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What's My Why?

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Panelists:

Lisa Poulson, Principal, poseycorp

Stephanie Courtillier, Founder, Integrous Women

Robb Breeding, Founder and Coach, REV Advisory Group

Alan Wallner, President, Visionary, Conscious Branding

Alan Wallner (00:15):

Hello everyone. I want to welcome you to Thrive!cast. I'm Alan Wallner, the president and visionary of Conscious Branding. With Thrive!cast, our intention is to focus on you, your business and your success. With each episode, we discuss at a high level, a topic to spark new thoughts, generate ideas, and push the boundaries of what we know is familiar. And hopefully through all that, we may even come up with a way to frame up a new mindset to ignite your business forward and inspire action. I'm really grateful for all of you who are here today. Our topic has had a great influence on my business, and it is something that I'm very passionate about. It's how great leaders inspire. And it's what gets you out of bed even on your worst days. So what is it, how do you leverage it to turn your business into something that is remarkable?

(01:13): And I'm talking about your why, the deeper purpose cause, or belief behind why you do what you do with your business or even with your life. And today we're joined by three amazing people who are here to provide some wonderful insight around leading with why and how this can change your business in a big way. I'd like to welcome Lisa Poulson. She's the principal of poseycorp. Lisa works with innovators to become great communicators who create the change they want to see in the world. She's also an author who writes about grief, love and the complex beauty of female power.

(01:59): We also have Stephanie Courtillier, the founder and CEO of Integrous Women. Stephanie is paving the way for the next generation of conscious leaders and she's on a mission to inspire, educate, and empower women to create their purpose-driven futures. And that's a big deal. So Stephanie, it is great to have you here today. We have Rob Breeding, the founder and coach at REV Advisory Group. Rob works with growth-minded business leaders using a people-centric approach and philosophy focused on improving, implementation, accelerating results. Rob's love for people, business and leadership development are at the heart of everything he does. So he's showing a little bit of passion there. So welcome, Rob.

(02:55): I'm running a business. It's tough. And especially in the current situation, makes it even more challenging. And I sometimes feel what many of you may be also feeling, some days it's really tough to get out of bed and to give 100 percent of yourself for your business. It's really tough to do that at times. So what is that little spark that keeps someone steadfastly focused and highly, highly passionate and even energized while others may be drained? And that spark is your why; the foundational element to the life-force behind your business. I know it sounds like I'm grandiose about it, but it's a pretty big component of what

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gets you going with your business. So what do I mean by why? Simon Sinek has a wonderful TED Talk and a book that speaks to starting with why; he uses the simple but powerful Golden Circle to explain how great companies lead their communications from Y, and from why they do what they do as opposed to what they do or how they do it.

(04:09): Our format and time today doesn't allow me to go in depth around the Golden Circle and what Simon Sinek says about all that. But after this episode, if you're not familiar with it, check out Simon's next TED Talk, *Start with Why*. We'll also provide the link to this TED Talk in the bonus materials. So either way you'll get access to it. It's going to be a good follow-up piece to this, if you're not familiar with it. And for those of you who are, this will be a great conversation also. It's going to tie into this and we're going to have some fun talking about it today. So what I'm going to do instead of normally just asking some questions we're going to go a little bit deeper with each of our panelists and how they use their why with their business and share more about themselves and how they leverage their why running their business. So to get us started I'm going to start with Stephanie and Stephanie, can you share your why and how you discovered it?

Find Your "Why"

Stephanie Courtillier (05:15):

Thanks, Alan. And what a ginormous question, right? I must admit I was one of those people. There's a quote that I actually want to share with everyone because I heard this maybe five, six years ago. I think it was Pablo Picasso though. I have seen varying ideas of who actually said it, but it's the meaning of life is to find your gift. And the purpose of life is to give it away. Now I'm sure many of us have heard that. The other thing I kept hearing was, Oh, but when we find our purpose, it was always right in front of you the whole time. And that was the most frustrating thing to hear when you don't know what it is. What do you mean it's right here? I'm like searching every book and opportunity in place. And it was this frustrating, hard, difficult journey to tap into what is my why, my story, might be a little bit different than others in that I've actually found it.

(06:11): I'm an achiever. I'm a perfectionist for all the others who can totally relate to being that personality type. So in my mind, it was like, I have to find it. This is my life soul. It's to find the why. And once I found it, big weight off my shoulders, I can live free. And I've got the why. And to give some hope, hopefully to some of you who maybe haven't necessarily pinned or can literally lay it out in front of you. So clearly I found that this is a very emergent process. And though I did find my why, it's constantly evolving. The only thing that's constant in life is change. So for me, it started with being in a state of burnout, just having enough of just everything; I mentioned I'm the perfectionist type, I've worked for many startups and entrepreneurs.

