

Hello there, and welcome back to another episode of the Your Next Best Step Podcast with yours truly, Theresa Cantley. I'm a business strategist, a business resilience specialist, and I help small business owners to find the obstacles, to find the gaps, but also to find the opportunities so that we can fix them and they can scale to seven figures and beyond, but also to have their business run smoothly without them even being there. So I am so glad that you are here with me again for another episode.

And I wanted to talk today about culture, not culture as in what is your culture? What is your heritage? But culture as in what happens in our business? I've had this conversation a lot with people about culture. I think I've even talked about it on the podcast several times, but I wanted to talk about it today because as the world is changing, as things are evolving, so our culture is in businesses. And a lot of people think that culture is just something that just happens in a business. They just think, "Oh, okay, I have my business and this is what my business is about and this is what the culture is." And that's not how it should work or really how it does work, okay?

So culture isn't something that happens just from dictating tasks to people. It's also not something that happens by just opening up a business and saying, "Okay, world, I'm here and this is what I do." Culture actually comes from bringing the right energy, the right focus, and the right intention into our business. And I've seen many, many business owners, many business owners who are successful, have a lot of money and they are miserable. And when you look at the culture, when you look at their employee engagement in their business, or you walk into the business and you can feel the energy and the vibe within when you walk around and you see people sitting at their desks, or you see people at a... I don't even know whether they use copy machines anymore, but you see people at a copy machine or you see people interacting with each other and you can just feel the energy. You can feel the culture. And I'm sure if you talk to any of those employees, you'll come to find out that the culture there is not a very positive one.

So here's the thing is that with our culture, it's not something that comes from outside. It's not something, again, that is just there and it's just how things are. It's something that we can actually define and get clarity on what we want the culture to be, but then consistently bring the right intention into our business to make sure that the culture is one that is positive and really aligns with what it is that the vision is for our business and what it is that we're trying to do in this world, okay? And, again, I've seen this time and time again where people, even when they talk about, I have employees that aren't really engaged, or I have employees that aren't doing their job, or that are not paying attention to detail, or we can't hire the right people, or we can't retain the right people. And a lot of times what that comes down to is what is the culture from within?

And there's a saying that I heard awhile ago from one of my mentors, as within so without, as above so below. So when I think of that, especially when it comes to building businesses, building resilience into your business, scaling a business, a lot of people want to start with the external pieces. They want to start with the marketing and they want to start with the website and they want to start with all that external stuff. And what they miss and what they forget is we have to start inside so that it can reflect outside. And one of the biggest things that we need to start with and that a lot of people don't want to start with is what can we do to build a better culture within our business?

And here's the thing. The culture that gets built within the business, it does not come from your employees. That's not where it starts. It actually starts with you. It starts with the energy that you're bringing into your business every single day. It starts with how you are showing up every single day in your business. If you're coming in and you're stressed and you're overwhelmed and you're trying to control everything, then the vibe that you're giving off to people is that one of being a control master, that they don't have control over things, and potentially, that everything that they do is wrong. Plus also they feel like they have to walk on eggshells, right?

And I've seen that. I've seen... I actually work with somebody who I just started working with, and every time they will go into their company and they would be walking around, they would be constantly stressed and constantly overwhelmed and constantly just moving at such a fast pace. And I remember when I had a conversation with one of their employees when I first started working with them, the feedback that I got was, "Well, we know she's very busy. We know she has a lot on her plate, but she's really unapproachable. And when you're trying to solve certain problems, we feel like there's no place to go because she's unapproachable and any time you ask a question, she's always so busy." So the culture there is one of feeling chaotic, feeling stressed, feeling overwhelmed, and that's not really good to embrace and have people perform at their highest potential, right? So culture starts with you, the manager, the leader, the business owner, okay? It starts with you and the energy and intention that you are bringing into your business absolutely every single day.

