

Well, hello friends and welcome back to the Your Next Best Step podcast with me, your host Theresa Cantley and I'm back here for a solo show again after we had the amazing show where I interviewed my clients and my dear friends, Kenny Fisher and Victoria Brunner from FattE-Bikes. If you haven't listened to that episode, go back to episode number 120 and make sure you listen. It was filled with so many gold nuggets of information and so many inspirational quotes and messages from them as far as where their journey has gone, where it started, how they've gotten through things, not just with the business that they have now, but with the businesses that they've had in the past and what they're doing now, what they're doing differently and what they're planning on doing now so that they can achieve the future that they want to achieve. So make sure you go back and listen to episode 120.

So today I wanted to focus on, because I've heard this over the years, people have said this line to me that, "Theresa, I don't have time to plan. It's a waste of time. It's a waste of time from the things that I need to do during the day and it actually prevents me from being creative." And I wanted to talk about this because planning out things and having a strategy, it could be further from wasting time and preventing creativity. In fact, it gives you more time and gives you more creativity. And I want to dive in here today because as things are opening back up, but also as the world is turning and things are happening with COVID and just with stuff that's happening all across the world, we want to make sure that we are taking time to plan out things that we want to do in our business, especially as our business goes through different seasons.

You've heard me talk before about how businesses have four different seasons and they don't necessarily align with the seasons that our planet goes through, but they are very, very similar in that you have a season of taking downtime to reflect and rest. And you have a season of huge amounts of growth and huge amounts of cash coming into your business. So we want to make sure that we are taking time to plan out what we want to do and we also take time to then start taking action on that. And I'm going to give you three reasons why planning does not waste time. And in fact, again, it gives you more time. So often, so often I see entrepreneurs, managers, leaders in businesses, focusing on things that do not move the needle forward. They do not move them closer towards achieving their goals. And they also in fact, keep them stuck, overwhelmed, overworked, and they can't figure out why. Because most of the things that they're focusing on are day-to-day activities, things that maybe they're comfortable doing, they don't love doing them, but it's comfortable because that's what they've only ever known.

And that's what they've only ever focused on. And the stuff that they really need to focus on, the vision and what are the critical activities or what are the most important things that we need to focus on, the most important projects we need to do in order to make the business grow, in order to get the business to grow, but also in order to get them to grow, they don't focus on those at all. And again, I've seen this so many times. So then when I meet with people and we talk about, so how do you plan out your day? And they look at me and say, "Well, I don't because having meetings on a regular basis, sitting down and planning things out, it's just a complete waste of time when I need to be focusing on this whole laundry list of things, because that's what's going to keep the business running." And they don't realize that what they're doing is actually detrimental to the business and hurting the business.

But I know if you're listening to this episode, you are one of those people that wants to understand how planning and how to go about taking the right actions to plan out your day or plan out your month or plan out your quarter, whatever it is so that you can be successful so that you can achieve that next level of success that you're looking to achieve. So let's talk about, first of all, taking time to think, taking time to catch your breath and just allow yourself to think as a CEO, as an entrepreneur, as a manager, as a business owner, that is probably the most crucial time that you can give yourself. And it is something that a lot of people and I am guilty of this myself. It is something that a lot of people don't want to focus

on because people think that if you are not running at 500 miles an hour, doing work, sitting down at your desk, doing work head down, running around like a maniac in your business, trying to get everything done.

If you're not doing those things, then you're not making money or you're not helping the business. Or one of the things I used to tell myself that if I wasn't doing those things, that I was lazy. Crazy, right? But what I found over the years in growing my business and helping others to grow their business, that thinking time, that time to give yourself some space to be creative is so crucial to move your business forward. That time is when you can allow yourself that space for new ideas and solutions to come in. When we are head down in, go, go, go, go, go mode, just constantly moving, constantly taking action, constantly doing things, we don't give ourselves that chance for new ideas to come in. And when we also stay in that space of just constant movement, we don't allow the space or the energy for positive change to come in, change that will help the business to move forward.