(07:06): I was the one who wore the hundreds of hats. I always looked around and said, is this it? Am I aspiring to be like this? the CEO of this firm? or the entrepreneur over here?

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And I never really found that person or that ideal role model of someone who was really living their values. And so through that burnout process, I ended up leaving the job. I was working 80 crazy hours a week. And I thought to myself, no. I wish I was brave enough to travel to the ends of the world and study under all the big mindfulness coaches. But in my case, I did something simple. I took probably 50 different personality tests. My favorite, by the way, is 16personalities.com because you get these cute little figures that tell you essentially who you are.

(07:54): It's Myers Briggs based. I'm an ENFJ, if you're curious, definitely extroverted. And I just took all these tests. I actually ended up also creating a survey and I'm pretty much giving the journey of how I somewhat pinpointed it. I created a survey that I sent out, and this was probably the best thing I did. And I just asked people around me, what do you think my why is, or what is the story where you feel that I was living my best life? What's a memory you have of me? And that was really eye opening for me because I thought I knew my strengths, I know my weaknesses, but to hear it from others and to almost hear the limitations to what do I not know about myself, that you would like to share? What I ended up doing is literally mapping out all the different personality tests, this feedback that I had received.

(08:42): And I started asking myself really powerful questions, like, who am I at the core? And just to journaling, where do I belong? What is the legacy I want to leave in the world? What causes do I love? And I ended up putting it together. And once again, perfectionist, I wanted to create this just intense, amazing sentence. So my sentence ended up being, I use my passion and love to inspire and empower heart-centered leaders to take action towards their dreams. And I literally forced myself to memorize this. Now this is not the way you should go out and find your why, because it's constantly emerging. I couldn't repeat it back. It wasn't something that I definitely got excited when I read it, but I couldn't memorize that. And I was literally wordsmithing for hours on end to get the perfect sentence. And it wasn't until maybe COVID hit, and I said, I've got to break; I've got to simplify.

(09:32):

I've got to have more fun. I can't be constantly on like this, because that's a powerful why. So my new, why today is this. I love this concept of be, do you have something like, I'm going to be inspired and I'm going to use that. My why is be loved, do good and have fun. And if I can keep it that simple in everything I do, then I've made it. I'm having a good life. So though I do love my very fancy statements and I still look to it from here or there. I'm still emerging. And I think to keep it so simple, because love is such a big word. If I'm in love and not fear, that's a win for the day, I'm doing good to any capacity. Amazing. And if I can't have fun while doing it, well, what's the point of living if I'm always going to be in a serious state? So I did all these different things to get to where I am, but I might be a completely different thing a year from now, who knows? That's somewhat the journey I ended up taking to get to it.

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Alan Wallner (10:38):

I like how you say it comes from your core, from your values, from your essence, basically. So as long as it's always a derivative of that, you're sitting good, so it's okay to be more full of it. Lisa, I'd like to hear about your why and how you discovered it.

Lisa Poulson (11:01):

I left my day job when I was 50 and I thought, Oh, I'll just freelance. And I'll pick up some work and it'll be fine. And it was a total disaster. So after a year of flopping around completely failing and not knowing what I was doing, I went to coaching school. And then after that, the year after that, I was trying to figure out do I want to be a coach? And if so, what kind of a coach and who do I want to serve? And I had spent 25 years at that point in public relations, almost exclusively in the tech industry. And I didn't know how that was or wasn't relevant to coaching. But what I did is, I sat down and made a list of every client I'd ever had across my whole career that I liked.

(11:54): And then I started to list why did I like those clients? Why did I like that work then? With each one, I wrote down all the characteristics that I liked. And then I looked for commonalities. So basically I reverse engineered it. I just looked back at the fear that had already happened and figured out, okay, what were the things that worked for me? What I found was the people that I love working with the most are the people that have really fascinating ideas, but they didn't necessarily have the skills to scale up, to communicate those ideas to the world. So my favorite client of all time is a doctor at UCLA who was one of the first people 12 years ago to realize that there was a need for trauma informed primary care, which is now a ubiquitous buzzword, but 12 years ago, when he was trying to create it, it didn't exist.

(12:50): And he's one of the first people who started talking about it. And I've been working with him this whole time on that concept. And what it made me realize is that I want to help people with great ideas, become great communicators because then they can change the world. So I'm not going to change the world. I'm going to help other people change the world. And so it's an indirect relationship action on earth. And so what my why is that I help innovators become great communicators because it's great communicators who can create the change they want to see in the world. You can't build a movement if you don't know how to connect with and talk to people. So that's how I got there. And it was just literally a process of writing down the attributes of every single client that I'd worked with and identifying the commonalities of the clients that I loved.

