

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're here today. Today, at the time of this recording, our country is going through all kinds of stuff. And I just wanted to speak today on my feelings about it and my beliefs, as well as what I see happening and potentially what can happen in the future. We're going through this whole COVID shutdown and businesses have been struggling and people have been struggling and there has been ... you've heard a lot about depression and anxiety and all kinds of things happening because of the shutdown. And on top of this, now we're dealing with a situation that has infected our country for many, many years, hundreds of years, and how it has escalated in recent times with recent incidents, particularly the one with George Floyd that happened in Minneapolis. And how we're looking at the virus, the COVID virus, and this even more infectious, horrific virus of racism and what has happened in our country.

And I wanted to start by saying that we can't change the past, we can't change history, but we can learn from it. We can learn from it and we can grow from it. What happened in the past is in the past, it happened, we can't ignore it, but we can learn and we can grow and we can make for damn sure that it does not happen again. And we can also focus on creating real change right here right now, and to stop the spread or to stop this part of our culture that is immoral, unethical and just horrific, and which has plagued our nation, as I said, for hundreds of years.

So let's start with COVID. Let's just start with that. And like I said, I have a platform, it took me a long time to find my voice. It took me a long time to be able to speak out and not be afraid of rejection or not be afraid of what people thought about my opinion. And I feel that it is my duty, as a woman, as a woman entrepreneur, as a human being, as an empath, as someone who believes in good and light, that I have a platform and I need to use it. So I just wanted to take this time and this episode to talk about my beliefs and also what I believe we can do to change the world.

Because that's exactly what we need to do right now. And that's exactly, I believe, why all of this is coming up, because we haven't been listening to the warning signs. We haven't been listening to the things that have happened. We haven't done enough. We haven't done, I don't even want to say enough. We haven't done the things that we need to do to fix the system that we've created. And I mean the collective way. I don't mean me personally, because I haven't been involved in it, but it's time that we focus on fixing these things, fixing the process to get vaccines approved, fixing the things that are broken in businesses with overcrowded areas, but also fixing this problem that has plagued our society and plagued our culture, which is the biggest infection and the biggest virus of racism.

And I just want to just start off by saying, I grew up with amazing parents. Were they perfect? No. But what they did tell us and we were talking about this, this past weekend, with all of the riots and the protests that were conducted this weekend. But I grew up with parents who taught us that all humans are equal. And that it doesn't matter the level of education. It doesn't matter the color of your skin. It doesn't matter the religion that you believe in. It doesn't matter who you love, whether you're straight or gay. What matters is that you're human. And what matters is that you stand, be a stand for what you believe. Don't try and follow the crowd. Don't try and ... don't condense your beliefs or don't put how you feel aside and hide it because you want to try and fit in.

You need to not be afraid to stand out and not be afraid to stand for what is right and stand for what you believe. And it can be the hardest thing ever, but you need to do it. You need to take a stand, because when you have the ability to do that, and you have the ability to use your voice, you can be a stand for someone who can't, someone who can't use their voice.

And my parents, like I said, taught us that everybody is equal. And I wanted to just start by saying that. And that doesn't mean that I've been blind to things. That is just what my parents kept instilling in us,

because we saw a lot of friends of mine, growing up, being treated unfairly because of the color of their skin. I mean, I had friends that were black and Mexican and Puerto Rican and Chinese and people who had Jewish faith and people who were Muslim. And to me, they were my friends. To my parents, they were my friends.

And I remember my father saying to me, "You know, Terry, the world ... we have our belief and we've taught you to treat everyone equal and to treat everyone as human beings. Because what it comes down to is that's exactly what we are, human beings." And he said, "But the world is cruel. And not everybody out there believes that. Not everybody else believes in that equality. But what we need to do is just be a stand, is be a stand for treating people equal and be a stand for doing what's right. Even though the world may frown on it, even though you may be criticized for it, you need to still take a stand and be a stand for what is right and just in this world."

