

Theresa Cantley:

Hey there, and welcome to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I am your host, Theresa Cantley, and I am so glad that you are here with me. It is a bright and sunny day outside. It's not very warm, but at least it's sunny and it's not raining, which makes me feel so good. Sunshine is just so good for us, and it's good for the soul, it's good for... The vitamin D is good for us, gives us energy, and just overall makes us feel good. And right now, I think we all could use a dose of feeling good, right?

Theresa Cantley:

I wanted to just jump on here today and talk a little about how we can lead in the face of fear with what's going on right now in the world, in our local communities. I, as you've heard me talk about many times over, my business is based on... You know, I work with local businesses to help them to grow and to build an iconic experience that sets them apart from everybody else and ultimately brings them the freedom that they crave.

Theresa Cantley:

And with everything going on in the world, I mean, it's funny, and I talked about this on the Facebook Live late last week, but last week, I ended up having to have surgery that wasn't... It was scheduled kind of last-minute, and I had to go down to the University of Pennsylvania, and now I'm home recovering and staying in the house, because everybody's staying home right now, which is a good thing. And it's funny, my husband and I joked around that we went in to Penn and left, because I had to stay over, and when we left two days later, it was like the world had gone from one thing to another within two days. And it was just like, wow, you know? And trying to get your footing and get grounded back down so you can make decisions and do the right thing.

Theresa Cantley:

You know, it was just so amazing. I mean, everything was being canceled, sports events were being canceled, big sports events, and meetings, and restaurants are closing. And of course, working with local businesses, I've talked to many, many of my clients who are, you know, there's a lot of fear going on right now. And rightly so, I mean, it's scary, and this is a new time, it's a new... This is something that we haven't really had to experience since, I think they were saying back in 1904 with the Spanish flu, which I don't think any of us... Well, if you're listening and you were alive back in 1904, God bless, but I know I wasn't.

Theresa Cantley:

But the whole thing, we haven't experienced this before, so of course everybody is like... I mean, you have people buying out toilet paper, and scams on hand sanitizer, and just all this craziness going on. And the thing is, is that, and what I've told my clients, because like I said, a lot of them, they're local businesses, they're brick-and-mortar businesses, and they're like, "What are we going to do, Theresa? I can't close my business." My first answer to them is... Because, yeah, am I afraid? Absolutely. I'm human, I'm just like everybody else. But the thing that I know is that we will get through this. Nothing... It's just like you have a bad day, you go to sleep, and you get up the next morning, and the sun rises, and it's a new day, right?

Theresa Cantley:

So, it's the same kind of thing, where this is not something that's going to last forever. It is something that will pass. They will find a cure, or not a cure, but a vaccine, just like they have for other flus. I mean, I remember 15, 20 years ago when I was in the laboratory equipment industry, when H1N1 came out, and SARS came out, and the swine flu came out, and we were heavy into working with researchers to provide them equipment so that they could find vaccines for these things, and they did.

Theresa Cantley:

So, I have no doubt that this is a temporary thing, and it will pass. And I also believe, and I said this to my husband yesterday, I said, "You know, universe works in weird ways." And I believe that this, honestly, and some people might think I'm crazy, but I do believe that this is happening to get us to slow down for a moment and really think about what's important, and think about taking care of ourselves, but also thinking about what is really important in our business, in our jobs, or really, what is important in life.

Theresa Cantley:

And when my clients have called me over the past several days, you know, I was getting messages while I was in the hospital still, which is totally fine, but my first answer to them is, "You cannot make a decision based out of fear." Just like, one of the things that they told me, because I had general anesthesia, and when I was going home, they were like, "Don't make any important decisions right now, because they won't be made with really good reasoning." So it's the same kind of thing, if you think about it.

Theresa Cantley:

So, the first thing that I've said to people is, "You cannot make a decision based out of fear, because if you make a decision based out of fear, you're only going to bring more fear towards you, and you're going to make decisions that will contract your business and will contract what you're doing instead of expanding it." So, when we focus on making decisions that are fear-based, or that are scarcity-based, or that don't have a plan behind them, that's when things don't go necessarily right. That's when stuff starts to swirl even more. And also, we're not really thinking about what's best for the business and what's best for our community and our employees and ourselves, really.

Theresa Cantley:

So, the big thing that we have to think of when we are leading in the face of fear, which is what a lot of people have right now, like I said, I've had many, many, many calls, is that we have a choice. We have a choice when these things happen that we can either look at this adversity and find a way to get through it, or look at this adversity not from a standpoint of fear, but looking at it from a standpoint of leadership and an opportunity for us to reinvent certain things in our business.

