

Well, hey there. Welcome to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Cantley, and I am super, super, super glad you are here. I just got back from a trip over to Ireland. We were away for a couple of weeks with some friends of ours, and it really was a trip of a lifetime, and really made me stop. It's that whole concept that I talk about of slowing down to speed up. It really made me stop and really take a look at kind of things from a different perspective, which is something that I always tell everybody else to do. Truth be told, sometimes I don't do that myself. But we just got back, and I've been thinking about this topic, and I wanted to share it with you, especially since unfortunately the second week we were there, I picked up some kind of a crazy, crazy, crazy cold, which is why I don't typically sound like myself. I sound a little bit like Kathleen Turner or, it was actually worse before so.

But yeah, somehow I ended up picking up this crazy cold, and I mean when you're over in Ireland, it's one of those types of trips, as my husband says, because you want to be able to see the entire country because there's so many amazing things, you're moving a lot. So somehow, some way, I was the only one that ended up getting sick, but it's all good because I am here, and I am super excited to talk about this topic, because it is a topic that I have struggled with myself over the years, and finally in working with mentors, one in particular, Jim Fortin, to really reprogram this whole thing, and kind of reshape my own identity, and not my identity of my name is Theresa Cantley.

I'm a business strategist, I'm a wife, whatever, but more from the standpoint of my identity as far as how I see myself from the inside out is kind of how I look at it. It's this whole topic around the power of two words, two words, and how super, super, super powerful they are. Those two words are I am, I am. Even just saying them, just saying, "I am," how does that make you feel? For me, I always get this, and I am an empath, I'm very sensitive. So I always get like I can feel certain emotions. So if I'm feeling, if I say something that doesn't feel great, I always have that contracted feeling, but if I say something and it feels very empowering and it feels great, I get that expanded feeling.

So just saying the word I am, I am, it just makes you sit up straight, it makes you feel good, right? Long ago when I was taking yoga, I remember doing this particular mantra, which is soham and soham is I am. When we were meditating in yoga, and when we were going through certain poses, or going through the practice and everything, my yoga teacher especially during the meditations when we were meditating or even when we were in Shavasana, which is when you're done, and you're laying there, and you're kind of cooling down and whatever, she would have us say soham. You would just say it quietly to yourself, soham, soham, soham, and you would just keep going. She said, it means I am. The foundation for everything that you do is I am. The foundation for how you go out into the world, I am.

At the time, I'm like, "Wow, this is really cool. It makes me feel really good," not really connecting the pieces probably the way that I should have and until I became I really stepped fully into being an entrepreneur. It's funny because now that I am an entrepreneur, I've seen other business owners that I work with that struggle with this statement of I am, and then what follows after that okay? Why it's such a powerful, it's such a powerful two words is because whatever follows after that I am statement ends up being what you end up creating in your reality, in your world. So as I stated it the other day was what you state you create, okay? What you state behind that I am whatever that is becomes your identity. So for business owners and people that I've worked with, what we ended up talking about, because everybody comes, they're like, "I want a new strategy. I'm struggling. I'm overwhelmed. I don't have," and we've talked about all these things in the podcast, right?

"I don't have enough time to get everything done. I can't hire the right people," those are all statements and beliefs that are tied to an I am okay? "I am overwhelmed. I can't get everything done," those are all tied to the statement that comes after the I am. Those I am statements are, like I said, what shapes your identity. When people come to me and they're like, "Oh, I need a new strategy. I need this. I need that," they think it's all an external problem. What they don't realize is it's actually an internal issue. Until we can fix the internal, because the external is just a manifestation of what's happening internally, just takes some time to catch up, right? I know I'm getting a little woo woo here, but I'm going to come full circle I promise you. Hang with me.

Maybe it's because I was over in Ireland, and we went to St. Patrick's Grave and this most amazing church over there, I don't know. But I really wanted to talk about this topic because as I said for the longest time when, and especially when I first started my business, and I didn't even realize that as a carryover from corporate America, but I always had this identity, okay? My I am statements always were completed with something of, and I didn't even realize I was doing it. It wasn't like I was stating it out loud, but it was something that was kind of a sentence that kept repeating over and over and over in my head. They were more of, "I am a person who needs to prove my worth. I am a person that needs to work harder in order to get ahead."