So let's take COVID, let's start there. Everything that has happened with COVID and I've talked a lot about this, about things that are happening in businesses and what has been happening in the world and what the shutdown did. And a lot of people looked at it like, "This is awful. This is horrible. This is ruining our society. This is bad. This is." So, how I look at it is this was our chance. And I said this in my last episode, this was a great accelerant of change.

This was our chance to fix a system that was created that is broken, to repair a system that needs repairing so that everybody has the chance to achieve success, so that everybody has access to capital and opportunity, so that things are equal in this country. And it hasn't felt like that. It hasn't, with student loans, kids graduated from college with these student loans that are exorbitant. I mean, I know I graduated and I had student loans and they took forever to pay off. But creating equal opportunity, giving everybody the chance at education or even giving everybody the chance at being able to start a business and achieve that American dream of achieving the life that they want to live and building a business that makes them feel alive.

And I believe that we, right now with this pandemic, we are making history. I mean, we're making history with vaccines and making history with how things have changed. But for so long things were moving so fast, businesses, I mean, you'd walk into restaurants and they would be so overcrowded, you would walk into stores or amusement parks and you'd stand in lines, like lines and lines. Or like I said, you'd go out to eat and you'd have a two hour wait and you'd go in there. And it would just be like bumping elbows. And it would just be so tightly packed. And things were just moving so fast and everything just felt so chaotic, that I believe that this was a chance for us to fix what we needed to fix, to make the change happen that needed to happen.

And giving people the ability to just have ... having people have the belief that they can succeed. If you have an idea that you can take that idea and you can create reality with it and you can build a successful business. Or you can take that idea and find a cure for something. Or take that idea and create something that can change the world. And I think for a long time, people didn't think that that was necessarily possible, because the system had us jumping through hoops or just making you feel like you couldn't do it.

And like I said, things had been ... as business owners, and I feel like I'm jumping around a little bit, but just follow me. As business owners, the idea with business is that we create solutions no matter what that is, we create some kind of a transformation. And I know for myself, working with business owners, I just found time and time again that that wasn't the focus, that the focus was more on chasing money, that the focus was more on, "Just tell me how to make money. I want to make money. Tell me how to make money. I want to make money. Just tell me how to make more sales, more sales, more sales," and focusing on not even the bottom line number, but focusing on, "What's our gross profit?" Not even [inaudible 00:11:52] what's our gross profit? "What's our sales? We need to increase sales."

Instead of focusing on, again, what is at the core of anybody who builds a business, which is making people happy, creating happiness, creating solutions, and creating some kind of a transformation. And I don't care what business you own. I don't care what you do. You create some kind of a transformation. If you have customers coming into your store, your restaurant, your yoga studio, your cleaner, your dry cleaner, your movie theater, whatever, you are creating some kind of happiness, you're providing some kind of a solution and you're creating some kind of a transformation.

And I believe that with COVID, and I've talked about this a lot, and I actually have a class that I'm going to be teaching, a workshop I'm going to be teaching called The Business Resilience Blueprint, where we focus on this. We focus on getting back to what is that transformation that you want to create in your business? And how can you focus on that now so that you can push things forward in this situation, but not only just for today, not fixing the problems of today, but also fixing the problems of tomorrow?

So I believe that this pause that we've had to happen has given us a chance to reflect so that we can fix things. And not even just fix it, but make it better, make it better so that we can thrive not only today, but tomorrow. And going along with this, there are business owners out there, because of COVID, that are struggling, but they have been doing anything and everything possible to keep their business going, to keep their business going during this shutdown. And the absorbing that we've had to do of what is it going to look like once we reopen? I mean, I've read documents, I've written documents myself, as far as reopening policies and guidelines and things that we need to do. And it's crazy and it's overwhelming and it's a lot.

So you have business owners that are dealing with this, and you have business owners that are, they're moving forward and they're people that I work with. I mean, I see them and I've been part of helping them to create these plans so that they can survive this. And try and decipher through the loans and the grants and now the reopening guidelines. It's a lot to absorb. And lay on top of that, this travesty that has happened in Minneapolis, and Atlanta, and Florida, with all these situations of racism. And realizing that we need to make a change, we need change, we need reform in our country.