Theresa Cantley:

You know, I work with brick-and-mortar businesses, and they are very much, I mean, a lot of the places that I work with, yes, they are getting online, and they have different streams of income, and... But they still think like that brick-and-mortar business, of people physically coming into their business. So, of course, I've had to remind them, "You have other options, you have things that you could do to create a different experience, because we've already put some of this stuff in place."

Theresa Cantley:

Besides that, the thing that we have to remember, again, is being a leader doesn't mean that you never feel fear. It doesn't mean that you never can be vulnerable. Being a leader means that, yes, we need to be vulnerable, and being vulnerable means that we can be brave. We can be brave and understand that, yeah, this is going to be hard, and we need to move forward, and at the same time, be empathetic. Be empathetic to ourselves, be empathetic to our community, to our employees, to our customers.

Theresa Cantley:

And the combination of the two, being brave, but at the same time being empathetic, is what is going to help us to face that fear head on, but not look at it as fear, but look at it where there is an opportunity to create innovation through this. We can have that chance to, like I said, not look at it as being afraid, but look at it like, "You know what, this is a challenge for us, and we can figure this out. It's not going to last forever, but we can put a plan in place, we can take time to do the things that we need to do, so that we can make this situation something that becomes a new opportunity for us or a new innovation for us."

Theresa Cantley:

And that's where people get stuck. People think, "Oh my gosh, this is doom and gloom," and they function in doom and gloom. "It's never going to work, we're going to have to close." And of course, if you have that mindset and you think like that, no matter if you're an online business or you have a physical business, if you keep thinking like that, like, "Oh, this is going to be so terrible..." I mean, we got takeout over the weekend, and the comment that the guy that was checking my husband out, the comment that he said to him is, "Hopefully we make it through this." Well, if you have that mindset, what do you think you're going to attract, right?

Theresa Cantley:

But if you have the mindset of, "You know what, we need to take care of our employees, we need to take care of the business, and we need to put a plan in place here," take some time to stop and think and create new experiences, or take the experiences that you have in your business and create something new, create a new way of looking at it, or a new way of connecting with your customers. Which, again, I really believe in some form that this is the... This is 2020, 20/20 vision, it's the year of vision. I really do believe that this is an opportunity and a chance for the people who want to see things differently, for them to really step into this.

Theresa Cantley:

I do believe this is, you know, with everybody having to stay home, I think it's something that's happening to connect people back together and to enable us to see things differently. Because for so long, every time you turn on the news, and I actually stopped watching the news for a little while, it was just political stuff and doom and gloom, and so much anger in the world. And with this situation, yeah, while it sucks and people are sick, it's also a chance for people to rest, for people to rest and to give themselves some space to connect back to their families, and to also take that time to remember what's important.

Theresa Cantley:

And like I said, as a leader in a business, and I have clients that have called me and I've talked to them, and they are trying to control this situation, and that control master feature is coming out, and that's not necessarily the right thing to do either, because when you're trying to... When you're the control

master, and you're trying to control everything, what is behind that? Fear, right? I had somebody say to me, "Well, I'm trying to do what's financially wise for the business, and at the same time, morally ethical." And I said to them, I said, "Wait a second. They're not something that separate. If you're moving from a place of doing what's ethical and what's morally correct for the community, for your customers, for your employees, well, the financial piece, it just goes right along with it. They're not separate."

Theresa Cantley:

And I think, again, that's where people get stuck in that fear thing, because they're just thinking, "I'm going to lose money, I'm going to lose money, I can't close, I need to keep people." But if you're moving... If you look at the two together and say, "Doing what's ethically correct and what's morally correct in a situation like this," going with what you think is the right thing, then the financial piece will follow. And not everybody's going to agree; everybody has their own opinion about this whole thing. That's why people are hoarding toilet paper and cleaning supplies like crazy people. You know, not everybody's going to agree with your decision, but if you believe that you are moving from a place of being morally and ethically responsible, being socially responsible, the financial piece will follow.

