

Well, hello there, my friends. And welcome back to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast with yours truly, Theresa Cantley, business strategist, business growth strategist for local business owners helping you to create an iconic signature experience. And part of creating that iconic signature experience that we focus on is figuring out really what our core values are. I know a lot of people that when I start working with them and we dig into the vision, the mission, the purpose, the core values, and kind of letting go of a lot of the junk that is clogging what's in between our two ears so that we can get to that point I get a lot of pushback. And people say, "Well, what does this have to do with business growth strategy? What does this have to do with business planning? This is very woo-woo. This is very ... " No, it's not in actuality because our core values are a lot of what drives our business.

Before we get into this, I just want to mention this is episode number 49. 49. 49! And if it wasn't for my core values and what I believe in my business, in my business, I would not have gotten to episode number 49. Imagine that, right? So yeah. So next the next episode is going to be number 50, and I'm going to be talking about my lessons from creating 50 podcast episodes and really sticking to what's important and coming up, creating content, talking to people, pulling from my experiences, pulling from working with people one-on-one, and guiding, and mentoring, and kind of what has gone into creating 50 podcast episodes. I know 50 to some people might not seem a lot, but for me, I mean, it has been like staying consistent with these podcasts episodes and just the mistakes that I've made, the blunders that I've made, but also the amazing people who make this weekly podcast episode happen. So stay tuned for that on episode number 50.

But in the meantime, let's talk about values and why they're super, super important. So let's kind of ... And the way that I always explain this, especially when people are giving me some pushback and they're like, "I want to dig into the strategy. I want to dig into the numbers, and the goals, and the financials. Why do we have to do this?" well, because ultimately it's what really guides your business. Some people don't believe that. But once we dig into this and kind of really break it down and unpack it, people can see, okay, I get it, especially the people who were super rigid, super detailed people, people who are super into numbers. They don't want to do what people have said to me, the fluff and stuff. Which I don't look at this as the fluff and stuff. This is like the core of creating a business and building an amazing business. Anybody from Warren Buffett to Richard Branson to ... Why can I not think of the guy that started Microsoft? Bill Gates. Oh my word. All those people, all those people had vision because vision is super important. We talk about that a lot on this podcast, but vision is super important, understanding what our mission is in this world and our purpose, but also what kind of brings it all together and is that guiding force are our core values.

So if we look at it like this, we look at it like our beliefs that we have about our business, our thoughts and our beliefs, that ends up creating our map, okay? So we start at the beginning, what creates, what determines what our journey is going to be, that is when we define our purpose and our perspective about our purpose, okay? So that creates our journey. That's like saying, "Okay, this is what I was brought to this world to do on the big picture, grander scheme." So then our beliefs and our thoughts about that purpose, whether or not we can do it, or can't do it, or what's going to happen to us, or all those fears that drive us, or all that motivation and momentum that drives us, and the experiences that we go through, and how we handle all those things, that's what ends up creating the map to build that journey. So if you're thinking about I want to go from Pennsylvania to Arizona, we need a map, right? And our map, like I say, that is our beliefs, and our thoughts about our purpose, and our perspective.

And everybody, I don't care if you own a store, if you own a restaurant, if you're an online entrepreneur, everybody has a purpose, okay? It's not just to open a store and sell stuff or it's not just to open a restaurant and sell food, right? It's something grander than that. And our beliefs about that and our beliefs about our abilities to serve that purpose to the highest level, that is what creates our map. And like I said, our purpose and our perspective, that determines what journey we're going to go on, and the map gets us through that journey as if we were going from Pennsylvania to Arizona. And of course there's mountains, and there's streams, and there's rivers and everything along the way, which are the bumps, and the missteps, and bad decisions that we make along the way. But that's okay because that's part of the journey. And our beliefs that we have about that, that ends up creating the map for us. So yeah, sometimes we run into mountains on our map. But if we believe that we can get over it, well, then we're going to continue on our journey. But if not, we're going to get stuck, right? We're going to have a roadblock.

So our vision, so we're thinking like we're driving a car and we're on ... We're going down or a map. We're driving on our map. Our vision is our GPS. That is what connects to our beliefs. If we have beliefs that we can't do something, well, then we're not going to have a clear vision, right? Or if our map is like a really bad map, and it's kind of cloudy, and we can't really read it, well, we're not really going to be able to plug it into our GPS and our vision isn't going to be super clear and super solid, right?

So our vision becomes our GPS that we plug in the coordinates, and we're looking at our map, and we're plugging in our stuff, and it's going to tell us where to go. It's going to tell us what to avoid. It's going to keep us on the road and going in the right direction, right? You can kind of see where this is going. So our values, our core values in our business are actually the headlights on the car. So if we don't have the headlights on in the car, we have a GPS, but we don't have the headlights on when it gets dark or when it's raining, we don't know where to go, or we make a bad decision and take a wrong turn, or we go down the wrong road, or maybe we run off the road. Our core values are like the headlights on the car, and the windshield wipers on the car, and the heater in the car so they keep us moving in the right direction. They connect to the journey, the map, the GPS to guide us and make sure we're going in the right direction.

