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Are You Blocking Your Business Growth With Fear?

Episode 95

Is fear blocking the growth of your business? Recognizing and correcting this is something that has been a pivotal part of my journey as a business owner. For many of us, fear is "The 800 Pound Gorilla" in the room. We put on a good show and pretend it's not there. If you ever felt paralyzed by fear, you know. Whether you're starting a new venture or scaling your small cleaning company, you're not alone. Fear is a common denominator for many entrepreneurs. And it's something I've wrestled with throughout my career.

Faith or Fear?

The decision to take a leap of faith in myself and start the business was one of the biggest risks I ever took. This choice wasn't prompted by ambition alone. I didn't "soar out of the nest". My flight into entrepreneurship was a boot of necessity. Finding myself unexpectedly unemployed and unable to secure a desired job. At that point the fear of failure was replaced by the fear of not being able to provide for myself. This was a case of do or die. At that point fear pushed me to channel my knowledge of the cleaning industry into a viable business. That was only possible because I'd made myself an asset.

The Fear of Success

Interestingly, the fear of success is another hurdle nearly all of us face. The question that haunted me was, "What happens if this actually works?" Delivering services a few times wasn't really a question. But managing the on-going responsibilities and all the hats I'd have to wear as an owner? What was I thinking? The responsibility of maintaining high-quality service and continuing to grow was daunting. Many employees do the same when they achieve new roles or take on more responsibility. The critical question becomes, "Am I good enough?" This introspection can be paralyzing. It took a lot of self-conviction and encouragement from mentors to push through that mental barrier.

Trust and Delegation

As the business grew, the fear of losing control emerged. I had to learn to delegate tasks and trust the people I hired. Initially, I believed that I had to oversee everything because my reputation on the line. If you go back and read that previous sentence, you'll recognize "reputation" wasn't my problem. What was on the line was my ego. I understand that now. The same realization may be dawning on you. If you need a minute, take it now, because this is a bitter pill for many entrepreneurs to swallow.

Being in business requires belief in yourself. There's a delicate balance between Self-confidence and over-confidence. Recognize that to succeed in commercial cleaning you might need a good team. That means trusting people. Micromanaging will be detrimental. It destroys the morale of your team and limits the growth of your business. A system of checks and balances, along with trust in your team's capabilities, is essential. I learned to empower my team, and I can help you do the same. That step will allow them to take ownership of their roles. That ownership will foster a more motivated and efficient workforce.

The Role of a Coach Through Fear

Another fear that needed conquering was the fear of hiring a coach. The financial commitment was intimidating. I worried about the return on that investment. At the current stage of my career, I can say that I've hired many coaches. Each for their own particular focus and expertise. The commitment to investing in a coach is investing in yourself and your business. These coaches provided insights and accountability that can propel your business to new heights. It's about facing the aspects of your business and yourself that you might not want to confront. Albert Einstein said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." A good coach is crucial for business and personal growth.

Moving Beyond Fear

To any business owner or aspiring entrepreneur facing similar fears, my advice is simple: get over yourself. I had to hear those words too, and they were a wake-up call. You can't do everything alone. Building a successful cleaning business requires a team, just as much as it requires overcoming personal fears. Embrace the fear as a motivator.

In the end, fear is something that every business owner must face. Whether it's fear of failure, success, or loss of control. By acknowledging and confronting these fears you take the first step toward personal and business growth. When you're ready to take your business to where it should be, rather than where it currently is, reach out to me. Together, we can tackle these fears head-on and achieve success.

Thank you for joining me in this discussion. Remember, fear is a natural part of the entrepreneurial journey, but it doesn't have to be an obstacle. With the right mindset and support, you can turn fear into a powerful catalyst for growth.

The audio version of this podcast can be found on YouTube or my website.

00:07 Ray
Joel?

[00:00:08.08] - Joel
Yes, Ray.

[00:00:08.28] - Ray
We're talking about fear today.

[00:00:12.02] - Joel
Is that a fearful scream?

[00:00:13.13] - Ray
That was a very fearful scream. And how owners use fear to block growth. Boy, is this a big topic.

[00:00:20.04] - Joel
Oh, this hits right home before I even started this company, let alone many times while I have owned the company.

[00:00:27.09] - Ray
I've told a number of fellow business owners who are just about ready to go on their own. Every great work is preceded by at least three minutes of sheer terror.

[00:00:36.04] - Joel
Just three minutes?

[00:00:37.04] - Ray
At least three minutes.

[00:00:38.15] - Joel
Yeah, there's been a lot of fear over the years. Taking that leap of faith in yourself is probably the biggest jump I've ever made in my professional career.

[00:00:48.02] - Ray
Whether we're talking to people who are about to go and start their business or they're already running it and some need for change is on the horizon, change is hard.