Theresa Cantley:

And this is one thing that I've said to the leaders of the businesses that I work with, is this is your time to show up as a leader. Just because nobody else, just because no other restaurants or no other retail stores are putting out a message saying what they're doing to take care of the employees and clean their buildings, but also other options that they're offering for people to order food or be able to shop virtually or whatever, just because nobody else is doing it doesn't mean that you can't. Because sometimes, most times, being a leader and carving your own path, and showing up in that face of fear, you may be standing there by yourself. But if you're moving from a place of possibility, if you're moving from a place of vulnerability, and you're being brave enough to do what you believe is right, which is where the empathy comes in, you might be standing there by yourself, and all the crazy people who are hoarding the toilet paper might not be standing with you.

Theresa Cantley:

But there will be people in your community, and there will be... Your employees will rally around you. If you are moving from a place of doing what you believe is right for the greater good, the financial piece will follow. The community will back you. Your employees will stand up for you. Because here's the thing, is that what ends up happening is, or what's the underlying effect of all of this, is the connection to your vision, and not necessarily people following you, but following what you believe in. And when you are taking a stand for what you believe in, which is connected to your vision, and people see that, people will rally around you. But when people make decisions based out of fear, and they're focusing on the financial piece, that's not taking a stand for anything other than showing people that you're afraid and that you have this fear. And that's not something that is going to benefit... I mean, it's not going to benefit your business, it's not going to benefit your employees, it's not going to benefit you, it's not going to benefit the community.

Theresa Cantley:

So, if we can be vulnerable and say, "Yeah, you know what, this situation is hard." This situation is going to be hard, and we're going to have to find a new normal for a little bit. It might be two weeks, it might be three weeks, it might be four weeks, it might be eight weeks, but we're going to have to find this new

normal. And we're going to have to stand in that vision and what you believe in, and move from that place of morality and ethical and social responsibility, because the financial piece is attached to it. The financial piece is just... I mean, that's arbitrary. I mean, it will, again, if you're moving from a space of solutions and possibility, the financial piece will follow, because when you're moving from a place of that, of opportunity and possibility, and discovering new ways, which is innovation, to do things in your business and connect to people, your vision isn't stopping. It's just shifting gears. And your business isn't stopping, it's just shifting gears a little bit, and you're continuing to move forward.

Theresa Cantley:

And that's why I said in the beginning of this episode, you have a choice, and we always have a choice. In situations like this, you can either run from it or you can lean into it. You can be brave and be empathetic at the same time, and lead your people, lead the community through this, showing up as a leader and not a follower. And again, not everybody's going to agree with you, and that's okay, because the people who will support you, and who will roll with this with you, and support you on whatever alternative services and products and things that you're doing in this time, they will support you. They will see it, and they will continue to buy from you, to shop from you, to work with you, whatever that looks like. They will continue to move forward with you.

Theresa Cantley:

So, a couple things to help you to handle... And here's the thing, the other thing that I just want to say, is... And I'm a firm, firm, firm believer in this, is that adversity comes our way not to... And this is adversity. Not to punish us or hold us back or prevent us from doing something; adversity comes our way to help us to grow, to help us to see things in a different way, and to help us to stay connected to whatever that vision is, and to be a stand for what we believe.

Theresa Cantley:

But not everybody's going to see that. Most people will see adversity as adversity. But if we can see it as possibility, we can look at that adversity and say, "Okay, this is the problem that we have. What can we do, or how... What is the lesson we need to learn here, and how can we take this adversity and create some kind of innovation from it?" Just like the researchers out there that are now pushing and pushing and pushing, and the doctors and nurses that are finding new ways to care for patients, and also digging deep into that empathy to care for people that are sick, for the researchers that are finding a vaccine, and the pharmaceutical companies that are creating medicines to treat these things.

Theresa Cantley:

That adversity isn't holding anybody back, it's moving us forward, just like it's moving... You can use this to move your business forward, even if it's that you take this time to focus on finishing building out the new experience that you want to create, the new event, the new workshop, the new class, or focusing on putting the policies in place or the training in place so that you can help your employees to grow and to master more of their skills.

Theresa Cantley:

So, one of the things that you can do through this period, and to really help you to really tap into that leadership during this time, is to really own and understand the value that your business brings. Not just believing in your business and believing in yourself, but really owning and understanding your unique value as a leader, or your unique value as a business, and moving from that space. Because when you

fully understand your value as a business, that you offer amazing food at your community spot where everybody wants to go, and that you provide an educational experience for people and you can teach them things, any of that stuff, when you fully understand what makes you different in your community, that's how you can really own it and be a stand for what you believe. You may have to stand alone by yourself, people might not agree with you, but that's okay. So, if you can fully own and understand your value by understanding what makes your business different, by understanding what makes you different, by understanding how you create that unique experience, that's how you can really start to find the opportunities, the hidden gems, the hidden opportunities, so that you can move forward.