"I am a person who has always struggled, and always will struggle." I never, it's like I said, it's not like I was sitting there just constantly saying that to myself over and over and over again. But subconsciously, those were the identities that were playing over and over and over in my head. Like I said, way back in yoga when we were studying soham and saying that, and the yoga teacher was like, "Soham, I am is the foundation for how you express yourself in the world on your mat, off your mat, okay?" When you're on your mat and you're doing your practice, your yoga practice, when you fall, immediately you say to yourself, "I'm an idiot", okay, or, "I suck. I can't do yoga." Same thing with, and that's what she was trying to teach us is that if you fall on your mat, it doesn't mean you stink.

It means you get back up and you try again. So to try and help us to not have our thoughts go to the negative, and not judge ourselves if we fall, or we couldn't do a pose or whatever, and just to say, "I am practicing. I am a work in progress. I am capable. I am valuable," okay? I didn't realize this like I said, until after I really got into my business and really started, really stepped into being an entrepreneur, I didn't realize the connection between the two until I started working with my mentor, and understood that a lot of the blocks that I had in my physical business came from this whole identity that I built for myself of, "I am a person that cannot fail." You've heard me talk about that before, my struggles with failure. Failure was just not an option.

I wasn't going to be failing, and I didn't understand really what that meant. So the reason why I wanted to talk about this is because again, in working with other business owners, people always think that it's an external problem. Whatever that external problem is, is creating how they feel about themselves inside. Because our business isn't growing, that means I am the worst entrepreneur ever. So what ends up happening you can imagine is that they believe that about themselves because their business isn't moving forward, so guess what's going to happen? Their business is going to continue to not move forward. Like I said, in my own business, when I first started, I had been growing it. I knew all the things to do, I had all the strategies, I had everything, but I couldn't figure out where the blocks were.

Again, what we ended up uncovering is I had I am statements in my head subconsciously that were holding me back because here's the deal, those I am statements and whatever you state after that, I am

blank, okay, that is what ends up creating and shaping your identity. Your identity is kind of how you see yourself and how the world sees you, okay, based on how you see yourself. We always have the choice. At any point in time, we can choose what that identity is subconsciously or consciously, okay? For many people, there's many, many, many people walking around out there don't even realize it that subconsciously are saying these I am thing, that their identity is something that is self-destructive, okay, or not believing themselves, or something, and they don't even realize that they're doing it.

So again, when I work with business owners, the first thing that we start with as I listen to them, we go back to, and we start with that foundation, which is as a business owner, who do you need to be? How do you need to show up in this world, which is that whole premise of redefining what your identity is. Because here's the deal, in creating new I am statements, whether you physically see them on paper, or you're saying them to yourself, or they just become inherent where you don't even have to say, they're just there, they just show up and they're just there, and you are just fully into and fully being the person that you need to be. That's the point where we want to get to is that they are just so inherent, almost like brushing your teeth every day.

You get up, you brush your teeth, right? So it's the same kind of thing. We want to get it to the point where our identity, we're just always believing it, and our identity is we're always believing in ourselves, and we're always showing up as that identity, and our identity is also connected to the future physical results that we're going to end up creating for our business. So if we're sitting there and we're saying, "My business isn't doing great so I am a terrible entrepreneur, or we can't grow," I just had this conversation with someone this morning who their business went through a period of huge amounts of growth, and they are running into a couple of struggles with some staff. The comment that she said to me was, "What am I doing wrong? I must be a horrible leader."

So if you continue to tell yourself that, what do you think is going to manifest itself? Like I said, your thoughts manifest your physical world. It just takes some time, the physical world needs to just take some time to catch up to what you're thinking. So what do you think kept happening? Because over the span of two weeks while I was in Ireland, things just started to unravel. So the more she was telling herself, "What am I doing wrong? I must be a terrible leader," what do you think is going to continue to show up? So our identity and whatever we put behind that I am blank, that is what's going to shape our belief. So if we're saying, "I am a terrible leader, or I am a horrible business owner, or I don't know what I'm doing, I'm a terrible business owner, I don't know what I'm doing," so then what ends up happening is, and even if we're not physically saying it out loud, we're thinking it, and then we start to believe it.