[00:00:58.11] - Joel
Change is very hard. It affects everybody differently. That catalyst that creates the fear is going to be different for every person. I talk to my sister a lot of the time, and she says, "I could never do what you do in owning your own company and trying to provide not only for yourself, but for the people that work for you". She says, "I like the power of a paycheck". Don't we all? But behind that power of a paycheck is a business owner that has gone through a world of fear and upward battles and everything else because paycheck is a paycheck. And an owner provides that paycheck, usually through their due diligence over time. The company she works for has been around almost 50 years. I'm sure my company, when it's around for 50 years, it's going to be seen more as the power of the paycheck. Oh, you need to work there. But I'm able to provide for many people, including myself.

[00:01:50.22] - Ray
It's interesting that it was framed as the power of a paycheck. Power can be used to either steer a ship or to keep it anchored.

[00:01:57.20] - Joel
Yes. I think when I originally When I started the company, my fear was the fear of success.

[00:02:03.00] - Ray
How so?

[00:02:03.18] - Joel
The fear of success meaning what happens when you actually make this work. Now you have to provide that service. You have to continue to provide that good service so that you can continue to grow. And sometimes people see that even working up in an organization, that they really want a job. But when they are offered that job, the fear of how am I going to be able to do that? What happens if I'm not good enough? I think that was the biggest fear initially for me was, am I going to be good enough? You were one of the people that kept prodding me, telling me, "Hey, you got to start your own business". And I kept saying, "Oh, these are the reasons why I don't want to do it". Until I was unemployed and couldn't get a job because everybody wanted me to start an entry-level position. And I said, Well, if I'm going to do that, I'll start my own business. That was the fear. I needed to eat. I had no job. Unemployment ran out. There was nothing. I had a startup business. And I sold what I knew, which is the cleaning industry.

[00:02:53.28] - Joel
I was able to get a few accounts and things over the course of time. It wasn't a great amount of work the first year, but by the second year, I was like, Wow, we have almost $100,000 worth of business. I know that there's people out there listening right now that have been in business 10 years that hardly have that much business. And I really put my nose to the grindstone to be able to be successful. And then a fear of losing control, which is some of the different growth points in your business, is you have to then release some of the work and trust somebody else is going to do that.

[00:03:28.02] - Ray
Talking to the owner who's listening now, or the would-be owner who's listening now. What is your counsel in overcoming the fear in hiring a coach?

[00:03:37.15] - Joel
The fear of hiring a coach. I've been through that myself. Why was I afraid of hiring a coach? Because I was afraid, one, of the financial responsibility. I said, "Wow, if I spend this much money on a coach, then I'm not going to have that money to put back into my company". Well, hello, you are investing in your company by investing in yourself. And that money, if you

take the coaching to heart, you're going to have more than double that money in the long run. You should be 100-fold, 200, even a thousand-fold if you do the things and give yourself an honest assessment of yourself through your coach. So that's one of the fears. The other thing was facing the things I didn't want to face, facing some deep-down fears or looking and judging books by the cover, so to say, without asking the proper questions of either clients or staff or whatever in order to grow the business. Maybe early on for me was, I didn't want somebody to do something because I thought I could do it the best. And I was afraid somebody was going to do it better. But by somebody doing what they're better at allows me to do things that I'm better at.

[00:04:41.09] - Joel
Right.

[00:04:41.26] - Ray
How about not over-managing the employee? Managing a team takes time. You have to trust those people. So that fear of trust. How do you find now that you have a larger team and someone who is in direct contact with that team? Far more than you. You've beaten this fear to death.

[00:04:59.19] - Joel
That It was a big fear, too. I was afraid because it's my reputation. It was my neck that was always out there. So I felt that I had to be the one involved. I had to have the final say that something was okay. And I had to be able to trust the people that I hired for those positions to do the jobs that I hired them to do. And that's how having a system of checks and balances and touching base throughout the day and the evening, still allowing them some slack and not having them micromanaged. I'm not going to micromanage people. Because when you do that, you destroy their self-worth and they become unmotivated. And there was a book I read many years ago that I've read several times called Heroes. That book talks about how to talk to people so that they're empowered to do more. That is how you have to overcome that fear, is you have to trust people are going to do the jobs that they're hired for and motivate the people that work for them the same way that you're motivating them.

[00:05:56.12] - Ray
In bringing this episode to a close, I want to speak specifically to that small business owner. There are some things that they would like to accomplish. They would like to grow their business. But this thing is in the way, this fear about loss of control. Spending money that they don't think that they have, hearing answers that might be very challenging to them personally, and they don't want. Folks, if that is you, it is time to get over yourself. I'm sorry.

[00:06:20.29] - Joel
I think you had that conversation with me.

[00:06:23.12] - Ray
There might have been one of those.

[00:06:25.22] - Joel
One or more.

[00:06:26.27] - Ray
Joel, I remember our first conversation around this, and your response, "I can't possibly do this myself".

[00:06:33.29] - Joel
I was semi-right. I couldn't do this by myself. I need a team around me in order to do what I'm doing. But I had to get over the fear of starting and becoming successful so that I could hire people and hire those that now run the business while I manage the business.

[00:06:50.04] - Ray
Listener, if you're ready to get your business where it ought to be rather than where it is, contact Joel. Joel, thank you.

[00:06:57.17] - Joel
You're welcome.