

Podcast Episode #032

ENCORE: How to Accomplish Your Goals Without Relying on Willpower

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Pamela: This is our first mastermind teleseminar, and the topic for this evening's call is "Crafting a Vision for Your Reinvention."

Announcer: Welcome to the Lift Your Life Project with Coach Pamela.

Pamela: Welcome to the Lift Your Life Project. I'm Pamela Mitchell, also known as Coach Pamela. This is the podcast devoted to helping you meld your personal self and your professional self into an enhanced version of your best self. My goal is to help you take control of your work and your life, feel more relaxed and confident, and experience the satisfaction and fulfillment of a sustainable, successful life.

Today, I have got so much great, great, great content for you. In "Tales From The Coaching Front", we talk about "How to Accomplish your Goals without Relying on Willpower". Yes, it's true. Yes, it's possible. Also in today's segment of "Ask Coach Pamela", I have a question from Nikki who is wondering how to get started with her reinvention. That, and lots more for you today. Let's get this show started.

Announcer: And now ... It's "Tales From The Coaching Front".

Pamela: In a recent call that I had with a client, she was talking about the struggles she was having when she ate a bag of chips. Now, it's true that that might seem like a minor topic for a coaching call, but I am here to tell you that you can have major insights from a bag of chips. At any rate, what she was talking about is how she ate this entire bag of chips, and as she was looking at it and debating, "I know I shouldn't be eating this", but she did. She ate the entire bag of chips, and then, afterwards she felt just horrible. She was telling me, "I don't know why. Even though I knew I was going to feel badly after eating that bag of chips, I don't know why I still ate it."

She said, "I used to have willpower when I was young, and now, I find that I just don't have any willpower." What I said to her is, "Hey, do you realize that willpower is actually a depletable resource?" She said, "No, I didn't". I said, "Yes. In fact, willpower has been



shown ... scientifically shown ... to be tied to glucose levels in our bodies. Glucose is our store of energy, and when we use it, it can run out." That, in fact, is why it's easier to do certain things in the morning, and then afterwards we seem to run out of steam. It's because our glucose levels are dropping, and when they drop, it's very difficult to have the same type of willpower ... actually, it's difficult to have any willpower when they are low.

There's a really interesting book if you want to learn more about this topic. It's called "Willpower", and it's by Roy Baumeister and John Tierney. I do recommend checking it out. I said to my client, "The thing to understand about this, is that we can't rely on willpower to be the source of consistent change." That was a huge "Aha" moment for her, because she had always been able to rely on willpower, and now, she recognized that it wasn't reliable. The thing is that when we want to make a permanent shift, we have to find another source within ourselves apart from willpower.

I happened to find this out through my own journey which I shared with her, and I will now share with you. My journey has to do with weight loss as well, and struggle with food, because I, my entire life, have struggled with food. I went up and down the scale. I would have lots of willpower for certain phases of my life, and when I had lots of willpower it was easy for me to eat in a healthy manner. And I also worked out. But then, life would happen, things would get stressful, and then I would have very little willpower, and would go back to eating things or just eating more quantities than I should and all of that. Then, the weight would just come back on. I had to deal with this cycle for many, many years of my life. Pretty much my entire life, until I hit my mid-40s.

It was then that I had an epiphany as I was sitting in yet another weight loss room saying to myself, "I'm listening to people talk about what they should eat and what they shouldn't eat and all of these things", and what came to me was that I knew what I should be eating. That wasn't the issue. The problem is that at some point I knew that even though I had the knowledge about what to eat, I wouldn't eat that way. That as soon as my life got stressful I would stop eating the way that I knew was best for me. I realized then that the problem to solve wasn't the "Oh, how can I have more willpower?"

But, was "How in those stressful moments, where I had very little willpower, how was I going to continue to maintain the eating program that I knew would sustain the healthy weight that I wanted to reach?"

I realized that I couldn't just rely on, "Hey, let me just power it through." It had to come from a different source within me. The one thing about me is that I just don't do well feeling deprived. That was another reason it never stuck, is because in those really stressful moments where I was having to deal with a lot of stuff, I was like, "I don't want to deprive myself of these other things." That's where I'd be turning to whatever food substance I wanted for myself. Usually cheesecake, because that was my thing. I had to come up with a new strategy, and one that didn't involve feeling deprived. What I hit upon was that I could make it a choice, but not sort of the typical choice of, "Oh, choose what you want." In those stressful moments, when faced with a cheesecake? Yeah, I



know what I want. I want that cheesecake.