We need to wipe out this racism. And what those police officers did to, as I heard someone say, snuff out the life of a human being, was deplorable, absolutely deplorable. And it is forcing and a forcing that we need to wipe out racism, to wipe out this horrific virus that has been in our country for a hundred, like I said, hundreds of years.

But it doesn't mean that we fight darkness with darkness, that we fight violence with violence. I believe that we fight violence with education, with reforming our culture and with reforming and creating change and being a stand against violence. Just those police officers and what they did to George Floyd, like I said, is deplorable. And over the weekend, we've had these protests against police brutality and against the broken system that we have in this country, so that we can erase and find a cure for racism that has plagued our country.

But what ended up happening is a lot of violence erupted, and a lot of looting and destroying businesses that were already struggling. In my home, in my city, we live right outside of Philadelphia, pizza shop owners and restaurants and I was talking to somebody this morning who owns a business down there, where over the weekend their windows and their business were completely smashed. And these were black business owners. Their business is destroyed, because these protests turned into violent riots.

So here these business owners are, that are already struggling because of COVID, black business owners, white business owners, Puerto Rican business owners, Latino business owners, Chinese business owners, who are already struggling because of this shutdown. And now these protests that started off peaceful, and started off where we need to educate ourselves. I need to educate myself on what's going on and how I can be a stand for change.

And what ended up happening is these protests were, I saw on the news police officers and sheriffs coming together with these protestors and showing their support and saying, "We are not like those cops out in Minneapolis that killed an innocent man. We are not like them. We love you. We support you. We want to help. We want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem." Police officers are not there to be like those jerks, be like those horrific cops that did that out in Minneapolis, they are here to protect our country and protect our freedom and protect the equality that we want to have.

And those peaceful protests, many of them turned into violent riots, where police officers were attacked and buildings, like I said, these small business owners that have been struggling, now their businesses are trashed because of this. And it just, that's the part of it, I mean, this whole thing has just made me feel so sad, so sad. And so like, "Oh my gosh, what is going on?"

But then I remembered what my father said. I remember very, very vividly. And it was 30-some years ago. My father saying to me, "The world isn't always going to agree with what you say, and the world isn't always going to agree with the belief that you have, that everyone is equal and everybody deserves a chance to achieve success and achieve their dreams. But you know what? That's okay, because you need to be a stand, you need to be a stand and you need to do what you feel is right. And use your voice to create change. And use your voice to do what's right, to help other people and to push that feeling, that belief that you have that everybody is equal."

Doesn't matter the color of your skin or your educational background or your religion. It doesn't matter. What matters is that we are all equal. And what matters is the decisions that we make in any adversity is what is going to create our legacy, the decisions that we make in an adversity, in a crisis, the decisions that we make and the actions that we take is what defines who we are.

It doesn't matter if you have a billion dollars or you have \$10, the decisions that you make, and the actions that you take in any adversity or crisis is what defines who you are. And I am blessed that my parents helped me to define who I am in a world that wouldn't always agree with my beliefs, but to stand firm in my beliefs, that racism should not exist. And it's time we get rid of it. And it's time that we step in and we have solidarity in our country, so that everybody has a chance to achieve the life of their dreams. And I believe this. And I thought about what my father said to me. And as he said, "The world will be cruel and people may shun you and may discriminate against you because of your beliefs, but you need to be a stand for what is just, and what is right."

And that's exactly what I built my business on and exactly what I want to say about this whole thing, is that my mission, and I've talked about this many times, my mission is to teach business owners, to teach business owners how to connect and interact with each other and with their community and with other people in a more positive, equal fashion, equal way. And if we start in our businesses, if we start by creating a culture, an inclusive culture, that makes people, that people understand, or people know that they are heard, that people know that they have, they can speak up, that they can feel safe. That we create a culture that is built on wealth. And I don't mean necessarily money. I mean, wealth of abundance, wealth of love, wealth of caring, wealth of kindness, that wealth that comes from within.

