

Laura 00:00

Hello, and welcome to the Next Level Leap podcast. My name is Laura Meyer, and I'm thrilled to be your guide on this journey. With over 20 years' experience as an entrepreneur and growth strategist for some of the country's fastest growing nonprofit and for-profit organizations, I'm passionate about the power of marketing, creating massive positive change in the world. In this podcast, we'll explore how you can use marketing to create a ripple effect of change that will impact lives and communities for years to come. I'm so excited to share my insights and strategies with you and to help you discover how you can use your talents and skills to make a difference in the world. So, let's dive in together and create a marketing report that will change the world.

Laura 00:43

Hi, everybody, I want to introduce you to Courtney Elmer. She's the founder of the effortless life. We just had her as a guest in our abundant consultant mastermind she rocked it. And I want you to hear her genius too. So welcome, Courtney. It's so good to have you here.

Courtney 00:58

Laura, thank you for having me. It is an honor to be here. I'm so excited for our conversation today.

Laura 01:04

Me too. And it was we were having so much fun even before we started recording. So I know this is going to be a good episode. And before we even get into the questions that we have for you today, why don't you share a little bit about your background? And then what got you to today?

Courtney 01:19

Absolutely. So my journey and entrepreneurship started when I was 25 years old, sitting in the doctor's office, two days after getting home from my honeymoon, we have had a long, nine months or so of planning the wedding, you know, the whirlwind of two weeks leading up to the wedding, I had been really sick with a sinus infection right before the wedding. And I had gone to the doctor just to get an antibiotic knock out whatever was residual kind of going on. And at that visit, the doctor was like, oh, I think we need to run some further tests or tests what, okay, did some blood work to the whole panel. And those results were due the day of our rehearsal dinner, and I told my doctors like, don't call me like I am getting married. I promise to follow up with you. But just please don't have your office call me. This is my wedding week. You know, just give me this one week. So that Tuesday, lo and behold, I get a phone call from the nurse. And she goes I know you told us not to call you but the doctor just wanted to let you know your results are in I was like, Well, I was expecting the results. But I asked you not to call me. I

promise I will circle back to you. I'm getting married tomorrow. She's like, okay, well, we just wanted to make sure you didn't miss your follow up. And like, I promise I won't miss the follow up. Let's just put it on the calendar if it gives you peace of mind. So we scheduled that for two days after we got home from our honeymoon.

Courtney 02:34

And that was the day that I was diagnosed with cancer. Oh my gosh. And let me tell you, Laura, that hit me out of complete left field. Wow, no history in my family. No thyroid issues in my family, it was thyroid cancer. And within a week, I was on the surgery table. And I had my thyroid completely removed, went through radiation treatment. And you know, looking back now, I am so grateful that this happened because had it not I don't think I'd be where I am today. And it became the catalyst for my business for my work in the world for everything that came next. But it forced me to stop. It forced me to think and reexamine my values, my principles, I was working nine to five and nights and weekends and lunch breaks. And climbing the corporate ladder thinking that that was what I was supposed to do. That's what I needed to do chasing this ideal of success. That wasn't true to me. And so it forced me to ask myself some really big questions. And the answers led me in a direction that I never envisioned for myself. But I'm so grateful for the path that unfolded before me. And so fast forward a couple of years after that whole experience and finally getting my feet under me again, I opened the doors to at the time it was just Courtney Elmer coaching, didn't really know who I serve, didn't really know how to differentiate myself in the marketplace. But I knew that I was here to make a difference, to help people to use my voice in a positive way. And that I couldn't keep sitting on my hands, you know, waiting for the next promotion, waiting for the next raise waiting on my dreams. Now, fast forward seven years, here we are with a much better defined niche and much clearer. You know, we know what we do. And we know how to communicate that now where is that? You know, that didn't exist before. But it all came as a result of this catalyst event. Wow. And again, you know, just my heart is just it's nothing but gratitude for that because of because of what it brought me.