No. The real question I had to ask myself is, "What do I want more?" What that question did is it made me acknowledge that number one, "Yeah, I did want this cheesecake", but I also wanted to be a healthy weight. I could look at those two choices, and I could decide which one I wanted more. Now, the real power of that question, "What do I want more?" is that it does tap me into my own power. I don't have to feel deprived, because I get what I want either way. In that moment, if I decide that I want a piece of cheesecake more than I want a healthy body, then, I get what I want. Or, if I decide that I want a healthy body more than I want a piece of cheesecake, then I get what I want. Either way, I get what I want, and I am not deprived.

There is a real strength to that. There is a real resonance and a real power to being able to step into that type of choice. What I've found over the years, as I continue to maintain a hundred pound weight loss, is that that choice that I get to make is far more reliable than willpower. I shared this with my client, about that choice that she could make, and that she could choose between whether or not she wanted the chips more or she wanted the feeling of the healthy body more. She said, "Yeah. I get how in that moment it would help me be very clear, and I wouldn't feel deprived."

Now, here's another little tip that I can tell you, because there are those times that you will look at whatever thing it is that you're wanting to choose, that might not be the healthiest thing for you, and you'll decide, "Yeah, you know what? I think I might want that more." You still know that it's not the healthiest thing and that you're going to feel sorry once you make that choice. What do you do in those moments, because this is real. I'm like a coach here that helps you with the real situations, not this sort of "airy fairy" like, "Hey, it's always gonna be like this." No. There are going to be those moments where you say, "I want that." Just like there were those moments that I was like, "I want that cheesecake. There is no question. I don't care about being healthy. I want it."

What do you do when you face those challenging moments? I had this little, internal trick that I would do, but I found a quote by Mary Karr that encapsulated it so perfectly that I'm going to share that with you now. I shared it with my client and I just thought, "This is exactly what I've always been thinking." Mary Karr was talking about how she doesn't watch porn. What she said about that is, "It's not that I occupy some high moral ground. I just think that down that road lies madness." That encapsulates it so incredibly powerfully. That's what I would think to myself when I would look at that cheesecake and I'd think, "I want that. I want that." But, I'd remind myself that, "Down that road lies madness."

I know the pain and the insanity that came from eating the kinds of things that weren't healthy for my body, and I just didn't want to experience that anymore. In those tough moments, my wonderful "Lift Your Life" listener ... When you are faced with those kinds of things that you know you want, but also, there's a choice that's going to move you closer to the life that you truly want to be living, what you want to do is to step into that



"power of choice", and ask yourself, "Which do I want more?" If you find yourself wavering, remind yourself that "Down that road lies madness."

Announcer: That's it for Tales From The Coaching Front. Now, onto our next segment. Got a question? She's got your answer. It's time for "Ask Coach Pamela".

Pamela: We are back with my favorite segment. Today, we hear from Nikki, who is in a job that seemed like a great opportunity when she took it, but now, she feels stuck. Let's hear what Nikki has to say.

Nikki: Hi. My name is Nikki and I'm from Milwaukee. I was offered two part-time positions, one of them being my passion: dance. I started working, everything was great, and then they offered me a full-time position with benefits, something totally new that I've never done before, and I went with it because it seemed like a great opportunity. Now, after doing this position for more than two years, I feel like I'm stuck. I don't want to be in this position. I'm not happy. I know what I want to do. I want to dance and I feel the calling in that direction, but I'm nervous. I'm asking your advice. What do you think I should do?

Pamela: Hi Nikki. That is just a great question. First of all, kudos to you for getting a job that was first in your passion, the part-time one, and then, having them offer you a fulltime position with benefits. Clearly, they view you as a talented resource, and that's a good thing. I'm hearing that you feel stuck right now. You've been doing this for two years. It sounds like it's stretched your skill set. You said that this was something you hadn't done before, and it was a good opportunity at the time. But now, you're feeling the calling of your passion, and you want to get back to that, but you're nervous. You're nervous which, yes, I can understand.

We all would be nervous, because when we have something that is good and has benefits and on its surface seems like it should be enough, but in our hearts we know that it's not, it can be very, very scary to stand on that precipice and think about leaving. The first thing that I would encourage you to do is to look at your current position as a stepping stone, rather than a block. The reason that I say this is because viewing it right now as a block makes you feel more frustrated. When we feel frustrated, it's really difficult to create something new, because we're in that kind of mental mode of, "I don't like this", and when we show up every day we're just not happy, and that's not a great space to try and step into a dream and a vision.

