

Hey there and welcome back to another episode of the Your Next Best Step Podcast. I'm your host Theresa Cantley. Of course, you know that. I am super, super glad you're here and super glad to be talking about this topic today, which is all about how business owners get stuck by focusing on the how and why being future-focused and getting future-focused is so, so, so important. This episode comes from my own experience in getting stuck in some of this and getting stuck on the how and conversations I've had with mentors over the past couple of years on why we get stuck in the how and how we can get out of it. And that's where this whole premise of getting future-focused comes into play. This topic also comes from a couple conversations I've had with people, with my clients over the past couple weeks as we've worked on setting goals and setting things that they want to achieve in the new year. And then now the new year's here and now we've got to execute.

I wanted to really talk about this because I do think that... In working with business owners for the past decade, actually two decades, I think that a lot of business owners and a lot of leaders get stuck on the how. They get stuck on, "How we're going to do it." And in my opinion, what happens is, is that when people get stuck on this, how are we going to achieve this? A short story, one of my clients, we were working on setting goals and she stopped me and she said, "Wait, I can't think about the future. I want to know how we're going to do this. I want to know how we're going to meet this new number. I want to know how we're going..." Before we even thought about what a successful year would look like and what that future would look like for the business, she said, "I can't do that. I can't think about the future. I want to know how we're going to do this today. How we're going to make this happen. What do I need to do now?"

And that's right there is part of the problem. Is that when people start focusing on the how before they've even thought about what does a successful future look like, or what is a done business look like? Before they've even thought of that, they're focusing on, "How am I going to make this happen? How am I going to do this? I have these goals, how am I going to make these things work? How am I going to bring my team together? How are we going to execute this?" And they get focused on that before they've even had the big dream, which sounds kind of weird. The reason for that... Like I said, I think a lot of business owners, in my experience, a lot of people struggle with this. I struggled with this. And I think the reason why people struggle with it is because most people out there are functioning and planning based on where they are today. If they're in debt or if the business is broke and it's just breaking even, they're basing all of their plans on what is happening right here, right now, right today, which is current circumstance.

When we do that, that's when we get stuck on the how and that's when we stay stuck because we don't really have a GPS, we don't have a GPS to say, "Where are we going?" There's no map, there's no GPS to say, "Where are we going? What decisions do we need to make?" All of those things. So we get stuck in where we are right now. And that in my mind is getting stuck in the how.

I remember I had a mentor a couple of years ago who said to me as I was going through and he said, "What is it that you want for your business?" I sat there and I thought, "Oh my gosh, I've never really thought about that part. I just want to know how I'm going to achieve the goal that I want to achieve." And he said, "Well, you can't figure out the how until you figure out your why and your what. So I'm going to ask you again, what do you want for your business?" I thought to myself, "Wow, that's a big question." I was getting so focused on, "How am I going to do my launch? How do I do a webinar? How do I put this together? How do I hook all my emails, do my email sequences?" Before I was even dreaming big as to what my bigger vision was for my business.

I see this time and time and time again, is that people come to me and they're like, "I want to get a better marketing plan. I want to know how to do this. I want to know how to grow my business." And the first question I ask is, "What does a done business look like?" And they can't answer that because one of the reasons is because they've lost their vision. And even if they haven't lost their vision, a lot of times people just don't have a vision because again, they're functioning in whatever that current circumstance is. A lot of people with whom I talk about, if I say to them, "Do you have a vision? Do you have a vision statement?" Many times, more often than not, it's written in what they do in present day and not written in what bigger thing do you want to do for this world and what are you and your team working towards? Or what are you working towards?

And so I think a lot of times in my mind, and I can say it from my own experience, is that when we lose focus on our vision, our bigger vision for what it is that we want to do in this world, the bigger impact that we want to make. When we lose focus of that or we don't take time to fully flesh out or fully develop our vision, like taking time to think big and dream big and push ourselves to the point when we look at that piece of paper and the things that we want to do and the bigger impact that we want to make in this world beyond the products that we sell or the food that we serve. When we look at that, it should be a little or a lot scary.