And I just read something from my mentor today, Mel Abraham. Amazing, amazing mentor.. Taught me everything that I know about building my own thought leadership. He is just amazing. But I heard something from him today about ... He was talking about core values also, which is funny because that's what my topic was going to be today, and just how there's so many people it's almost become like a marketing speak, having core values. You hear people talking about core values in posts, and you hear people talking about core values on sales pages, finding your core values. And it's not just enough to throw those words out there. It's not just enough to write words on a paper.

The other day, I was talking to somebody and they wanted to rush through the vision, and the mission, and the, and the values. They were like, "I've done all this. I have an MBA. Why do I have to do this again?" And they just scribbled down words. It was it's not just enough to just write those words down on a paper. Those words, again, those are your headlights that guide you. So those words, you need to feel them and live them. They're not just words that we just write down and we just say these are just words that we're just going to write down on a paper because this is what we think we believe. They're words that we actually use on a daily basis. They're words that become part of our business, and they end up determining the actions and the decisions that we make every day.

So if one of your core values becomes integrity, okay? So that's one of my core values in my business. And if one of your core values is integrity but when you promise you're going to do something and then you never do it or you keep pushing it off, you're not living and showing up in your business by those core values, so that is ... When a lot of people set these values, they just write words down on a piece of paper. But then as business leaders, as managers, they don't fully live into that. They don't take their actions and demonstrate them, demonstrate those core values, in those actions, in those decisions that they make every single day.

I had a meeting with a business owner the other day, and they were telling me about how the business, how their business is ... They've gone down 20% this year. This was a new client. They were telling me about how their income had gone down 20% this year and how the business was struggling. Obviously they contacted me because they need my help. They were telling me about how revenues were hurting and they were losing business. So when we started digging into the core values, and one of their core values was financial freedom. It was, okay, so one of your core values is financial freedom, but your business is struggling with revenue. So let's talk about what's going on. And when we dug a little further and unpacked what was really happening this business in his business, we discovered that core value that he has, financial freedom, he wasn't living fully into that because he wasn't managing. Number one, he wasn't managing his pricing and how he was charging people. He wasn't and owning that value. He wasn't managing his expenses, he wasn't managing his customer base and building that experience so he wasn't fully living into building that financial freedom.

So those words that we pick for our core values, they're not just something that we write on a paper. And when I work with people, it's not just something I make you do because I want to pick stuff out of your brain. Those things, those words ... I normally tell people pick between five and seven. I have five. If you want more than seven, go for it. If you want five, go for it. It's totally up to you. But whatever those words are, we need to fully live into them and demonstrate them in the actions that we take every day and the small decisions that we make.

They also help us to stay in integrity and responsibility to ourselves, and to the business, and to everybody else that we work with. Again, they help us to stay in alignment with our purpose and our vision and make sure that our beliefs about things stay on the right path as well to help us so that we can stay in alignment with things and we can make better decisions about our business.

So again, if one of our core values ... Let's go back to integrity. No, let's go back to financial freedom. If one of our core values is financial freedom but as a business owner we're spending every last dime of the business, of the profits of the business on ourselves and not providing that financial freedom for all of our employees there, well, how is ... That's totally violating if integrity is one or if financial freedom is one. We're not being responsible with the decisions that we make. Or if we're spending money on random things because we think that's what's going to grow the business instead of really being responsible for what we're spending money on, whether it be marketing, or coaching, or whatever that might be, helping us to stay in alignment and guide our decisions better.

The other thing, kind of what brings this all together is this is what helps us to create the culture in our business. So when you run through my signature program, which is the Business Growth Formula, one of the ... We have three things that we work on. We work on the big picture, which is your vision, your mission, your purpose, your core values, the beliefs that you have, and a whole bunch of other things. So we focus on that. But then we also focus on how we build the internal experience, which is the

experience within ourselves as a business owner, the experience with our managers and leadership team if we have one, but then also the experience that we build with our employees.

So the first thing that we work on is defining those core values, and what resonates with you, and how you are going to show up as a business leader every single day. Then, those core values then help you to create that culture in your business, which is the internal experience. Because then from the internal experience, if we can build this amazing culture based on a foundation of those core values, and the vision of the business, and the grander purpose of the business, when we do that, then the external experience that we build becomes even that much better, and that external experience takes into account our community and our customers, which is all the marketing, and business development, and connections and things that we do.

