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Break the Failure Cycle

Episode 137

Join me and break the failure cycle in your commercial cleaning business. This story is about one of my clients. I will not share personal information on anyone. There are parts of this story that are heartbreakingly common. And I believe that stepping out of a damaging cycle is possible for nearly every one of my fellow business owners.

Imagine running a business for 10 years. Every day you pour your heart, soul, and countless hours into something you love, only to feel like you're stuck on a hamster wheel. That's the reality for many small business owners I've counseled. I've been there myself. I want you to break the cycle that traps so many entrepreneurs:

- You get the work
- You do the work
- You lose the work
- You stress and feel trapped

The Failure Cycle Trap is Real

The “get work spiral” often feels like your back is against the wall. For a single parent running a small service business, generating $30,000 to $50,000 annually while raising kids in a tough economy? That's a perfect storm and that spiral is real. If that’s you, the signs are clear. After years of grinding out 70-hour weeks, you’re probably exhausted and disappointed. Every week finds you dealing with endless problems from every direction. It’s tempting to throw in the towel. Sometimes you feel like the rug has been yanked out from under you.

But here's what I've learned: the problem isn't always your business. It's your headspace.

The Mindset Shift That Changes Everything

When you're drowning in problems, it's nearly impossible to think clearly. When my coaching client tells me, "I don't know what to do. I can't move forward.", my response is, "If you don't try to get yourself in a good frame of mind, you **won't** move forward."

That's not rude. That's truth. And it's actionable. An HOW you approach it is important.

I asked them to think back to when things were going well. "What were you doing differently? How did you build traction?" At first, they said, "I don't remember. I'm too upset." But once my client shifted their focus from despair to opportunity, everything changed. You could feel it in the room.

Find the Low-Hanging Fruit

When I dug deeper, we found it. An opportunity had presented its self. A client had booked a couple of residential cleaning jobs. To be clear, these are not not their ideal target. But these projects ARE quick work with quick pay. That's money in hand, and here's the magic. When you get paid, you feel good. That will help you survive to get the work you want. As an owner you know that positive energy is fuel in your tank. That fuel helps you roll over the hill of desperation that's in front of you!

Because once you start doing work and getting paid for it, you're no longer "selling on the hill of desperation". You're selling from confidence. You're offering value, not screaming for help.

I learned this lesson years ago when my employment depended on closing a deal. My back was against the wall. I walked into a restaurant to pitch a new prospect. The business I worked for had never cleaned a restaurant. But I knew what they were capable of and got the job. This was a seven-day-a-week account that saved my position. And the moment I realized I had nothing to lose, something shifted. I aspired to a higher level.

You Need an Anchor

Breaking the failure cycle demands having a solid base under you. That base won't happen overnight. But you CAN grow out of chaos and that base CAN be built when you have trust and experience at your disposal.

Neither you nor I can build your entire system for you in a single conversation. What I can do is help you shift your mindset, find that immediate opportunity, and get money flowing again. Some people need one session to regain clarity. Others need a longer journey to build sustainable systems.

Every business owner needs someone in their corner. Someone who's weathered these storms before and can remind you that you've survived worse. Janitorial business owners often operate solo or with just one other person. That probably means you're wearing nearly every hat. You don't have all the answers, and there's nowhere obvious to turn.

That's where accountability and counsel come in.

Your Next Move

If you're stuck in that failure cycle, your back is against the wall and you're running on fumes, don't wait until you're ready to quit. That's exactly when you need help most.

Book a session with me today. Whether you need one focused call to reclaim your mindset or a longer-term package to build systems, there's a solution for where you are right now. I've been there. I've rebuilt. And I can guide you through it too.

You can't afford not to.

Ready to break the cycle? Comment below, share what's blocking you, and let's start building your way forward.

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

[00:00:03.26] - Joel
I want you, you the listener. Yes. I want you the listener to press the like button, the subscribe button, but more importantly, comments, comments that you liked or disliked the topic discussed. What would you like discussed? Because you, the listener, are who is important to me so that I can provide the value that you want and need.

[00:00:29.21] - Ray
Joel.

[00:00:30.15] - Joel
Yes, Ray.

[00:00:31.12] - Ray
You have a heck of a story to convey today about one of your customers stuck in cycles. Tell me about the customer that you counseled this week.