Alan Wallner (13:50):

See Stephanie is right. It was right under the Lisa's nose the whole time. Everything you always need is right under here. So Rob, I'd like to hear your perspective on this.

Robb Breeding (13:59):

I think you two have taken way more intentional thought through some of this why discovery than I have, but when I reflected on this, and I certainly have read Simon's book and seen

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that TED Talk, Alan, I believe that every one of us, and this is maybe speaking to the audience a little bit, it's searching for purpose and meaning in life. It's probably the biggest thing that can give us energy onto your points. And for most people listening, for me, my biggest why has always been added to, and fine-tuned.

(14:49): You add experience and education and learn more about myself, it evolves just like Stephanie was saying. And Lisa, you and I are in a similar boat, I sold my business when I was 48. And then I found myself looking in the mirror, wondering what I would do with myself now going forward. And it's funny how God has a way of working these things out for us at the same time. At the beginning of that next year, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer, which turned into heart failure. And I spent two years caretaking for the woman that I've loved and been married to for 33 years. That was a real perspective changer and a real eye opener. That's when I decided I wanted to get into this business of helping others in working with people and helping them to achieve excellence and find this very thing, because this is what drives engagement and what drives our effectiveness is our ability to get connected to our why.

(15:50): There's three clues to your why. I think we're going to talk about this quite a bit, but one is that we all have our God-given talents and our natural abilities. I think there's a clue there to what our why is; what are we good at? What do we naturally love doing? Like Stephanie, I love those behavioral things. And I use a lot of behavioral tools in my practice and knowing yourself is where it starts. The second clue is our life experience and our personal journey being a certified assessment giver. You learn that there's not very many things that change these kinds of fixed talents and abilities that we have, but a trauma, a major trauma, like I went through with my wife or my wife went through, or maybe the loss of a child or a divorce, or some of these major incidents that happened in our life, can really impact us at the core and it can change our why; it can change our values and what we believe in.

(16:54): So that's happened to me a few times, and then the third factor is really the truth that we discover. And that's both through education, through mentors and through modeling and through the experiences of others. So I've never really been very good at that one. I always have to fall on my face in the mud myself to have an experience, but certainly I think that does inform our why. And so my why, and I had to write it down because I wanted to make sure I articulated it properly, it's just really connecting, guiding, and inspiring those people that God places in my path to understand and develop and fully engage the talents that they have. The final piece is so that they can accomplish what matters to them so helping them to understand who they are, what they have to offer and then developing those skills around that and engaging themselves in such a way that they can accomplish the things that matter most to them. That's my why.

Alan Wallner (17:50):

I think you're onto something when you hit a, maybe it's more of a looking at yourself internally because of something tragic that's happened or a really low point in your life for some big challenge, that's really difficult to overcome, tends to be what starts that process of

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evaluating your, why. I had a similar thing when our middle child, Alix, came to me and told me that she was transgender and I had to deal with a lot of my own personal emotions around that and to figure out what that meant for myself and my family and the journey through all of that helped me understand the different way of looking at the world and a different way of seeing people for who they truly are and accepting them.

(18:55): And as a result realize that that all fits into branding because it's not about physical attributes, it's about the inner being of a person and the presence they bring to their business, and then being more aware of your presence and why you do what you do. And that led me to come up with a whole driving why behind why I do what I do. And that's every business has an inherent ability to be remarkable and to have a profound impact on the world to make it a better place. It just needs to be unleashed. So that's what we do now with our would, turn that into our whole way of doing business. And I like how there is a common thread behind all these. There was definitely a lot of thought, a lot of twisting and turning internally, trying to figure this all out. For all of us, it seems like it was right under our noses, which I find very interesting. So now that we've heard our why's, I'd like to discuss how you applied it to your business and how it has made a difference in your business as a result of that.

Apply Your “Why” to Your Business

Lisa Poulson (20:10):

There's this Dilbert cartoon of a company without a strategy and someone picks up the phone, and says, no, we don't do that. And he hangs it up. So what strategy gives you—I didn't explain that very well—strategy gives you focus. So for me, a huge part of this was understanding what I don't want to do. It was when I got out of coaching school, I was sitting down with a friend and there are a lot of people who have PhDs in organizational behavior from Wharton, or they were CEOs and had their executive coaches. And management per se is not a great interest to me. And I was talking to a friend about what coaching career I wanted to have.