And so many people, when I bring up this principle of you need to give yourself that downtime, you can't be in constant movement and constant action and constant, that one season of just go, go, go. When I bring up the concept of you need to give yourself that critical thinking time, people look at me like I have three heads. They're like, "No, that's not possible." But once they allow themselves to have that space, they realize, "Oh my gosh. I've had so many great ideas and found solutions to problems that we've had forever and thought of, oh my gosh, I have so much time to do X, Y, Z," that they realize the power of thinking time. So how that relates to planning is when we give ourselves that time to plan out what it is that we want to do. Now, whether it's something that you do in the morning and you plan out your day or you plan out, what is the next month going to look like? Or you bring your team together and you all sit down daily, weekly, whatever, to have those meetings.

Sit there and give yourselves that thinking time, that space to say, what are the things that we want to achieve and what are we going to do to start moving us forward to achieving them? So the three things that we end up getting from taking that time to think or taking that time to really start planning things out are, and then I'm going to call it the three A's. So the first one is alignment, action, and achievement. So the first one, let's talk about alignment. So alignment, when we take time to give ourselves that thinking time, whether it's just you or it's you and your team, the alignment piece is getting everybody in alignment with the vision of the business and coming back to, this is what we need to accomplish or this is what we want to accomplish, or this is who we want to be. So getting back in alignment with the vision, but also getting back in alignment with who we need to be in order to move the business forward.

So often everybody is moving in many different directions that what ends up happening is, especially if you're in a stressful period in your business like a lot of businesses have been in, what happens is we get out of alignment with each other as a team, and then that's when breakdowns start happening. So if we can take that time to get everybody moving in the same direction, again, the team will be stronger, the business will be stronger, and we'll be aligned with the vision again. Because then number two, action, once we come back into alignment with each other because we're sitting down, we're taking time to think about what it is that we want to do, the next step is we can take action and not just random action, but inspired action. Inspired action, action that starts to move the needle in the business. We're not focusing on random things. We're not focusing on these day-to-day busy work that doesn't really serve the business, that actually holds it back.

But also everybody's taking action that they should be taking or that is in alignment with their role whether you are a manager, a leader, somebody who is executing all the tasks, you are in alignment because you're taking the right actions that you need to take in order to move the business forward. And that's where people get stuck because people take actions that they think they should take. So

people start doing things that they think are going to move things forward. And what they don't realize is all it is, is just daily tasks that keep them busy. It's just busy work. So they can't figure out why they keep going around in circles. So when we get back into an alignment with the vision of the business and what it is that we want to accomplish, what is it that we're striving towards, then we can start breaking it down into chunks and taking inspired action that is going to move us forward towards number three, achievement.

So achievement in that we are working towards the common goals of the business to move the business forward. Everybody's in alignment. Everybody's taking inspired action and we're achieving things that we want to achieve in order to move towards that bigger goal, that bigger vision. And when we have, whether they're small wins, big wins, doesn't matter. But as long as we are continuing to achieve small things, little things by taking these small steps, imperfect action but inspired action, that's when we can start to really move closer or to that bigger vision that we have for the future that we're trying to create in our business with our team. So those are the three things. It's alignment. We get everybody moving in the same direction. Inspired action. Instead of random action. And we are moving towards achievement. Achievement that aligns with that grander vision.

So a couple of things that you can do to really start focusing on planning in the right way. So if you're doing it with yourself, what I like to say is and I do this myself, is I look at my week on a Sunday and you can do this on a Monday morning, whatever works for you, but I look at it and I say, "Okay, what are the appointments that I have? What are the meetings that I have? And how do I want to set up each of my days to make sure that I have a CEO schedule and I'm consistently focusing on the vision and giving my team the things that they need to do, and they're empowered to make decisions and move things forward?" So I set myself up in the beginning of the week or like I said, on a Sunday, as far as how do I getting back in alignment with my vision, looking at it and saying, what is that bigger vision that I have, the difference that I want to make, I make the future that I want to create and then start taking inspired action.