So when we are trying to grow our business, especially if you've just come off of a huge growth period, which a lot of my clients from going through the holiday season, probably from September through the end of the year, is a huge growth season for them. The first question that they ask is, "How are we going to do this again? How we just worked so hard. How are we going to do this again?" Instead of getting in touch with that vision again, connecting back to it and maybe growing it. Your vision is going to change and grow as your business changes and grows and as you change and grow as a business owner. The more you grow and the more you develop personally, the more you focus on improving your beliefs and your thoughts about your business and about your dreams and about your vision. The more you do that and the more you grow, the more your business is going to grow. It's just the two are tied together. So I think that people stop looking at that vision because they get so focused and so tied to that day to day or what they're doing. What their current circumstance looks like in the business.

I had a conversation with someone yesterday, with one of my clients yesterday and they just went through a very, very busy period and ended up hitting some speed bumps in the business. She has one area in particular where she's had some turnover. She had one of the leaders in the business ended up leaving unexpectedly and she's had some turnover and they've had a very busy period where the people that worked in this area did pitch in and everybody stepped up when they had this turnover happen. But along the way she also started running into some personnel issues and things that she needed to fix. And her answer to me was, or her question was, "How am I going to do this? How am I going to fix this area of the business?" And I said to her, "Don't think about the how, but think about this is your chance... Since you've had some people leave, you've had some turnover, some people that maybe didn't really fit the business, this is your chance to make things better. This is your chance to really move this part of the business forward and have it really fit the grander vision of the business."

My question to her was, "What does a super successful, high performing, amazing..." And this happens to be the kitchen area. "What does that look like to you? What does it look like if you were standing fully in your purpose every single day? What would that look like? What would the kitchen and the cooks and the chefs and all that stuff, what would that look like to you?" And she said, "I don't know." I said, "Well, that's where you need to start. Don't think about the how, how are you going to fix things? How are you

going to do everything? Because guess what? You shouldn't be trying to do everything and you shouldn't be the only person that is capable of doing this stuff. That's why you empowered leadership in the kitchen. That's why you put certain people in place so that you don't have to do everything."

When she started to think about it, she started to think, "You know what? This is what it would look like. I would love to have X, Y, Z. I would love to do this. I would love to have bonus people on, the people in the kitchen on certain things. I would love to have these different levels." And I was like, "Okay, then build it, then build it." That right there, that's how we go from focusing on the how and staying that current, what's happening right here right now, whether it sucks or it's great, but that's the difference between focusing on that current, whatever's happening and getting future-focused. Stepping into and reconnecting with that grander vision that we have.

And it happens. Whether you've had lots of turnover or you had a period of major growth and you've had a period of major activity in your business. It happens where people get they're just focusing on doing, doing, doing, doing, doing, and then they get stuck and forget about that bigger vision, that future that they're looking to build. That's why my big thing that I tell people is when you work with me, you not only own a business, but you learn to really own your future. And the way that you can own your future is by staying future-focused and not focusing so much on the how. What we do is when we reconnect to the vision and we're the visionary and we're pushing and we're saying, "Okay, this is why we're doing these things and this is what we're doing to make that why happen." Then from there, that's when you get your team involved. That's when you get your team involved to say, "Okay, let's brainstorm out and re-engineer how we can make all these things happen." But the first thing is instead of focusing and planning on where you are right now, we have to get connected to the bigger future that we want to create.

How do you do this? It's probably your next question. I'm going to give you three things that you can do in 2020 so that you can really get future-focused and you can really start owning your future.

The first thing is reconnect and get focused on your vision again. What does your vision look like? If you haven't spent time really getting connected back to it and really thinking about what that future looks like for 2020. What does that done business look like? If you're standing at the end of the year, what does that super uber successful year look like? How does it feel? What did you do differently? What did you do to celebrate? Again, what does that done business look like? What decisions did you make differently to get to that done business? And really take time to really think about that because that will then be your GPS to figure out how you're going to make everything happen or get your team to work with you to figure out how you're going to make all of that happen. But the first thing that we need to do is we need to get focused on the future. So we need to focus back on that bigger vision that we have for our business.