So if you want to build a positive culture in your business and create an experience like no other, defining these core values becomes super, super, super important. As I said, I have seen many business owners and people that when I start working with people, they tell me, they'll say, "These are my core values. These are the things that I believe in in my business." Then when I sit down and I talk with the leadership team or I talk with employees, I start to uncover that those core values haven't really flowed down to the rest of the people in the organization.

So the core values and communicating them to your team on a regular basis, this is where it ends up showing up, getting people to do their jobs. That is one of the biggest struggles that I've run into with local business owners, is hiring good people and then getting them to have ownership in the job that they're doing. Well, if you're not communicating, if you don't clearly define and you're not stepping into and living those core values yourself, and your management team isn't doing that, then how do you expect that to trickle down to the people that work for you, the employees, right? And how do you expect your community to see you as a business owner with those core values if you're not communicating that on a regular basis, right?

Again, how these core values show up is in having high-performing employees. If you're communicating the core values, like if your core values are integrity, teamwork, education, fun, financial freedom, if you're not communicating those and you're communicating the actual core values to your team, to your employees but then also those core values end up getting demonstrated in daily activities, daily actions, daily decisions that you make ... So if one of your core values is education but then you don't spend time creating training programs for your employees or creating experiences where you can take them to an outside place ...

Like one of my clients is taking her kitchen staff to another restaurant with a local restaurateur and having them teach, having him, this local restaurateur, teach a class to them, teach a special class to them on cooking techniques, or on pairing techniques, or whatever she talks to him about teaching. So again, if one of their core values is education, so what are they doing? The small decisions and actions that they're taking are making sure that they're creating educational programs, making sure that they're constantly training their staff, making sure that they're consistently talking to them not just about the business and what they do in the business but also what the business is about, that grander purpose.

When we don't do that ... Like I said, I run into a lot of local business owners who tell me, "Well, I can't get people to do their job. I can't get people to show up to work. When they're here, they're lazy. They're on their phone." And my first question to them is, what have you done to convey and

communicate your vision, the purpose of the business, and those core values on a regular basis? But then also, what have you done or what has your management team done to show up that way to display leadership to these employees? And if the employee just still doesn't do their ... still isn't doing their job, well, then they don't belong there anyway.

But again, those words, those core values that you choose are not just words on a piece of paper or just not words that you keep in a notebook. Those are the things that end up driving your daily actions and decisions. I can remember a time where I was writing out my daily actions that I needed to do and communicating with my team and saying, "Okay, these are the things that we're going to do today," or, "These are the things that we're going to do this week." And then I realized as I was booking my schedule and I was doing things I was not staying in integrity. I was telling them I was going to get certain things done, but then I wasn't getting them done. And now since I've become aware of that and I know that integrity and responsibility are two core values in my business that are important, now when I see that I can catch myself really quick and say, "Okay, you know what? If I'm not staying in integrity, I can't expect them to stay in integrity either. So I need to get myself back into this and reconnect so that we can move these things forward."

So if you haven't taken time to really clearly define what those core values are and how they relate back to the grander purpose of what you're doing in your business and then also what that vision is for what you and your team want to do to make a difference in this world and a difference in your community, I highly recommend that you take some time to define what those core values are and why they're important in your business, and also at the same time how you're going to communicate them but also what you need to do as a business owner to show up embracing, and living, and breathing those core values.

Because as my mentor said this morning, which I thought was super, super clever, is that we sew our own fabric. What that means is that the decisions that we make on a regular basis, how we're showing up, the actions that we take create this fabric, and that fabric we then wear as business owners. So if we don't have clearly defined core values and we aren't living them, we are sewing a piece of fabric that is quite holey. And I don't mean holy as in religious. I mean it's not going to be a piece of fabric that is going to be able to withstand years of wear. But if we clearly define these core values and we live them and they are fully like people ... Because the core values end up determining what our brand is so it makes people ... It helps people to feel a way about our business and to without us even being there.

So however we are showing up in those actions that we take and the decisions that we make, that ends up creating this piece of fabric so that we're going to wear. And what I mean by wearing it, that's what our business looks like. So you have a choice of either creating a piece of fabric that's going to fall apart in two days or you're going to create a piece of fabric that you can make a garment out of that you're going to be able to wear for years, and years, and years, which is a successful business. But the foundation behind that are the core values that we define and implement into every single piece of our business and every single part of the experiences that we create within our business.

So if you haven't done this already, I have a free download that will help you to really start to create and define what those core values are and then what you can do to implement them inside your business so that you can really connect together that vision, that purpose, and those values so that you can create an amazing journey for you, the people that work for you, for your community, and for your customers. So if you want to get that free download, you can go into the show notes and you can click on the link to

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it. It's at [theresacantley.com/corevalues](https://theresacantley.com/corevalues). So until next time and until our next episode, episode number 50, I wish you an amazing rest of your week. And I hope you have a fabulous, fabulous day. See you soon.