(21:02): And he said, well, I haven't once heard you say that you want to be asking CEOs if they did their yoga. And I was like, you're right. I don't give a bleep if a CEO does yoga, I care about whether he can communicate or she can communicate to her team. And so the why really gave me focus. So, first of all, it's all about how people communicate. It's not about general management or any of those other aspects of business. The second thing is I am not interested and I don't have a mass marketing program at all, because I'm not interested in just helping everyone become a better communicator. I want to work in depth with someone who is doing something powerful and someone who's brilliant. So I only take clients through word of mouth. And my marketing is tailored because it's very clear about how, and then about what I need to do to remind the people that I already know that I exist.

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(22:07): And then the third thing is understanding what services to offer. So it's focusing on what I do. It's how the marketing is different, and then within the group of people that I'm targeting. So I can understand exactly who my clients are, who my perspective clients are and what their attributes are and what their problems are. And then what specific exact services do they need? So, for example, when COVID happened, 90 percent of my gigs were canceled in three days, because almost all of my clients were hiring me to help them get ready for their big keynote speeches. They were giving it to their user conferences or at industry conferences, or I was prepping them to go on media tours, where they would be going to New York or New Jersey and being on CNBC or whatever. It was immediately apparent that they would still have to keep their businesses going, and they would still have to reach people because I understand why they need to communicate.

(23:10): And so pivoting; I've got tech CEOs who are delivering their big user conference, keynotes from their living rooms on their laptops, just like we're sitting here now and so pivoting so that I could coach them to successfully do that. And it's comforting in some ways to stand in front of a 60-foot plasma screen and have the big demo behind you. It's not really about you, but now it's like people are looking at your face. And for a lot of these people that was in some way scarier than being on a big stage. And so helping them be comfortable with that, because I know my why I know who my audience is, and because I know who my audience is, I know what they need, and I can create services for them specifically.

Alan Wallner (24:01):

What I like about that is through the why it really helps you to keep your business very focused. And through times that come along the way, you can fall back on your why to help realign. It's almost like a compass and a guide star, even though it goes a little off track, you can get back on track

Lisa Poulson (24:23):

And it saves wasted effort.

Robb Breeding (24:26):

When I looked at this question, I took a little bit different approach. And what I was thinking is there's probably a lot of different people listening. And I do think it's true, that the older we get, or the more we experience life, the clearer it becomes. I don't know if that's true. Hopefully it doesn't become more fuzzy. So what I was thinking was, I thought back to my very first iteration into business because this is a business topic here that we're discussing in the context of business or context of success.

(25:11): The first thing was I had this troubled youth and when I came out of high school, I went to college to study youth ministry because I wanted to help the kids, like I had that trouble. And so my why, the driver that was pushing me then, and I know now is the driver of mine, is my altruistic driver. When it comes to people, I'm very altruistic. I want to help. And so that's what was driving me then. And then I started working at Sears. Sears was this beautiful, great big company back in the eighties and nineties when I worked there. And all

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of a sudden my commanding drivers kicked in. I wanted to be the CEO of Sears and climb the corporate ladder. I switched gears and went from youth council or youth pastor to psychology to wanting to be an executive at Sears Roebuck and Company.

(26:01): Then in 1999, my brother called me up from California and told me about his wireless phone company and how he had finally made a dollar and so all of a sudden my resourceful driver kicked in and this idea that, Hey, nobody's doing that in Minnesota. Let's start a wireless phone company. And now all of a sudden that was what was energizing me and driving me. That went on for 14 years and what a great opportunity for me to lean into all those different things, leading people, and in all of the different ways that that's impacted it. And then fast forward to now, and probably what I think is the most fine-tuned of how my why is influencing my work is that I've really focused in on what I said, and that is helping people to understand and guiding them and inspiring them towards this.

(27:00): So it's this exponential impact, hopefully that, rather than just my sphere of influence that now I'm helping these other people that all have spheres of their own. And so I think that's how it's evolved for me. And I wanted to go through that iteration so you can see, because I think it doesn't have to always be clear and there's different parts of our why that are influencing us at different times. And I think that's okay, as long as we're in it in some way, if we have energy, it gives us energy.

Alan Wallner (28:15):

I agree. And that becomes that life-force behind what we're doing. And have it, you have your why. If you put too heavy of a stake in the ground, you're not going with the flow of life. I like how you point out the different aspects of your why. It started bubbling up as different experiences start flowing.

Robb Breeding (28:15):

We all have to do a bunch of stuff we don't like doing. And so whenever we can lean into that energy that we get from our why that can really help us to push through what we know we need to do to be successful.

