

Well hello there, and welcome to another episode of the Your Next Best Step podcast. I am your host, Teresa Cantley, and I wanted to talk today about something that I've learned, a lesson that I've learned myself over the entire time that I've had my business. And it's something that I've always struggled with. And I didn't quite know how to fix it, and at times it ruled my life and ruled my business, to the point where at one point I remember crying and turning to my husband and saying to my husband, "I didn't build a business, I built a nightmare." And this one thing that we can change for ourselves can help to protect the greatest gift that we are given, which is our gift of time.

And once you learn how to identify and set these things up, you will be able to feel so much better about things. You'll be able to be more honest with yourself as a business owner, and you'll also be able to connect with people on a much healthier level. I had a conversation with a client last week, and in talking to them and having this conversation, I realized very quickly that this was something they needed to work on in order to go to the next level with their business. And what I'm talking about, and I know it's probably to be a shocker, but it's something that many, I think everybody that I've ever worked with over the past decade, even the past 20 years, 25 years, everybody struggles with this. And there's so many programs out there to help you with it. But I wanted to just speak from my own experience and just ... We're going to talk about three things that you can start with. And this thing that we need to set in this thing that we need to work on are boundaries.

And they're not borders, as I read in this book, *White Hot Truth* from Danielle LaPorte. I read this book several years ago when it first came out, and she talks a lot about not setting up borders, but setting up boundaries. Healthy boundaries. And when ... And it's funny because I can relate it to when I was studying TaeKwonDo, when I was learning how to spar, you had your space. Or just learning how to do forms, how to do our forms, how to do ... Even when we were learning the bow, when we were learning the J chucks, nunchucks, and sparring, and really anything. You have your space, your boundaries. And you learn to respect that space, but you also learn to respect your opponent's space. You also learn how to get very intuitive about your space, because especially when you're sparring, you want to be able to see when somebody is coming into your space so you can gauge how much room you have, so you can get your space back with a kick or a punch or whatever.

But thinking about these boundaries and working with many, many business owners over the past decade in my own business, boundaries are the biggest thing that people have a hard time setting. It's the biggest thing that I've had a hard time setting. And when we don't have boundaries, when we don't have healthy boundaries set up, that's when we get stuck. We get stuck, we can't get out of our own way, but also we get stuck in this pattern of trying to make everyone else happy and trying to please everyone else so that we feel better, we know they feel better. We're trying to do everything for everyone. And what happens is we do nothing for no one. And I know speaking for myself from my own experience, when I haven't had boundaries set up, I've gotten into a pattern of working very long hours, promising everything to everyone and working to get everything done for everyone.

But then I also like ... I'm working hard and I'm doing all these things, but I just feel miserable. And I know business owners, this happens especially if you have a team, we fall into these same patterns. And the client that I was talking about from last week, they were running into these boundary issues with employees, with themselves as business partners and respecting each other's boundaries. And also with their suppliers, the supply chain that they had to deal with. And what it leads to, or what it led to with them is checking their phone as soon as they wake up, responding, or thinking they're they're being proactive about fixing the problem, but what they're actually doing is they're just reacting to the situation. And what happens when we react to stuff, we don't necessarily make the best decisions.

So I wanted to just give you three areas that you can start focusing on setting boundaries. And no matter if your business is doing super well, or your business is in crisis mode, boundaries are going to

become super, super, super important. Because no matter what's happening, you need to have healthy boundaries, most important, set around your mindset and set around your time. So that you can keep your mindset fresh, keep your thoughts positive, your beliefs positive, but also take the right actions. Because when we're reacting to situations and we're tired, and I know I've experienced this myself, when we're mentally and physically drained and we need to keep pushing ourselves through something, what ends up coming out on the other end is not necessarily very positive and very effective. So the three things I wanted to talk about and just give you some ideas of how you can start setting boundaries are set around your schedule, your employees, and meetings.