[00:00:39.29] - Joel
It's an individual who has had their business for over 10 years. They do somewhere between $30,000 and $50,000 a year in business. And they're a single parent.

[00:00:51.02] - Ray
Okay. If I remember correctly, at least a couple of kids.

[00:00:53.26] - Joel
A couple of children. Yes.

[00:00:55.02] - Ray
Okay.

[00:00:55.20] - Joel
So it makes it very difficult. It's already tough in the economy that we're in and in the industry we're in. But then when you're a single parent on top of it, it makes it very difficult. Okay.

[00:01:06.00] - Ray
Joel, the bigger part of this story, at least in my opinion, is just having the right headspace. There are days we have both seen that have like 70 hours in them.

[00:01:15.28] - Joel
It's just, it's just never ending grind to grind, grind, never ending problems coming northeast, west.

[00:01:22.29] - Ray
And there are times when it feels like the rug has been yanked out from under you.

[00:01:26.27] - Joel
That's pretty much where this person is. This person's back is against the wall. It's kind of gloom and doom for them. They don't know how to get out from the cycle of I get work, I lose work, I get work, they go out of business. And it's just— it becomes just a revolving door.

[00:01:45.02] - Ray
I know this person can't be that stuck because I know who their coach is.

[00:01:49.07] - Joel
Well, thank you. We talked and they are not in a good headspace right now. They are very upset, disappointed. They're at that point where they just want to throw in the 10 years of work and just call it quits.

[00:02:02.10] - Ray
Okay, so why don't they?

[00:02:03.18] - Joel
Because they actually love what they do. That's a big part of it. This person is one of the hardest working people that I know, and I know a lot of hardworking people in this world. They are a very hardworking individual. They have a big heart. They expect a lot of themselves. They do want perfection. I told them that perfection is always in the eye of the beholder and that we tend to hold ourselves to higher standards than most people hold us to.

[00:02:30.22] - Ray
Oh, and if you hold yourself to the perfection standard, people also don't tend to pay for it.

[00:02:35.19] - Joel
That is correct, because we are in a world of what people see as a commodity, unfortunately.

[00:02:42.12] - Ray
Right.

[00:02:42.22] - Joel

And I expressed to them how much they have put in over the years and that when things were going well for them, there was a lot of traction. So I asked them to think back when things were going well. What did you do and do well? How did you find these clients? How did you get from no traction to traction? Because it just doesn't happen. What were the things that you were doing that led up to it? “I don't remember". Well, we have to think back. You're going to have to try. "I don't, I can't do that. I’m too upset." Well, if you don't try to get yourself in a good frame of mind, you are not going to be able to move forward.

00:03:21.04] - Ray
To our listener, we understand that there are some stormy days. We're going to go with stormy days. You need people in your circle who can help you get out of that. Now, that doesn't mean they’re responsible for your attitude. Any one of us can have a crappy day and have a crap attitude that day. But you need people in your circles that you can reach out to that can anchor you on those days.

[00:03:42.20] - Joel
I think you're there for me.

[00:03:44.09] - Ray
Don't know what you're talking about.

[00:03:46.06] - Joel
But yes. So trying to be that anchor for them for today to get their headspace clear and get them in a positive frame of mind and starting to think of the positives and asking where is that low-hanging fruit? And the response was there is no low-hanging fruit.

[00:04:03.09] - Ray
There's always low-hanging fruit.

[00:04:04.20] - Joel
There is always low-hanging fruit. Talking to them a little bit more, I realized that they had booked a couple of residential jobs. Not their target of what they want, but there's that low-hanging fruit. It's a quick job with quick pay, usually at the end of the job, unlike a commercial job where you have to wait for the money. So at least they have some money coming in. I said, "Those jobs with that money coming in, how do you feel when you get handed that money?" "Well, it makes me feel good." There’s that positive energy you need. Because once you start doing work and you're getting paid for it, that makes you feel good. So now you're not going out and trying to sell in desperation. You're trying to sell on the value that you bring. That is the key. I told this person about a story many years ago when I worked for somebody else. That I was told I had to close a deal or I didn't have a job. That's stressful. And I walked into, of all things, a restaurant when I worked for this company and we had never cleaned a restaurant.