So we build a culture based on wealth, based on health and based on happiness. And if we can do that with our biggest and our most important stakeholders in our business, our employees, then what we can do is we can push it out to our community. Because if our culture is based on core values that are important, that are positive, that make people feel inclusive, core values of integrity and responsibility and teamwork and equality and education. If we start there and we build this culture of health and wealth and happiness on these core values. Then when we are building that experience with the external group, our external stakeholders, our community, and our customers, we can push it out to them. We can push that health and wealth and happiness out to them.

And then what we can end up doing is that we'll pay forward and push out into the world, which is how we can build, start to build, a society of inclusiveness, a society of equality, a society where everybody can connect together. A society of solidarity, a society of being a stand. And it's not even being anti-racist, it's being a stand for equality. Being a stand for every human being is equal, no matter the color of your skin, or your religion, or who you love, who you choose to love, or what you believe in.

And I want to be a stand for solidarity. I want to be a stand for making this change happen, whether it's ... and I work with local businesses, I believe in local businesses, I believe that they are the fiber of a community that makes a community strong and makes the world strong, makes our economy strong. So if I can start, and we can all start, in local businesses and we can start to build this culture, we can start to change these broken, these systems that we've created that have not helped us grow, but have hindered us from growing physically, mentally, emotionally.

If we can fix those systems and make them so that they do not hinder our growth, they do not hinder education, they do not hinder equality, but instead they encourage equality, they encourage freedom, they encourage education. If we can start there in our local communities and we can be a stand for solidarity and equality. Through this COVID, one of my clients, he's from Northern Ireland. And every Sunday at 6:30, the Celtic culture, when they were going into battle, they used to play the bagpipes at sunset to show everybody that there was solidarity and that everything would be okay.

So during COVID, he has this bagpiper come, and at sunset, he stands on the roof and he plays the bagpipes and it's beautiful. And it's a reminder of how we can unify, how we can have a unified community against racism and against social injustice.

And we can, as I said, I am a believer in being a stand for equality and solidarity, and I'm also a stand or ... I'm getting passionate. I'm also a believer that having diversity ... having diversity in our business, creating diverse teams, people with different backgrounds, people who've had different experiences in their life. We can use those diverse experiences and we can use that diversity to create even more innovations. Because everybody's unique experiences, when we come together, that's how we can create change. That's how we can create new and different things that help the world and not hinder it.

So I wanted to just talk today about this and about how, as business owners, we can start with our own businesses to change and shift the culture in our businesses so that we can build this culture of health and wealth and happiness. Because I believe if we start there, it can push out and we can change. We can have this impact, the greater good, and we can really start to make this change this country so desperately needs. Right now what's going on, it's either going to tear us, it's going to tear us right in half and right at our foundation, or it's going to bring us together and unify us and make this country better than it's ever been, make groundbreaking, history breaking things happen.

And I know for me, I want to be part of the difference makers. I want to be part of that groundbreaking change that we're going to happen. Like I said, we can't change the past, but we can change, we can create a new future. We can create a new future and it starts today. And I wanted to just share this message with you, because like I said, as business owners, and if you're listening to a podcast, I would imagine you're a business owner. And if you're not, you probably work in a small business. But I think if we can change the culture in our business and we can become ... we can change the culture in our business and we can make impactful changes now, we can change the world and we can make all of these injustices, we can make all of these injustices ... we can change. We can make real change happen.

Have a great rest of your week. And I want to just leave you with this, that if we believe this inside, we can make it happen externally. And if we believe that we can change the travesties that have happened in the past, that we can make ... we can revise and repair and redefine things so that we can carve a different path, a better path for everyone, for every human being, for every business owner, for every

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person in society. And I hope you're with me on this. I know you're with me on this. And I hope you have a great rest of your week and it's time to make real change. It's time to change the world. And it's time to repair the things that are broken. So we can have a better future. Have a great rest of your week, and I'll see you next week.