Stephanie Courtillier (28:15):

I might echo some thoughts too from Lisa and Robb. In my case, I'm going to use the words Lisa used, the reverse engineering for me, business almost came last. So the way I built Integrous Women was when I was going through this process of finding my why, really finding myself, I identified my strengths. So it was more personal. I'm very altruistic similar to Robb. It sounds like heart's here. And so I was very clear on wanting to find a cause; I'm a multi-passionate entrepreneur though. I loved every cause you can think of. So it's like, let's just start testing. Let's go out and volunteer. Let's serve on different boards of nonprofits and get a feel for what is the cause that's really resonating with my heart. So once I got crystal clear on maybe my top three strengths that I really wanted to leverage and grow versus I think when 99 percent of us do is we really focus on weaknesses and go, Oh my gosh, I need to make myself better here.

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(29:12): But then when we do that, we just become average. So I really took those three strengths and I want to be great and remarkable, to use Alan's words, to come up into this with my strengths, I played around with different causes. And then I reverse engineered with what's a business model that I can build that will allow me to leverage my strengths and influence and impact the cause. And so what I found, and I think Robb mentioned. We are in that state of energy and flow. There's a lot of great books on flow. I was in this space of creativity and passion and curiosity for the world. A lot of doors started opening. So though I hadn't necessarily nailed in on and honed in on that perfect sentence or that why, I was living my passions. I was going through and finding myself through this, and those doors that opened were people that I ended up meeting.

(30:08): They were opportunities that just presented themselves. One of the doors was learning about the business model of social enterprise. And I had never heard of that. I went to college, I studied marketing. I've done business. I've been in nonprofit, but no one had ever told me there's a perfect world of the best of the business world. And the best of the nonprofit world literally merged together. I did a ton of research. I ended up founding Integrous Women three and a half years ago or three, almost three years ago, not even three years. My goal is to be a B corporation, which is this model of social enterprise. So I reverse engineered. It said really bring all those best elements into a business model. And so through Integrous Women, another one of those opportunities that came was I love getting coffees pre COVID.

(30:55): Of course, I miss my coffee dates with people, but the ability to sit down and I got introduced with a woman who was sharing about this cause in Guatemala. I was blessed, my mom's a life coach and a spiritual coach. She would drag me around the world. We've done so many impact trips. And so I felt like I had seen and experienced some really great causes, but to hear these stories of these young girls that were orphans, that had experienced all different types of abuse and to think, Oh my gosh, today, this is still happening. And I literally remember walking away from this conversation, looking to my left and my right going, someone needs to do something about this and recognizing when no one raises their hand, why can't that be me? So to take that moment, in that experience, I ended up blending into the cause of Integrous Women.

(31:46): So I was supporting entrepreneurs and I love how Lisa said, finding even the clients that maybe we've worked with in the past, or who do you want to be working with? If you don't love the people you work for and with, you're going to have a really hard time continuing through that business. So it was pulling all these and opportunities just started opening. I had no idea. Now I am someone who is a control freak, so to not know what step two, three, four looks like is scary, but to just be brave enough to get out of my comfort zone and talk, like I knew what I was pretending. Like I knew what I was saying, I'm going to start this thing. It's going to be called Integrous Women. It's a movement for female entrepreneurs. Things just started happening. And so fast forward the three years, we've got a sustainable impact model.

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(32:34): We are a social enterprise functioning and everything I'm doing incorporating my why and my values. And we'll talk a little bit later, even I just thought the culture and how we can cocreate some of these systems almost within our organizations, but to reverse engineer in that way. So starting with strengths to summarize and thinking about the impact you want to make in this world, maybe it's not a cause, maybe it is, but how do you build a model that allows you to live both of those? So personal professional and philanthropy. Those are my three Ps that we always do and talk about in Integrous Women. And that's how I've been able to bring it all home for me, at least.

Alan Wallner (33:15):

I like that. Just going out there and claiming something and having that as your why, and allowing that to help you navigate. And the person, professional and philanthropy, that's a great guide for someone; those are three very important components to your life and how you can help other people. So if you can blend that into your why that would be fantastic. I know when I was going through a lot of my figuring out with my why, I didn't quite know how to leverage it into the business. I know I want to help people. I know there's something about what's on the inside, not on the outside. It's how you see people and it's the energy around the individual.