Then again, our beliefs, whatever we believe about ourself, because our identity then shapes our beliefs and what we believe about ourself, what we believe about our business, what we believe about the world, our perspective on how we see things, so that shapes our thoughts. So then the thoughts that we have, and you can see how this starts to topple, our thoughts end up creating our reality. Like I said, just our reality just needs some time to catch up. Had a conversation with someone, it was about a month ago, and it's an executive in business, and he had just switched jobs, and he was having, he actually had switched jobs a couple of times because the business that he originally worked in as an executive, that business had been sold, and he ended up having to move jobs anyway, then he just switched to a different company most recently.

He said to me, "I am lost." He's like, "I'm struggling with my role. As this executive, I am struggling building my team. I am struggling. I can't quite get the team together. I can't quite get ... I don't think I'm

being a good leader. I had these goals, and we're falling short of these goals, and I don't know what strategy to put in place." I simply just stopped him and I said, "How do you feel about yourself as a leader and how you show up?" His answer to me was, "I am lost. I am lost. I am frustrated. I'm a bad leader." So I said, "Okay, you don't need a new strategy."

"We need to start there, and that's what we need to work on." Because you can see, however you're saying to yourself, whatever you're believing about yourself, whatever you're stating about yourself ends up becoming a physical reality for you because our life isn't shaped ... Our beliefs end up shaping our life. Our identity ends up shaping our life because how we see ourselves, and what our identity is as a business owner, as a human being, as a mother, as a parent, or that's the same thing, as a mother, as a wife, as a friend, whatever, that is how we see ourselves as that ends up creating the results that we have in our life. So again, the executive that came to me when I said to him, "When let's think back to a time when you did feel really good about yourself, and about what you were doing in your professional career, in your role here."

Then we started to kind of talk through things, and unravel things, and kind of pinpoint as far as when stuff needed to shift. Then the next step is because you're probably thinking to yourself, "Okay, so maybe I do believe this, and I know I'm not at a place that I want to be at in my business. I thought I was going to be a lot further ahead, and I can see how if I'm saying to myself these negative things, these negative thoughts, and how that's potentially holding me back. So what do I do, Theresa?" Well, it's fairly simple but fairly complex at the same time.

So the thing that I started to do, and what I've learned to do again after I realized, because remember what I said, I am is the foundation to everything in your world, absolutely everything, because it starts with the identity of who we are, and what we believe about ourselves, about like I said, about our business, about our world, okay, that we create. Then from there, that's when we create our actual reality. So the thing that I've learned to do and I run, when I work with leaders, I work with business owners, I run them through this as well so that we can reprogram the program beliefs that we've had about ourselves, and about the world, and about our perspective, and the whole thing.

Believe me, these beliefs have been shaped, and this was something that I had learned, but these beliefs are actually shaped from when we're little. Then even though we might overcome some of these things as we go through life, adult life, as we just go through life, there are certain events and certain things that trigger those limiting beliefs, those negative beliefs, those negative identities, those negative associations that we've put on ourselves okay that create those negative I am statements. So again, it doesn't happen where it's like you're at your job, and something happens, and you're like, "Oh, I am terrible", or "I am," it's just kind of like a subconscious thing that happens at first and then eventually, yeah. I found myself saying, "I am the worst entrepreneur ever."

Here's the thing, when we speak it out loud, a lot of times it starts out being subconscious based on reactions to things that happen, to circumstances that happen. But when we actually start to speak it out loud, that's when it gets really serious. Because when again, what you state, you create. So the more we state it, that's when we actually end up creating it in our physical world. So if you're not experiencing the results that you want to have, or you're frustrated with where you are in your business, the first that you need to re examine is how are you showing up?