Theresa Cantley:

The other thing is to just stay open and stay curious. You know, I had someone the other day, one of my clients, and they were in that control master mode, and every suggestion that I was giving them as far as different things that they could do, it was, "Oh, we can't do that because of this," "We can't do that because of this," "We can't do that because we've never done that before, we can't..." And I had to stop them and say, "Stop. Right now, what are you moving from? Not a place of opportunity, not a place of possibility, but a place of fear." It might not be beautiful, your new offering or your alternative offering right now, it might not be beautiful, it might not be fully fleshed out, it might be a little scrappy, but it's okay, because you're getting it out there, because you're trying, because you're putting one foot in front of the other and doing something to move it forward instead of staying in a place of scarcity.

Theresa Cantley:

And the third thing is just thinking about, thinking about all the possibilities of how you can connect with your customers. It might be sending regular emails; it might be doing Facebook Lives. I have a friend who owns an art studio, and she works with kids on a regular basis, and she was doing art, it was Art with Angela, because the kids are home from school now, and teaching kids, just doing Facebook Lives and teaching them how to draw different things.

Theresa Cantley:

So find, how can you connect with your customers in a different way right now, to let them know that we're all scared, but we're all in this together? You know, for me, I'm stepping up doing my live shows that I do. Normally, I only do it once or twice a week, but I'm stepping it up to give some suggestions. I'm also going to be offering to my listeners and to my customers, people on my email list, people in my community, I'm going to be offering a free brainstorm session, just a group brainstorm to get on and do a free brainstorming session, to kind of get some juices flowing.

Theresa Cantley:

So, how can you connect with your customers in a different way? It might not be the way that you've always done it, but you know what, today's a new day. It's a new time, and it's a chance, if we're willing to take it, it's a chance to discover what really, truly, dearly, what makes us different, and to really own that, to really own it and to move it forward, and if we're willing to, to really take that chance to move whatever dream you have forward, and to also just connect with people on a deeper level.

Theresa Cantley:

So, the three things were to really own and understand your value and what your unique genius is in your business and as a leader; to stay open and stay curious to new ideas; and to figure out and think about how can you connect with your customers, maybe differently than what you're doing right now,

but how can you connect with them through this? And just to let people... Remember, leadership is giving yourself the opportunity to be vulnerable, to be brave, but to also be empathetic. So, connecting with your customers and letting them know that, "Yeah, we get it. This is hard, this is hard for all of us, and it's going to be a little bit until we can get through this, but we're going to get through it together." We're all in this together, so stop taking all the toilet paper.

Theresa Cantley:

All right, anyway, I wanted to just jump in here. However you can support local businesses out there, I highly, highly, highly encourage you to do so, whether it's ordering out dinner, ordering out, doing... I know a lot of people are doing curbside pickup, shopping online from local, whatever you can do to support them through this time.

Theresa Cantley:

And I also have, if you're a business owner and you're... I mean, everybody's at home right now, working from home, a lot of businesses in my area, in the Philadelphia area, have been put on mandatory shutdown for a period of time. I have a free download that you can download. The link will be in the show notes. It's my top 10 things that you can do to start creating growth in your business.

Theresa Cantley:

It is a free download that I've had for a while, but I think with everything that's going on right now, I wanted to put this out there again, because it gives you some things to think about and some things that you can start acting on now, some things you can do with Google, some things you can do with your website, and just some things that you can do with your business in general. So, if you go to theresacantley.com/10secrets, you can go ahead and download that, and it will be emailed to you. Like I said, it gives you just 10 tips that you can do to get started, to think about, to really start to implement now, and to just get those creative juices flowing.

Theresa Cantley:

So, just remember, we are all in this together. Nobody's in this by themselves. We are all in this together, so if there's anything that I can do to help, please reach out at theresa@theresacantley.com, or you can find me on Instagram and send me a DM, or Facebook, you can send me a message to my inbox. Anyway, stay tuned for new... I have a new workshop coming, The Business Growth Formula, a new class, a new free class that we'll have details on that soon, as well as the brainstorming session that I will be doing on Facebook Live. And until then, remember, we are all in this together, and be brave, be empathetic, take care of each other. You know, we're only on this planet for a very short period of time, and using that, finding the opportunities and the possibilities in any adversity, that is how we can create more innovation in this world and make this world a better place. So, until next week, take care, be well, stay safe, and I will see you soon.