(34:13): And so that's what really got me started at dissecting what branding is, and actually looking at our whole process as the way we branded a company. And a lot of people think their brand is their logo. But in reality, it's the perception that people have of you based on how you make them feel through any brand that you've created for them. Once you start dissecting everything and really looking at your inside and seeing other people in a new way, you start thinking about brand experiences and your business and what you're doing, the services you offer, all of that, you start just turning it all upside down from the typical way of going about building and thinking of a business and your brand. And that's how my why data totally shifted, how I look at a business and how we work with our clients.

(35:11): We created our own way of doing it. We don't build it around physicalities anymore. It's, what is the why and use that as the driver. We help people find that, like you've all been saying, it's a very difficult thing to do. And it is a process it goes through, but once you get there, it has a huge impact on your business. The other question that follows up with that, we've talked about finding your why, what is your why, how have you leveraged it with your business. Was there ever a time when you were running your business, that you just didn't have a why or you lost it? How were things in your life, personally and business-wise and even philanthropy wise? How did not having a why, if you were in that situation, how did that impact your life?

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Not Having a “Why” Can Impact Your Work and Personal Lives

Robb Breeding (36:06):

This is a really good question for me because when I look back at what I've done it's not always been for the best of reasons. As much as we know each other, I think I'm a pretty good guy, but sometimes our motives where there's a shadow side to some of these drivers we have inside of us. There were times obviously with whether that was in school or whether that was at Sears when I was fighting with others to climb the corporate ladder or when that was at Shock City, when at the wireless phone company, when we were trying to grow and capture market share and make money. Some things that don't always sound as altruistic is the evil business idea.

(36:58): I think that oftentimes does sidetrack us. And then I would also say on a less intentional basis, maybe it's a good time to pause too. And just say we have such a blessing to live here in a country where we can have this conversation. We're so fortunate, not that you can have this conversation in a less privileged society, but what a blessing we do have to be able to find that purpose and blessing and really get to the pinnacle of our effectiveness as people. And I don't think we should take that responsibility lightly. That's a responsibility we have as Americans and as first worlders, whatever you want to call us that we do something with that, but there is this pole to get off the rails.

(38:04): And I listed a few things that are pitfalls. I do some coaching as part of developing ourselves. A lot of times this is what we need to stop doing. So some pitfalls for me have been as my need to win. I can't tell you how many times that's got me in trouble. I've got to win this thing. I got away from my value system or from my why; I need to be right. Which is also rooted in my need to win. Cause I'm a high type-A; Stephanie, I am telling you, I'm a high B. But I'm a high yellow too. So you don't have to guess what I'm thinking. And then when I'm right, when I think I'm right, of course I tell you. And then another one I wrote down was clinging to the past; sometimes we're too much holding on that.

(38:54): We can't let go of that to go to the next thing. And then I've already talked about money. So those are some ways that I think your why can get muddled.

Alan Wallner:

It's always been working to get back to that. But there are things that happen in life that can pull you away from that, but that's always a good grounding point to come back to you.

Stephanie Courtillier (39:26):

A couple of things come to mind for me, a big one was this awareness. And I love some of the elements Robb mentioned, even just to those pitfalls. Because I've definitely fallen through, I think many of us have, I mean, we're humans after all. We're not perfect. It's these two pathways almost. And growing up, I, at least for myself, I was always taught to succeed, what I was striving for. I was on his journey to strive for success in any way, shape or form. What I quickly learned in my early mid-twenties when I was starting to hit that burnout from

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having succeeded to everyone else's perspectives was I made the shift to striving for significance instead. We have to be careful because I still want to be successful, but it's almost this transition from getting out of our heads and working more from our hearts.

(40:22): And they say, this is the longest journey that we're ever going to have to make in our lifetime is from your head to your heart. But that was such a pivotal moment. And when I really understood that in a very gut level versus comprehending it up here. We want to be successful, but what is it, what would it look like if instead of always striving for the ranking and achieving in that way that I was striving for something that was a legacy based or impact based or values based. Going once again, from getting out of my head into my heart and I've run into those pitfalls. So like I mentioned, I'm a controller to some capacity. So ego gets in my way all the time. I'm a Leo, I'm a very quiet, humble Leo, I must say, but I'm a Leo.

(41:10): And I've got those characteristics inside of me where it's fun to be the spotlight and it's just my journey. I was a shy, quiet, introverted kid. I'm in Toastmasters and they make fun of me all the time. You're not shy and quiet. But for me to come to that heart space is having, and I think someone in the chat was asking this, so is it mindfulness, is it journaling? It's all. And it's nothing at the same time. It's pick one and pick the one that works for you. But as far as my business goes, similar to Robb, I got this entrepreneur bug. I joke that I am the perfect blend of my parents.