[00:05:02.19] - Joel
And I got, that's where I got my appointment was with a restaurant. And I was talking to the restaurant manager and they're saying, "oh, we need this done, we need that done. Have you ever done this?” Yep, done it.

[00:05:11.27] - Ray

Mm-hmm.

[00:05:12.11] - Joel
Yep. Not really lying through my teeth because I'm in a cleaning business. Yeah, we've always cleaned. Have we specifically done a restaurant? No, but I knew people I could talk to to kind of figure it out with a price.

[00:05:24.11] - Ray
And Joel, your back was against the wall. You needed to make a sale.

[00:05:27.25] - Joel
I needed to make a sale and put together a bid to that company. And that company hired us. It was a 7-day-a-week job., and my boss is like, "You saved your job." Now, yeah, my back was against the wall. I had to figure something out. And usually when you are in that spot and you have nothing to lose, guess what? You aspire to a higher level. And I told them that story and like, my gosh, that's where I am right now. And it was like a light went off for them. And I could even hear the change in their voice. I could hear the mood in them completely shift from negative to "I can do this. I can move forward."

[00:06:04.19] - Ray
This is possible.

[00:06:05.18] - Joel
This is possible. Now they still have to do that work for themselves. But the shift started. And that’s what's needed is you gotta have that shift happen inside of you in order to become successful once again.

[00:06:19.13] - Ray
Joel, so many of your customers are small to medium size. I know some of them are 2 people. Some of them are 20 plus. When we get to the larger groups, those larger training groups that you've been to, Hundreds.

[00:06:32.24] - Joel
Hundreds.

[00:06:33.16] - Ray
But day to day, the people who are here listening to this, between 2 and 15, for the most part, I expect many of those have contacted you with the assumption that you never have any problems, a challenging situation. You've already laid out all the cash and you haven't collected yet. You probably never go through that, do you, Joel?

[00:06:53.22] - Joel
Oh no, never. Of course I have the same problems. They're usually multiplied. Being a bigger company, the problems get multiplied. But what I have are systems that are in place, and I also have the real-life application of I've been through it before. So a lot of those types of storms I weather a little better because I know I've gotten through them before. And when people get to these walls in their businesses, it becomes a huge challenge for them because

they are a solo-preneur or they only have one other person. And sometimes even early in my days when my business partner and I were married and we had the business together. We didn't have all the answers. And yet, where do you turn for the answers? And a lot of people are in that same boat, being that solopreneur or that 1 or 2
person account where you're working with your significant other or a family member and you don’t have all the answers. And where do you turn? Because you have to have those answers.

[00:07:47.18] - Ray
Let me ask, you have 3-month packages, you have larger packages. We have other resources for sale. When you have an owner prospect, they're in desperate need of counsel this week. One session, two sessions, what do we do for them?

[00:08:05.07] - Joel
Every problem is going to be individualized. So some things can be handled in one phone call, but people that are looking to build systems and to build for tomorrow and start looking at the future, that's where some of the packages are going to be better for them because you can't solve it in a day. They didn't build Rome in a day, as they say. You're not going to build your company in a day. I've been building my own company for 13 and a half years, and it has its ebbs and flows. Every company has its ebbs and flows. What systems do you have in place? What are you doing to get to that next level? And how are you planning for that? And that sometimes is more important. On the front end, when you, when your back's against that wall, it may be a session or two where we get your mindset shifted and we get you towards that low-hanging fruit so that you can start creating opportunities within your own company right away. And that money's starting to come in. Because when we sound desperate, nobody is going to put money into somebody who sounds desperate.

[00:09:05.07] - Joel
You have to sound confident.

[00:09:06.18] - Ray
You have to go in with a mindset that says, "I got this." So listener, if you aren't in one of these storms and things are going well, but they could be going better, we have packages for that. You'll find the links in the description below. For those who are desperate, your back is against the wall. You might be living in your car right now, but you're still running a cleaning business. We got a story about that too. I'm going to encourage you. Call Joel. Book a session. I can't afford it. You can't afford not to.

[00:09:33.23] - Joel
Correct. I've been there too.

[00:09:35.18] - Ray
Thank you, Joel.

[00:09:36.10] - Joel
You're welcome, Ray.