sitting there with the executive chef, and she was saying, "Why is this happening? We do so much for our employees. We do ... We have been focusing on the right things, and we do ... Why did ... Why is this, all of this stuff, keep happening? I feel like things are crumbling down. I feel like ... Am I a bad ... Am I a bad manager? Am I a bad leader? Am I not ... I feel like I'm not doing something right, and these things keep happening, and why didn't I see this moving forward or before? Why didn't I see these things? Why didn't I push harder? Why didn't I see this stuff coming?"

I looked at them and I remembered the situation that I had been in. Like I said, I've said this before, anything that I teach or coach with anybody that I work with, there are things that I've experienced myself and I've gotten through. I looked at her and I said, "Okay, first of all, take a deep breath." That's my first line that I always tell anybody. "Take a deep breath. Number two, anything you can figure anything out, and, number three, there are lessons in here that you need to learn."

Of course, her answer was, I mean, she looked at me like I have four heads, and she was like, "What do you mean there's a lesson here? This is ... This is just ... This, this ... Everything that's happening is just so bad, and I don't understand why, and I don't understand what's happening here, and I just feel like I am the worst entrepreneur, manager, leader ever." I said, "Okay, stop." Again, we pulled out the three things. "Things happen for us. It may not seem it in that moment, and the things that are happening, yeah, they suck, and they're pretty crappy, but you know what? There are lessons in here that are going to move you forward and to help you achieve bigger and better things."

Of course, I get the answer, "Yeah, right." "Okay, now, just let's listen for a second," and we pull up the three things. "Things happen either to show us a lesson that we need to learn to get to the result that we're looking for, number one. Number two, they either move us in the direction, move us faster in the direction towards the result that we're looking to achieve, or, number three, they're detouring us in a better direction to move us forward towards the results that we're looking to achieve. Three things." After she kind of calmed down for a little bit, and I said, "These things are all happening. There is no business out there, no restaurant, no restaurateur, no business owner, no entrepreneur that has never, ever gone through serious hardship, that has never gone through mega struggles, but what gets you through those struggles and those hardships is being able to look past them in some form."

Even when my husband was diagnosed, what it did is, number one, it helped us to see that we could figure things out. No matter what, we could figure things out. Number two, it helped us to focus on our health more. Number three, it helped us to really focus on that gratitude for the things that we do have.

So when she was frustrated for all these these things that just kept happening, the employee quitting and then sending the message and two other employees having to leave abruptly and just the things that were happening that just kept feeling like everything was crumbling, nothing was crumbling, but what it was doing is, number one, showing a lesson, a valuable lesson.

So the first thing that I said to her is, "You need to ask, what is the lesson that I need to be learning that I'm not learning? Thank you for this experience. As much as it stinks, thank you for the experience. What lesson do I need to learn that I'm not learning?"

Number two, and this is the hardest thing when things start going wrong, is to not assign any meaning to it. In this situation where this employee sent this email, she was solely looking at it and taking it personal and saying, "This email means that I suck because this employee, this previous employee, quit and then sent this email. What she's saying in here, it means that I stink," instead of looking at what she was saying in the email. Some of it was just the person's opinion, and that's on them, but some of it, there were some interesting points in there that maybe they could take into consideration, and some of them also were things that we've already been working on to make things even better in the business. Our first instinct is to assign meaning to it. This means that I'm a terrible leader. This means that I'm a horrible entrepreneur. This means that the world is coming to an end, when in actuality it doesn't.

So the more we can not give meaning to it, but instead look at, what is this lesson? What is this trying to teach me? What can I do to figure something else out, which is number three, what is the next best step that I can take, and never ever letting what people are saying, never letting it mean that you, as a person, aren't doing something right. We can look at it and we can see, what are the lessons that I need to learn in here? What next best step can I take? And that is how we can stay. When we ask, "Look for the lesson," don't assign meaning, don't take it personal and then figure out what is the next best step that I can take? That's how we can take these struggles and frustrations in these situations that really stink and turn it around to get the guidance that we need to move ourselves forward.

In that moment with my client, and they had some of the things that were happening, like I said, they had this huge amount of growth and they had all these amazing things that were happening, and then got to a level where it was now they need to go to the next level, and people were fighting it because they were comfortable with the success that they already achieved.

So what was shown, what we ended up discovering is that these situations that kept happening, and the thing is is that if we don't listen, if we don't look at it and try and find the lesson in it, it's going to keep coming back over and over and over again. That's what was happening, but once we looked at it from let's take a step back and figure out, all right, just ask, what is the lesson in here, we started to see that in order to go to the next level, certain things needed to be set up in the business, certain processes needed to get up-leveled. We needed to start focusing on the proprietary processes that they had in each segment of the business.

Management also needed to up-level their performance and get really step out of their comfort zone, which is where they were based on the success that they've already achieved, but if it wasn't for those struggles that they went through and some of these situations that they were experiencing, I mean, one of those situations, the owner didn't want to take action and do the things that needed to be done because he was trying to just say, "Okay, I want to ... I want to make the best decision that I can do, and I don't want to ... I don't want to necessarily hurt anyone," but when we looked at it and we looked at what was happening, it was indirectly hurting the rest of the business by not taking a stand and not standing up and saying, "This is wrong. This is wrong. This isn't right for my business. I need to make a choice, and I need to protect the business, the employees that are here, that are working hard, and protect myself and my leadership team and everybody that really cares about this business.

In those hardships and those struggles and those sucky situations is when we can find the greatest lessons. Those are the lessons that we need to move us forward and move us towards the results that we're looking for, but when we fight it, when we take things personally and we assign meaning to things

it doesn't have, the only meaning it has is what we assign to it, well, that's how we stay small, and that's how we stay stuck, and that's how we continue to go into this swirl, instead of moving closer to that thing that we're actually looking to achieve.

Situations come up and things happen, not to us. I mean, our life and the world is filled with infinite possibility, but we are responsible to find them, to look for them, to move forward towards them, not necessarily understanding how we need to do it, but just having that focus on why we want to do it and what we want to do. When we get caught, when things come up and things aren't going our way and they're not going the way that we want them to go, and we just focus on that, well, that's what's going to keep coming our way, but when we can stop ourselves and look for the lesson and learn the lesson and keep going and keep taking the next best step, that's how we can see the change that we want to see and we can move our business forward, but it's hard to do that.

It's hard to look for the lesson because it's easier for us to just play small, stay small and just complain or whine or kibitz, like I used to say, and just focus on the negative. It's harder, it's easier to do that. It's harder to step into that growth and actually say, "Okay, what do I need to learn here? Maybe," and this is part of the taking responsibility, "what do I need to do differently, or what do I need to do better? Or how can I improve things in this business so that we don't have to deal with these situations again.

Like I said, the thing that they learned is that the processes needed to be up-leveled. They were moving to the next level in their business, financially, profitability, with their team. They needed to have better ... They needed to up-level the processes. They needed to up-level their systems. They needed to put the proprietary processes in place for each area of the business.

Once we started to do that, they needed to do some things to protect themselves, and once we really started to focus on that, good stuff started to happen, positive things started to happen, things started to move again, things started to grow again, but you can't grow if you're not willing to step into that uncomfortable area of trying to find that lesson and taking responsibility for what's happening and saying, "Okay, what can we do differently?"

So I hope this helped you. Like I said, out of our biggest struggles and our biggest frustrations can come the biggest and greatest lessons and the greatest opportunities if we are open to receiving them and looking for them. So I hope this episode helped you, and until next time, have a great rest of your week, and don't forget, look for the lessons that happen in things that happen every day, every week, because that is where you will find the greatest opportunities. All right. Bye for now.