So how do we start this? Well, the first thing... I'm going to give you some questions to ask yourself. The first thing that you want to ask is what is it that I am trying to do here? What is it that I'm trying to accomplish? What is it that I want to do? And that is directly tied to the vision that you have for your business, as well as your core values. What is it that you stand for? Okay? And why are you doing this in the first place? Right? That's how we can bring intention to what it is that we want to do. So if we want to create... So if we think about it and we think, "Okay, the vision that I have for my business is I want to create an atmosphere in my restaurant that's very engaging and very comfortable and very stress-free because the world is so stressed right now and I want a place that people can gather and feel good as well as my team can interact with them and they can feel good too." All right?

So there's our intention. And even me just saying it feels good, right? So if we have that intention, we have that vision, but then we show up every day into our business miserable, stressed, overwhelmed, the two are not in alignment at all, right? But if we have that intention, we have that vision, then what we do is we can ask ourself the next question, who do I need to be and what energy do I need to bring into my business every single day to make that culture start to happen? And then the third thing that goes along with that is how do I want to make people feel? How do I want my employees to feel? How do I want my customers to feel? Because again, when we have a culture that is built on intention and positive energy and consistency, we are able to then push that out into our customer interactions, as well as into our community interactions, our vendor interactions, and people can start to really see what the vibe of the business is, okay?

When the employees... When you have a higher level of employee engagement, you have a higher level of people working together better and interacting in a more positive way, that is going to push out into the outside, right? Everybody's going to be able to feel it, everybody's going to be able to see it. So as we're thinking about what kind of culture is it that we want to build, okay? We can start to think about what is it that I'm trying to accomplish in my business? What is my vision that I have for my business?

And then from there saying, in order to make that happen, how do I need to start being now, right here right now, and what type of energy like do I need to bring? If we're feeling like crap all the time, right? If we're blacking out from drinking too much every night, or we're eating really crappy, or we're smoking five packs of cigarettes a day, how are we going to feel physically? Right? Kind of crappy. And then we go into our business and we want to achieve one thing, but then we're showing up as something completely different. So the two have to definitely be in alignment.

And once we get that, okay? Once we understand and we say, "Our physical energy, we feel great," we also have the right intention behind, okay, this is what we want to do with our business, this is what the vision is for our business, and this is how I need to show up and I want to show up in my business no matter what comes your way, okay? And when we talk about resilience and we talk about the six pillars of resilience, this is so key to building resilient people, all right? Actually, people, infrastructure,

products, anything. No matter what comes your way, when you have a culture that has the foundation of intention, positive energy, focus, clarity, where everybody understands what the vision is of the business, there is an interaction between everybody and engagement, a high level of engagement that is really positive, no matter what comes your way, you are going to have that resilience that you can...

I mean, even if you as the leader are afraid of what's coming or what has happened and what you're going to do, people went through it last year with COVID, you will be able to continue. You will be able to carry on and continue to make things happen, because you've already built that culture on a strong foundation of conviction, a strong foundation of, again, the right energy so that you can move things forward no matter what impacts come into the business. And as well, when you are trying to grow your business or you're trying to scale your business, when you have this culture that is based on people understanding their purpose in the business as well as the grander purpose of the business, they understand and they have clarity around what your vision as the owner, leader, or manager, what your vision is and how they kind of fit into everything, they have clarity around that, they will start to take a higher level of ownership of their work and what they're doing, and again, have a higher level of engagement.

So ask yourself these questions, okay? What is it that you stand for? Your core values, what is it that you're trying to achieve? The vision in your business, your why, okay? How do those core values, how do they align with the people that you have in your business? Okay? How do you want to make people feel? And then also, who do you need to be right now? What type of energy do you need to bring into your business right now to make this culture of reality?

So, I guarantee if you take some time and you ask yourself those questions, you are going to find that either you need to make some small tweaks, maybe you need to make some large tweaks, maybe you're good. Maybe the culture in your business is good, okay? But I'm here to tell you that no matter what, building a culture, the right culture, a healthy culture in your business is not only important for you, it's important for your employees, it's important for their families, it's important for your customers, it's important for the community. It just pushes out into the world. And the more we can start within our own business by doing this, the more we can push it out to ultimately change the world and make the world much better than we found it ourselves.

So, I hope you enjoyed this episode of the podcast. And until next time, have a great rest of your week. And I will see you soon.