So let's talk about your schedule first of all. One of the biggest things that I've seen with business owners and their schedule and not setting boundaries around it, is they book themselves jam packed, and they try and keep these hours, or put these hours in place where they're just constantly going, going, going, going, going, instead of allowing themselves some time for creativity. And when you're trying to do creative stuff, create content, take your vision to the next level, implement new ideas and new programs or new offers or whatever, you can't be creative and also be analytical at the same time. And I've seen it with business owners where they just ... They don't have a plan for their day, and then on top of it, because they don't have a plan, they leave things to random chance, and they're trying to analyze and be creative at the same time. And it's just not ... We use two different parts of our brain and it's just not possible.

So one of the things that you can do, two ways that you can set boundaries around your schedule. One of the things is to create a plan for your day. Make sure you understand what your day is going to look like and have that plan and set that plan and communicate that plan. The other thing that you can do with your schedule is you can set aside CEO days. So you can set aside two days, three days, whatever it is, where you have that time completely blocked out so that you can keep your head down, do what you need to do to be creative, and you're not meeting with people, people aren't interrupting you. And if you can't do a full day, do portions of a day.

And I know this is one of the biggest things that I struggle with. I work with a lot of restaurant owners and they're telling me they're overwhelmed, and they're telling me they can't get anything done, but then I hear, "Well, this is the restaurant industry and it's just chaotic." Well, no, it doesn't have to be that. It doesn't have to be that in any industry. And here's the other thing, is that you have to be committed to setting these boundaries. You have to be committed to having a plan for your day and making sure that you're blocking off time to be creative, but then you're also blocking off time to do the analytical stuff. Talk to people about what's happening or doing the managerial things or doing the ... Looking at your numbers or looking at your metrics or doing this stuff that requires more thinking versus that creativity.

The other thing that you can do with your schedule to set boundaries is to also not check your phone in the morning. Make sure you're giving yourself some time for yourself in the morning to get your thoughts right, to get your head right, so that you can attack the day in a more positive way. But then also at the end of the night, making sure that you're shutting off and have a process to shut down your day and stay committed to it. One of the things that I started to do is shut down at 6:15 every night so that I'm not working until ... From eight in the morning until nine-10 at night. That's not good. So setting, making sure that you have healthy boundaries set around your schedule so that you're planning your day, you know what you need to get done during the day, you're blocking time to get things done, but then also you're blocking days off that you have, and your team knows that these days are days that you are spending doing creative work.

Second thing is employees. I've seen this so much with business owners, where employees have their texts, they have their home phone number, they have their ... Obviously they have their cell phone

number, they have their email. They have all these different ways to get in touch with them. And what ends up happening is, and I've seen this time and time again, where, especially if you have a situation with an employee, they're texting and texting and texting and texting and texting at all hours of the day, and just really pushing past a boundary. And then it becomes like they're invading my personal space. And so one of the things that I would say with employees is to, number one, make sure that they have one way to communicate with you. If somebody needs to call out sick or somebody has an emergency, I understand having access to your cell number. Okay. But setting in place a rule so that if someone has a situation, there is only one way that they can reach out. If it's not sending an email saying I'm not feeling good, I'm not going to be in. Or if you do want to have your employees contact you, make sure that it is very clear as to who they contact and how they contact them. And I would recommend giving them one set way that they would connect with you.

I normally tell people that if you're going to set a policy and a boundary with employees for situations like that, my recommendation is not to do text, but to have them send an email. Everybody has access to their email via their phone. So you'll get it, but having them send an email. Because when they start to ... Because texts are more personal. So when they start accessing text or they start texting you, then it starts to take that boundary down. So what we want to do is give them one clear way. Like I said, my recommendation is to have people contact you via email. But if it's an absolute, absolute emergency during the day, obviously they can call the business number. But if they know that they're going to be out in advance or something's happening, my recommendation is always via email.

The other thing is to set hours so that if they want to have a conversation with you or they have a question or they have a concern or something's happening, you have hours that they can come talk to you, or schedule a meeting with you, schedule an appointment that they can come chat with you. So that they know ... And I've seen this where people are in the middle of something and employees are coming up going, some random thing that they want to talk about. And it's like, okay, you're trying to get things done, you're rushing around, and people just want to come up and talk, and guess what? You lose your focus. You don't get stuff done. So I'm not saying that you shouldn't talk with employees. There should always be space for that, and there should be a comfort level for that. But if they want to sit down and have a conversation about something, making sure that you have time set aside and they know when that time is. So if they want to schedule a chat with you, they know when that can take place.