We don't want to see ourselves being in opposition to our lives, because we want to be able to take what we have right now and use that as a foundation to build something new. Let's first shift the mindset and take a look at how this position can be a stepping stone. The first thing is that it has brought you some key things. You mention benefits, and so the very next step that I would recommend you do is to take a look at your life, and see what your ideal lifestyle is. I talk about in my book, "The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention", that Law One says that, "It starts with a vision for your life." That's where you want to begin. You have this vision, you have this passion for what you want to do,



but we also want to marry that with the vision for what you have in terms of how you want to live in this moment.

Now, you don't mention if you have a family or anything like that, but those are the kinds of things that you also want to bring to the table. Do you have young children? Are your children about to get out of college? Where are you in that? Do you have a spouse or a partner that needs to be brought to the table? Although you wouldn't do it at this moment, these are the considerations that you want to take in terms of coming up with your ideal vision for your lifestyle, because it's about pursuing your love and your passion, but it's also about delivering the kind of life that you want to live for the people that you love. If your passion ends up being in conflict with the kind of life that you want to be living with your loved ones, then, it will create an issue. That first step ... "Come up with that vision for how you want to live", and take into account all of the people that surround you as well.

Now, second step on that is to, "Give yourself a timeline." Now, here's the thing ... That vision, when we think about, "Oh, I have this passion and I'm never going to pursue this passion." Again, it creates a mindset that makes us feel unhappy. That makes us feel stressed, so what I always recommend is that we give ourselves a specific time frame. In this case, I would say look at your vision and your lifestyle from a time frame of five years. Now, what does that do? That gives you a very specific container for how you can accomplish this next goal, and then, it also gives you a very specific container for the circumstances of your life. If you have young children, in five years they'll be older and you'll have different demands on your time. Or, maybe they'll be out of the house, and then you will be free and you won't have the same type of financial issues that you may or may not have now.

These are the kinds of things ... It's why the timeline is so important, and looking at it from a five-year window, so that it doesn't become a big question of, "Oh my life, how's that going to be?", but just, "What am I doing for the next five years?", is much more accessible.

Okay. The next step that you want to take is to, "See how you're already pursuing your passion." If this is something that you love, you want to make sure that it's in your life right now. Now, perhaps you're volunteering on the side. Perhaps you can do maybe a part-time job on the side. Or maybe, you can even consult or have people hire you independently, start a side business in that.

The key is to bring your passion into your day-to-day life now, even though you still have your full-time position that you're working on. This becomes your transition phase where you start to move yourself towards your new passion, but you're still doing and taking care of the things that are important to you in the moment. But now, you can also see that there's movement toward your passion. You get to experience it in your life right now, and you also get to see progress. Now, the next step ... Remember how I said, "Take a look at your current position. See how that can be a stepping stone to your next



one"?

Remember you said to me that they hired you first part-time for dance, and then they offered you this full-time position. I'm gathering from that that there might be other opportunities within your organization to perhaps, take a forward step with that, or, perhaps your current organization can put you in touch with some opportunities for that. Or, maybe the job that you have right now can expose you to things that can help you pursue your passion for dance. Really take a step back, look at your current position, see how it can open some doors for you in that passion.

Also, take a look at the skills that you've developed in this job, because as you said, "This job brought some new things to you." Are those skills that you can use, either in creating a business around dance or for a company that puts you much closer to that dream? Those skills can also be brought to bear with that as well. These are the things that I would recommend. I don't recommend just quitting and trying to find something new. I recommend using this as a stepping stone to build the next phase of your life. Thanks Nikki for your question. That's it for today's segment of The Lift Your Life Project. Be sure to visit [Life Your Life Project.com/podcast](http://LifeYourLifeProject.com/podcast) where you can download a transcript of today's episode.

If you have a question for "Ask Coach Pamela", visit LifeYourLifeProject.com/question, and leave me a voicemail. If I answer it on an upcoming episode, I will send you a gift of reinvention cards. You can also connect with me on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram @thecoachpamela. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a review for the show on iTunes. Your feedback does make a difference.

Today's lift-off inspiration comes from Teddy Roosevelt who says, "Do what you can, where you are, with what you have."

Thanks so much for listening today, and remember, "Why settle for good when great is waiting?" Take one small step this week to "Lift Your Life". Bye for now.

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