And this carries out throughout the week because when I take time to plan in the beginning of the week, then I understand what really needs to get done. There were many times, and I can't say that this doesn't it happen here and there is when I get in my own head and I get stuck and then I start focusing on things that aren't really important. And you know what? When I do that, I feel like crap. And I know clients of mine that I've had this conversation with when they do that, when they focus on the random things, they feel like they're not moving forward and they feel like they're not achieving things. So making sure that you're setting yourself up for success on a Sunday, planning out and looking at, "What am I looking to achieve in the next 90 days, in the next month?" Then looking at my weeks and saying, "What meetings do I have? What appointments do I have?"

And then setting myself up with my morning routine, chunking down my day to make sure that I'm focusing on the most important things that I need to do, and then making sure that I'm helping my team to set them up for success so that they know what they have to do. If you're working with your team on a regular basis, make sure that, again, you're setting yourself up for success by dedicating time that you can sit down as a team to talk about what is it that we're looking to accomplish this week and getting back in alignment with each other, but also back in alignment with the vision of the business. Because especially if you're in a service-based business, you own a restaurant or a retail store or a yoga studio, weekends tend to be very busy and you want to make sure that come Monday morning, you're taking time to gather your thoughts and say, "Okay, let's get back in alignment so that we can have a great week.

We can set ourselves up for a great week. What needs to happen? What do we need to let go of? What do we need to do?" But also making sure that when you're having those meetings, that we don't get off

on a crazy tangent and start talking about nitty-gritty stuff that really isn't going to move the business forward. It ends up turning into just a complaining session. So when we're having these meetings, we want to make sure that we're focused on getting back into alignment, taking inspired action so that we can achieve the things that we want to achieve. And it also helps to just create better energy in the business when we have those thinking meetings, those planning meetings. We have that energy of, hey, we're all connected. We're all aligned. We are a team and we are creating a healthier culture so that our employees feel safe, feel heard and feel like they can achieve more.

So when we have meetings and they turn into just complaining about what didn't go right and it starts to roll downhill, and I've seen this happen time and time again, we want to make sure we don't do that. We want to make sure that we are creating this space to plan out things so that we can be more creative. We can come up with better solutions. And again, we are staying in alignment and with our vision. We are taking inspired action and we're working towards achieving the things that we want to achieve. I've said this on previous episodes, most people don't have an achievement problem because that's all they focus on is just achieving getting their busy work done. But what they do have a problem with is alignment, alignment with each other as a team, but also alignment with, what are you even trying to achieve?

What is that bigger vision, that grander future that you want to create for your employees, for your customers, but also for you? So make sure that you are focusing on those three things. And if you're listening to the show, I know that you want to create a bigger vision. I know that you are focused on creating a bigger vision. I know that you don't look at your business and say, "Our business is defined by the products that we sell or the service that we offer." I know you are looking at creating an experience, a unique experience for your customers and really carving out your own path. And really focusing on disrupting your industry and doing things different. Doing things different because the vision that you have is bigger than your industry. I know if you're listening to the show, I know that you have the ability to create space and time to plan things out, to give yourself that thinking space so that you can be more creative and find the solutions, create the solutions that you've been looking to create.

So I hope this helped you and if it did, leave me some comments. Let me know what was your biggest takeaway from this episode. And I also want to know, what are you doing on a weekly basis? If it's just you, what are you doing to set yourself up so that you have thinking time so that you can be creative and you can plan things out? But if you also have a team, what are you doing differently? What are you doing differently to set yourself up and your team up so that everybody can have a successful week? Maybe it's asking yourself, was the person or the team that we were last week, is that going to take us to the next level? And if the answer is no, how can you show up differently? Who do you need to be in order to take your business to the next level? So until next week, have a great rest of your day. And I will see you soon.