The other thing that you can also do is set aside time, whether it's once a week, every other week, once a month, that you have ... I used to call them like coffee and donut hours, or whatever. Coffee talk, that you have an open forum that you will sit down, very comfortable environment and have a conversation with your employees addressing any concerns or questions or things that they have in a group atmosphere. So that's another way that you can set a boundary around addressing questions at a specific time.

And then the third thing that I wanted to just touch on is boundaries set around meetings. And this is something that I ran into a lot with people is that I would schedule meetings every day, all day. And I didn't have enough time to get my stuff done. Or I didn't have enough time to connect with people on social media, or I didn't have ... I was meeting with people at hours that were interfering with my personal time. So I was taking meetings at seven o'clock at night, or I was taking meetings at seven o'clock in the morning, and then missing my morning time, my morning routine, and foregoing that. So making sure that you have set times and set days. And I see this a lot with brick and mortar businesses, where you have people that just appear. Sales reps for things, people in the community, whether there are other community leaders or other business leaders, and they just pop in. So setting something and making sure that your entire staff, all of your employees understand, if you want to schedule a meeting,

this is when they will schedule meetings, or to let these people know I only do meetings on Wednesdays and Fridays, or I only do meetings on Tuesdays and Thursdays from this time to this time. And making sure that you have that communicated. It's clear, it's consistent, and it's out there so that people understand.

So, as I've said, I've seen this where people just pop in. And you know what? Hey, if you have time to talk with them, or it's something super, super important, then you can make that decision that you're going to change your schedule so that you can have a chat with them. But more often than not, you want to make sure that you're sticking with your schedule because you have a big vision. You got big dreams that you want to get done, right? So sticking with your schedule and setting some time aside so that you can do meetings.

Because it's one of the biggest things that I've had problems with, and I've learned the lessons the hard way, is making sure that I have specific days and times where I'm taking meetings. And if a time doesn't work for somebody, I'll do my best to try and find another time, but I will not do a meeting at seven in the morning or seven at night where it interferes with my morning ritual, and also my evening ritual. Because what happens is the more we do that, if we take an exception for one, then we make an exception for another, and another, and another, and then next thing you know, you're doing things that you didn't necessarily want to do. Taking meetings at times you didn't necessarily want to take them. And then it totally defeats the purpose of setting a boundary and having a schedule.

So if you can learn to have boundaries set up around your schedule, your employees and your meetings, it will help to protect your time and your space, but it'll also help to build better connections with people. Because when we have these boundaries set up, we can make sure that we are present during the time that we need to be present for ourselves, and for people that we want to have communication and connection with. But we're also respecting our vision. We're respecting the work that we're trying to do. And when we have focus time, we can do better work. We can figure out how to make things better instead of just throwing things out there just to see if they stick and if they work right.

So figure out where you need to set boundaries. And there's boundaries around other things, which I'm going to talk about in future episodes. But I wanted to just throw these three things out there, because I've seen it a lot, I've experienced it myself. And in order to take your business to the next level, especially in these turbulent times right now, and trying to figure out the new norm and trying to roll with anything that comes our way, which building boundaries, my friends, is part of building resilience into your business. If you don't have any boundaries set up around these things, you can't focus on building resilience. So we want to focus on setting these boundaries so that we can roll with whatever comes our way now in the future.

So take a moment, take a sheet of paper out, and write down these things that ... What do you need to do to set boundaries around these three super important things? And leave me a comment, let me know what was most helpful for you. And if you need some extra inspiration, I have a free audio download that you can save onto your phone. It's a very short audio download to keep you motivated and keep you moving forward when you are trying to set these boundaries. Or what it feels like when you know a boundary has come down or has been crossed, and you need to go back and fix it. So you can go ahead, you can find that download in the show notes, and you can go ahead, you can click on the link and download the free audio, save it to your phone. And hopefully it will bring you some inspiration as you are trying to move forward with setting these boundaries.

So until next time, have a great rest of your week week, stay well, be healthy, and let's focus on owning our future. All right, take care.