How do you want to show up? How do you need to show up? How are you actually showing up? What are the things that you think about yourself? What is that identity that you've assigned to yourself? Because again, we have the power to choose a new identity at any point in time, any point in time. It's not like your identity is this. I mean your identity, I am Theresa Cantley. I will always be Theresa Cantley unless I get divorced, but I will always be Theresa, and I'm not getting divorced, but I will always be Theresa. That's never ever going to change, okay? But the other identities that are associated with me, at any point in time, I have the power to choose a new identity. So the thing that I teach people to how to start to reprogram this, and I actually do it myself, I do it absolutely every single day, is to create some form of a routine to reprogram those program beliefs.

So what I do in the morning, and I tell people, "Pick something that you love to do. When you're going to start doing this, pick something that you love to do." So the thing that I started to do is I started to do it in the morning, because when you do it in the morning, it sets the tone for the rest of the day. It sets your intention for the rest of the day. So I get up, now I have a cup of green tea, I was just having a cup of coffee, but now I do a cup of green tea. I get up, and I sit, and I actually take my planner with all my tasks in it, my tasks and my goals and everything, and I sit down, and I give myself a good 20 minutes. I just literally will sit there and think about, "Who do I want to be today, but also in the future? What does my future self look like?"

"What have I accomplished? What are the things that I want to accomplish," because then however I want to be in the future. So if I'm going to be a millionaire, okay, and I tell people this, "You want to be a millionaire, guess what? You're not going to wait until you become a millionaire to start thinking like a millionaire, right? You need to start thinking like a millionaire now and believing that 'I'm a millionaire' now so that you can create that future reality." So what I do is I have, like I said, I have my planner, my goal planner, and I sit there with my cup of green tea, and I give like I said, I have 20 minutes, 20 minutes to 30 minutes actually, and I just really just let it flow, and I just identify with who I am based on the future things that I know I want to accomplish.

So for example, "I am a top rated Ted Talk speaker with a viral talk about innovation." I'm not a Ted Talk speaker now, but I believe in my heart of heart in my core that I am a Ted Talk speaker and I know I'm going to do this talk. So here's another one, "I am a New York Times bestselling author with a New York Times bestselling book, 'Bad Leadership, What Not To Do.'" Right now, I'm not physically I'm a New York Times best selling author, but my mindset and what I believe is that I am one. So all my activities, because my identity is part of that, all my activities will flow from that, and then the results will happen.

So here's another one you could do, "I am a successful," or, okay, "So I am a successful restaurateur with a very successful restaurant generating, making a difference in our local community, and generating seven figures," okay? That's an I am statement. It may not be where you are right now, but when you're stating it out loud and you can believe it, you're writing it and you're stating it, so you're writing it and you hear it, you're speaking it, you're speaking it into existence, and the more you can do that, the reality will then follow in the physical world. That will end up becoming your reality.

Because when you're speaking it, and I know this to be true because this is exactly what I went through when I started writing these I am, and I probably have about, I probably have about 15, when I started writing them every single day, every single day, and believe me, I thought, "I've done yoga. I was in martial arts for several years. I meditate every day. I don't have a problem with my beliefs. I don't have a problem with my identity. I'm good." Bologna, I wasn't, and it took a lot to discover that the identity I

was associating with myself was actually what was, like I said, really holding me back. It was my biggest block, because I would say I wanted these things. I would say, "These are my goals. I want to achieve all of this. I want to become a New York Times bestselling author."

"I want to duh, duh, duh." But what I believed about myself was not aligning with that. So there's no way you can make that happen if it doesn't align. So sitting down every morning and literally thinking about and visualizing where I want to be in the future and the person that I want to be, because I'm always [inaudible 00:26:41] ... I always want to be ... I am me, but I always want to be a better version of me. I want to be a better wife. I want to be a better step-mom. I have huge impact goals to help business owners out there, but I can't be that. I can't achieve all of those things if I'm holding myself back and not willing to grow mentally, spiritually, physically, not physically with my weight, but you know what I mean?

So sitting, taking 20 minutes to 30 minutes and literally, and writing them in a place where I write them in my goal book because I write my goals, I rewrite my goals every day, and I have my list of things that I'm doing to every day to move that goal forward. So that's why I chose to write it in my goal book, to just write out those I am statements. Like I said, I get my cup of tea, I sit down, I visualize what is it that I want to do in my future. My goals are right there so I already know, and I visualize, "Who do I need to be? Who do I need to be to achieve that?" Then there is one I say, "Who am I now that is achieving these things?" That's where those I am statements come in.