(41:54): My mom, I mentioned is a spiritual life coach, my dad is a middle Eastern workaholic, a businessman. So I've got the boots to the ground, work your butt off. If you want to ever be known for anything, everything is hard. Everything has to come after hours of work. And then I've got this mom that's like, Hey what is their plan? Tight, hang loose, just a hippie. And I've got these two very conflicting people that have made me who I am today. So I've had to learn to embrace both elements and bring the best forward. So to summarize it. Are you on this path for success? And if so, awesome. But how can you also live from your heart and everything you do? And we're only human. So it's not to feel guilty or shameful when you are acting out of ego.

(42:42): It's just to be more aware of those moments. And so almost set yourself up in a way. So are you meditating every day? Cause if I'm not having a 5- or 10-minute meditation or even a breathing or a grounding break, I am automatically in my Type-A get stuff done mode I'm in, versus B. And through COVID, was a big one for me to step out of doing and step into B. And that was so much easier said than done. But when we are in the element of B, all the things are attracted to you and that's something for a workaholic and just a narcissist society. How we're very individualistic. We're very achiever base. We're very success oriented. We have to remind ourselves of those elements and to bring that. So to answer the direct question, no, I was never operating from my why I was constantly in this other state. And it's a constant reminder, but Integrous Women, luckily, blessedly, I built it completely from my why and I've done it in a way that it's constantly reminding me of my why. So I'm almost being held accountable by our community to be that leader, to step into that higher self.

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Alan Wallner (43:55):

It's going for success versus significance, and then if you can build your business model around the significance, that is pretty powerful.

Lisa Poulson (44:12):

I would like to express the capitalist point of view, which is, I don't think that your why is opposed to being successful. So in 2000, if you compare where I was in 2013, when I had no idea what my why was going to be and where I was in 2019 before COVID my business was 20 times more profitable or 20 times top line revenue.

(44:32): So having a why helped me have a business that works, and I'm not a nonprofit. I worked for tech companies. They have a lot of money and I want them to pay me. And for me and my business, my services are not inexpensive because it helps people understand the commitment, which is if you're going to work for me, take it seriously and expend energy on it. So I'm in favor of making a lovely living from a place of a wonderful why and I just don't want us to feel like we're diverging from commerce toward a why and that we can't make a living at doing it. Because I don't have anyone else to pay my rent, but me, so I've got to pay my rent.

Robb Breeding (45:31):

The point I was trying to make was that when I'm focused in that area, it's when I'm most effective. And when I do generate the most revenue, Lisa, I mean, that was Shock City, that was that my individual sole proprietorship. So that's a really good point to make.

How to Discover or Rediscover Your "Why"

Alan Wallner (45:31):

Now, what about someone who is just not passionate about their business anymore and maybe they've never had a why to drive their business. What are some things that you might want to recommend they do to help discover or rediscover their why? I think we've weaved it into our stories here a little bit, but it'd be interested to hear if we can just quickly roll it up into a nugget.

Stephanie Courtillier (46:35):

Some of the things I feel many of us mentioned as COVID hit. I think it just puts such a dent in everyone's personal lives and professional lives. And so for me, having gone through that experience, even though I joke, I was built out of my why and my passions. It's like my essence. It's my being. And yet, and Robb alluded to this, we all have to do stuff we don't like to do. There's the paperwork. There's the really annoying backend admin work that I have to do with the way I finally found a VA. They exist. There's people who can help you with this stuff. But then we still have to do that as business owners. And more recently

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through COVID specifically. And I also happened to have gotten pregnant during COVID I'm 20 weeks right now and emotional

(47:30): But the emotions, of all of that was overwhelming and I took a step back and am I really doing what I want to be doing with my life? I started asking myself questions like am I leaving an impact? Almost going back to the basics to when I was first in that burnout phase of am I living this life with a purpose; am I actually living through my why? And so in that state of being, once again, I think I had to step out of the doing to step back into the being. And it's for me personally, it's every time I'm stuck in do that I'm no longer in flow. Things get hard. Things are complicated, things are overwhelming. And to keep it super simple, it's fear or love, or either living in fear in any way, shape or form and all those emotions that are scary and hard.

(48:23): That means you're literally facing fear. So I just go back to face love and going, what is it about Integrous Women that I love? It's the people, it's the community. So for me to get back into my flow, to start living out the why, again, meant being more intentional, being more strategic with where I was focusing my efforts. So I joke about bringing a VA so that the VA can take on the stuff I don't like to do. Why? Because I need to step into my unique brilliance. We all have one of those, it's those strengths. And so in my case, it was going back to the ability to take a step back, to take strategic action from, COVID not just react, but to be proactive through that process and hone in on the basics, the core, the values of what made Integrous Women, and to use that. So now an example is I put together a giving community project. We're going to make art kits to support nonprofits in Orange County. That's fun for me, that makes me feel alive. So I think for anyone who's listening, it's are you stuck, do you have the ability even for five minutes to step back, reconnect with your purpose and now be intentional, bringing elements of what you love into the day to day, but to be intentional, to take action towards that, I think is really, really important.