Along with that is making sure that you're communicating it all the time and consistently to your leadership team and to your employees, to the customers, to the community. And the way you explain it and you talk about it with your team, with your leadership team and your employees is a little bit different than how you talk about it with your customers. With your customers and your community, it's going to come out, particularly with your customers, your vision will come through in your brand and the experience that you create in your business. That vision that you have will come through in that. It will come through in the experience that you create before they become a customer. It will come through in the experience that you create when they're a customer and then also after they're a

customer to keep them coming back time and time again. With your leadership team and with your employees, you consistently want to make sure that you're communicating that vision to them because that gets them to own their responsibilities and own their role in the business and what they're doing. Own their job performance.

It also gives them a chance to up level their own skills to become better. When they understand what the bigger vision is of the business they can get connected to it. When you make them a part of it, they get connected to it. You've heard me talk about this in a couple previous podcast episodes, but it also has them understand what their deeper purpose is in the business and they also understand what the deeper purpose is of the business in general so they understand what their part is in the greater good. And going along with this, the more you focus on the vision and the things that you need to do, the more you realize your role in the business is to consistently communicate that vision and do what needs to be done to move that vision forward.

Just like I told the story about one of my clients that I talked to the other day who was having some struggles in an area in their business, I had asked her, "What is your responsibility? Are you responsible for making people do their jobs?" And her answer to me was yes. I was like, "Okay, I'm going to ask you that question again. Are you responsible for making people do their jobs?" And she said, "No." And I said, "Exactly. You can't make people do their jobs. What you're responsible for is to make sure that you are communicating that vision. You are communicating the grander plan of this business and you're putting the right people in place so that they can execute the things that they need to be done. You are creating that environment and that culture in the business that thrives on empowerment, that thrives on growth. That is what your responsibility is. Your responsibility is to make sure that everybody is doing what their part is and what they need to do to move this forward. That's your responsibility." So realizing what your role is in the business. Your role isn't to be the task master. Your role is to stay connected to that bigger vision, to stay future-focused. That's number one, is reconnecting and owning, owning it, owning your vision.

The second thing is to focus on and remember that there is no path. You are carving your own path and it's okay to do it your own way. Just like I told her, just because every other kitchen in the industry is set up a certain way doesn't mean that you need to set it up that way. That's why we focus on creating a signature process because that gives you an opportunity to do things your own way, to carve your own path and to set things up the way that you feel you need them to be set up so that you can make your vision a reality.

And the thing is that when we are carving our own path, there's going to be a fair amount of uncertainty. But being afraid of that and doubting ourselves or doubting what's going to happen, isn't going to help us to grow. So owning the fact that you are carving your own path and you're doing something that no one has ever done before and you're making things better by making better things. When you realize that and you own it and you choose to believe something different about your business, you choose to let the doubt and the fear move you forward and not hold you back. You choose to stay in the future and focused on the future. And if there are people in your business that don't want to come along with you and there are people in your business that want to stay in this fear and scarcity and complaining, then they don't belong there because that's not going to make this future happen. That's not going to create an amazing experience. It's only going to tear it down.

So believing in yourself, believing in your abilities and also believing and empowering the team around you so that you can continue to carve your own path. You can continue to set new standards that no one's ever done before so that you can own that future that you're trying to create. Like I said, doubt and fear aren't going to help you grow. Consistently doubting yourself, consistently being afraid, consistently saying, "How are we going to do this? How are we going to do this? How are we going to do this?" Without focusing on what it is that you want to do in the first place, that is not going to help you to grow. But choosing to believe and change your thoughts and do something different will help you to grow.

And then the third thing is, and this is something that I've really had to work since I became an entrepreneur, is your actions must align with your aspirations. And the only way that you can figure out what your aspirations are, you guessed it, is by focusing on and having clarity on what your vision is in your business. If you tell me that you want to achieve these things, that you want to hit seven figures in your business and you want to impact so many people and you want to be an icon in your area, but then your actions, when we look at your actions and what you're doing every day and you're taking inventory or you're the one that's prepping the food or you're the one that's... I don't know. Doing all these menial tasks, do those things align with your aspirations? No.