It's a simple activity, but it's something that is very difficult for people to do because people have a hard time visualizing a future for themselves, because so many people walk around in what we call circumstantial living. They walk around and do things and base what they want to do on what's happening right now, what their circumstances are right now. If you want to move forward, and you want to achieve big things, you can't base it on what's happening to you right now. You can't even base it on the past either. You have to base it on where you want to go in the future. Yes, we stay present, but we stay present with an identity of someone who has already achieved the things that we want to achieve. That's the whole purpose behind this practice.

So I have executives that do this. I have entrepreneurs that own local businesses. I myself do it. It's a simple activity that will change everything for you, absolutely change everything for you. I mean for the longest time I ... even if you're saying like, I am, maybe you've had some struggles losing weight, okay, and if you're constantly saying, "I'm fat," my husband always says as me, he's like, "I feel so fat. I feel like I'm overweight, I'm a load", no, because more you say that, the more that that's going to happen to you. So, I've said to him over the past couple of months, "You need to stop saying that."

You need to switch it around and say, "I am working on losing weight", or "I am working on becoming healthier", or "I am healthy. I am a person that is healthy and fit," because the more you can reprogram that belief about yourself, the more you can actually make it into a reality, because what we believe then dictates what we do. So if we believe we're fat, and overweight, and whatever, then what are we going to do? I'm not exactly going to be roaring and ready to go work out, or eat healthy, right? But if we say, "I am getting healthy and getting fit," or "I am getting in better shape," so even just saying that like just make for me, I mean I exercise every day, but I mean even me just saying that makes me want to, and empowers me to want to be that person.

So give a shot, and the reason why I tell people, “Do it with something in the morning because it sets your intention for the rest of the day,” but I always tell them, “Do it with something that you like to do in the morning.” I liked it to have coffee, I love coffee and now like I said, I drink green tea because I'm getting older, and green tea has a lot of health benefits, and for the longest time being in the martial arts and people who believe in Chinese medicine and did Chinese medicine, I thought, “Okay, you know what? I'm going to do this.”

So now I love green tea. Anyway, so I sit with something that I love, and I started getting into this habit because like I said, it's really hard when you start, because people have a hard time visualizing a future version of themselves, because so many people walk around and circumstantial living. They're just living life based on what's going on today, and they think that that's all that is available for them, that's all that's possible for them. So we don't want to do that. So it takes a little bit to get started. Even if you start off with three statements, even if you start off with one statement, “I am lovable. I am valuable. I am worthy of success,” or just, “I am worthy of success,” when you start off that, and every day you're doing it repeatedly because repetition is what ends up again is having that become an inherent habit, an inherent belief that you have within yourself.

So give it a shot every day, wherever you want to write it, whether it's a notebook, or if you do have a goal book where you keep your task for the day that you're going to do, give it a shot. Stack it with some kind of a habit or activity that you love to do. So if it's drinking coffee, drinking tea, maybe you have some quiet time that you sit on your porch in the morning, maybe you like to listen to CNBC, or maybe you do it during then I don't know. I even have someone, and I don't agree with this, but I thought, what the heck, he gets up in the morning and he smokes a cigarette. I don't promote that because I'm like, that's not a positive habit, but all right, if it gets you to do it, do it.

Not my thing, and I would like if you would quit, but whatever habit, positive habit that you like that you do in the morning, you can go ahead, and you can stack it with that. Give it a shot. I would love to hear what kinds of transformations you've seen within yourself. I can tell you from my own experience, as soon as I started doing this, my business and my life changed, changed dramatically. So I'm hoping that doing this episode helps you as well. I hope it helps you to really start some growth in your business, and maybe it even just shifts in your mindset and how you feel about things that even just get you started. So let me know. I would love to hear from you. You can send me a message to Theresa at theresacantley.com, or leave a review in this episode. I would love, love, love to hear from you. So anyway, have a great rest of your week, and I will see you soon. Take care, be well, and have a great rest of your week. All right, bye. Bye.