Lisa Poulson (49:49):

I think it's partly just taking a step back and taking a 30,000-foot view. I was so devastated by Chadwick Boseman's death and I've been reading a lot about him and about how he was suffering from colon cancer for four years while he was making these magnificent movies. I was reading Ryan Coogler's tribute to him yesterday, who directed him in "Black Panther" and he was talking about how Chadwick was so focused on just this long-term why of wanting to represent this beautiful hopeful model for generations of kids.

(50:29): He knew he was going to die; he was a person who was really focused on what's the highest level, the most important impact I can have and doing it right now in the moment. So sometimes I think stepping out of how do I make my numbers this month or this quarter and into what do I want to look back on having accomplished in 25 years and just setting aside for half a day, all this stuff that's right in front of you. I think that can make a difference. And also for me, a couple of times Robb's mentioned God, I guess it's okay to talk about God. I live in San Francisco.

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(51:28): I live in an apartment building and more than once I had gone up on the roof of my apartment building and just stared up at the sky and I'm like, God, I'm lost. I'm confused. I have a daily prayer practice every morning and every night, but sometimes I have to have a really serious conversation about how I'm freaking out and I can't handle it and I don't know what to do. And I really need help right now. And sometimes that's what I have to do. Or calling friends or going it alone versus asking for support. I think a lot of entrepreneurs, I mean, I'm so stubborn and I always think I know what I should do, so it's hard for me to step back and ask for help. So part of it is stepping back to that 30,000-foot view, and Chadwick Boseman is my role model for that. And part of it is when I am really lost, I have to step back and really ask for help. And so I go up on the roof because I feel like I can look up in the sky and I'm looking up at God's house and I can say, Hey, I really need some help.

Robb Breeding (52:40):

I'm going to echo what Stephanie and Lisa have been saying, and that is when you get away from your why, what you're saying is taking that time and having a regular practice of self-reflection and self-work will help you to stay there...I'll put three bullet points on it. One would be take the time and get to know yourself, and that includes your why. And then to Stephanie's point, be yourself as often as you possibly can. And then to Lisa's point, surround yourself with good people that have your best interest at heart that love you unconditionally, and that can help to lift you up and give you perspective when you need it. If you put those three things in place in your life, it's becomes a lot easier to stay on the rails.

Alan Wallner (54:08):

I would agree. Oftentimes we get so wrapped up in the day to day and needing to achieve, achieve, achieve, and to just always be on the mark and drinking tons of coffee. So you can have that energy, but it really does boil down to taking the time for self-care, to step back and slow down and to maybe observe for a while to even do that self-work and to really get to know yourself. And I liked authenticity and being true to yourself. I think you are right on with that. I can't think of a greater experience if you're a business owner, instead of just going on goals all the time and just taking a moment to become more familiar with you and your why, you're doing what you're doing. And once you open the doors there, I think the business starts growing and progressing and evolving in a much healthier way because like attracts like; so if you're in a more peaceful state of being and being true to yourself, who are you going to attract? You're going to attract people who are in a similar way and energetically people are going to like being around you. So you're going to start attracting really nice people who you can share this with and even learn from.

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Closing Remarks

Alan Wallner (55:39):

I think it just escalates. And there's a whole other component of which we're going to do in a later episode called conscious capitalism. That's about running your business from your why, and people, philanthropy, planet—how do we get all that to work together in a way that can be a successful business? If people are interested in this topic and how do you go even further with it, that'd be a good topic for everyone to tap into. We did address everyone's attendee questions in the way we were answering our questions. If not, please let us know. You can email us at info@consciousbranding.com. I would like to thank everyone for attending this episode today. I think it was a great conversation, great insights, a lot of things that people can put to use, and things will only get better if you start applying these things.

(56:38): So I hope everyone enjoyed the conversation. And also if you can think of any additional topics you'd like us to cover in the future, I'm starting to develop the next fourth quarter and first quarter of next year episodes. So drop me a line at info@consciousbranding.com. I'd like to incorporate some of your ideas with what I'm developing here. And I look forward to seeing you back. Remember, you create your world, so believe in your vision, drive it with purpose and above all take action. So until next time, be remarkable. Thanks everyone for being here.

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