Some of the things that we can do, because when we set our goals, we also want to make sure that we have clear goals. And I have a whole process that I teach people to take those goals and break them down so that they're consistently working on things every day that align with whatever it is that they're trying to accomplish. But the two other important things that we need to remember is we need to set healthy boundaries around the priorities in our business and in our life. If you have a boundary around, let's say workday. If you have a boundary around your workday and you know that you need to get certain things done to move the business forward, certain things with the financials or certain things with content that you need to write. You need to make sure that you have healthy boundaries set up so that you can get stuff done and you can move things forward.

So if you're the content creator in your business and you set aside, you say, "I need to set aside two hours a day so that I can create this content. I can write the posts, I can write the emails that I'm sending out to my customers every week. I can shoot a video that talks about our specials for the week. Whatever that looks like, I can have that conversation with the accountant and go over the financials or I can meet with the coach that we hired so that we can grow the business. And I am going to set a boundary around this day for two hours. I'm going to be doing these things." I see this time and time again where people say that, but then they let anything and everything and everyone dictate their time and cross those boundaries. So then what ends up happening is they don't feel great about what's happening and what they're doing because they're not able to accomplish the things that they want to accomplish. Because they've been focusing on absolutely anything and everything and everyone else other than what they really need to focus on.

So making sure that we understand our priorities in our business and our life, and as a business owner and as a visionary, we want to make sure that we are giving ourselves plenty of creative time. Otherwise, we're not going to be constantly performing at our best, but also we're not going to be showing up the way that we need to show up in our business so that we can be the visionary. We want to make sure that we understand what our priorities are and we're setting some non-negotiables that connect back to our priority. Again, a non-negotiable of, "I have two hours every day from this time that this time and that's my content creation time." That's a non-negotiable. Somebody wants to have a

meeting during the time, "I'm sorry, let's do it later." If somebody wants to come in and talk you at that time, unless it's an absolute emergency, "Can we do it a little bit later?" Those are non-negotiables. You only schedule meetings with staff members between on these days, Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday between these times. That's your non-negotiable.

Too often we let our schedule... People start out with very good intentions, but then they let anything and everything and all these interruptions... I will never forget meeting with a client. While we're having this meeting, it was a two hour meeting, they were answering their phone, they were looking at their watch, they have an Apple watch, people were coming in to talk to them, they were filling out paperwork while I'm trying to meet with them. Finally, I stopped and I said, "I think this meeting's done." And they were like, "Well, we still have an hour." I said, "Well, you haven't been paying attention for the past hour and I'm not going to sit here and talk to you about what you need to do to grow your business when your cup is overflowing with distractions. There's no possible way that you're focusing."

So we want to make sure that we set some non-negotiables and we're staying completely present for the things that we need to do to move our business forward. We're setting boundaries around that that protect those priorities and protect those non-negotiables because that is how we are going to be able to move our goals forward. That is how we're going to be able to take the right actions and have those actions align with what we are trying to do in our business, what we aspire to do. Those future amazing things that we're working towards.

The three things just as a review that we want to really focus on in 2020 to really own your future is focus on your vision, on reconnecting to your vision and making sure that you own it and that you communicate it consistently. Own carving your own path and doing it your own way. And the third one is making sure that your actions align with your aspirations in your business. When you do those three things, you can be sure that you will be more productive than you've ever been. You will have more clarity than you've ever had and you will really get future-focused and make those amazing things that you've been planning on doing that you've wanted to do for so long, you will really ensure that those things happen. And I can tell you because from my own experience, I have seen people who when they stay focused on this stuff, they doubled their business, they've tripled their business, they've increased profitability, they just feel happier. They feel a sense of joy and inner peace every single day because they are functioning in their purpose, in their higher purpose, and they're letting other people that they work with, that work for them. They are letting them function in their purpose every day.

I hope this episode helped you. Remember, 2020 is the year to not just own a business, but to really own your future and to really take those dreams and those goals that you've had and to really move them forward. It's 2020 vision baby. It is the year of clarity and moving these things forward. So, here's to owning your future in 2020 and beyond. Until next time, take care and see you soon.