Laura 04:50

Yeah. Oh my gosh, what an amazing story and experience and I know that growth is really important to you as well. result for that. By the way, I didn't know that about you. So I mean, I'm so sorry that you went through that. And also, I know for my hardest moments, while I certainly haven't experienced what you have, I definitely feel the same. Like I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. And I certainly wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy. And at the same time, in retrospect, it was such a gift. And I mean, it's just it speaks to your character and how you're built and who you are, and your own values to see it that way. Because I think it's hard for people to see challenges that way. Whether they're health, whether they're relational, you know, whether they're business, it's difficult to see them as a blessing. So it's an amazing perspective. And I know with that focus on growth and personal development and self-

awareness, what are some of the key that you really believe business owners need to have an order to experience that kind of growth?

Courtney 05:57

Yeah, you know, for me, I label this as the habit of receptivity is not a habit, like the ones you're going to read about in books or articles on Forbes, about, you know, the seven things' billionaires do every day. But I promise you this, that when you adopt this habit, when you understand how this works, you're going to see your life change, you will see your business grow. Because for most people, not knowing about this habit, not practicing this habit, not even knowing how to practice it is one thing that can really hold you back from the growth that is there for you in every opportunity. So, to illustrate this, you know, I go back to this idea of a catalyst event, significant events in your life, that create chaos, but can bring about change. So a simple example, you know, getting kicked out of your parents' house, when you turn 20, or graduate college, whatever, you know, it's like, that's it, you're done, you know, that might be a catalyst for someone to become more independent. Right? For me, this cancer experience, I was a big catalyst. And what's important to know about Catalyst events is that they can be positive or negative, you know, you would imagine going through some of these lowest points in your life, or getting diagnosed out of the blue with cancer, or an autoimmune condition, you know, or chronic illness. Those are maybe negative catalyst events, we would label those as negative some unwanted experience. Catalyst events can also be positive experiences.

Courtney 07:30

There was an event in the early days of my business, where for two weeks, I went to Canada, sight unseen, I had met a coach and a Facebook group. And this was back, you know, almost eight years ago, when we were really utilizing Facebook groups to network and grow and connect. And she was running a two week business retreat, to go and help you get clear on who you serve. And you know, all the basic foundational elements of starting a business. So met this person on Facebook didn't know her, booked a plane ticket, flew to Canada, where I had never been attended this retreat, and walked out a different person, because I walked in thinking I was going to have, you know, this amazing business plan. And certainly, I had a lot of clarity on that coming out. But what I didn't expect was the awareness that I would gain about the things that were holding me back. And to be able to move through those and work through those and shed those layers and come out completely different on the other side, that was a catalyst event to and it was a very positive experience. So my point here is that these catalyst events can be positive or negative, you know, if we were going to label them, but both can contribute to growth, a catalyst event doesn't necessarily have to be something difficult, in order for growth to happen, but what's really important to recognize is that just because you have these events, doesn't automatically mean you're going to grow from there. Yeah. And this is a key tenant of what I teach, you know, within my methodology around anti fragility, which goes beyond robustness or resilience.

Courtney 09:05

You know, resilience, robustness, that means that something can withstand a shock, it can withstand chaos, it doesn't necessarily grow from it. Or as anti-fragility means you improve because of that shock. Like a shock to the system is what I always said. So for most of us, we only realize these catalyst events in hindsight, which means we often miss the opportunity for growth. Yep. And so this boils down to the power of receptivity, because in life, you're going to experience highs and lows, certainly know are familiar with those on this business journey. But the habit of receptivity is the key to making sure that all of them contribute to your growth. You know, and during that positive event, I was incredibly receptive to the growth it's the reason why I grew I was open to it and the growth flowed you know, in the More negative experience, I knew good would come of it. But it was difficult to grow through. Yeah, and it many points along the way I resist it. And I made the experience harder than it needed to be. Yeah. So this is one habit that again, you're not going to read about, you know, on the Inc 500 list or anything like that, that people are talking about that you need to adopt to become, you know, some seven figure successful eight figure business owner. But it is the one that will determine whether or not or the degree to which you're able to grow during any season in your life.

Laura 10:36

Yeah,so if we were if you were to break down, that's so good. And if you were to break it down to like, specific actions in the day, is there anything that you do to reinforce this habit on a regular basis?

Courtney 10:48

Yes. So one of the things is just becoming aware, when you're experiencing something in your business, maybe it's something really positive and exciting. Maybe it's something really difficult and you're struggling to get through it. It can even be, let's say, a life experience that was unexpected, you know, you lose a loved one, or you get an unexpected diagnosis. Or maybe you're driving your kids to school, and you get a flat tire, right. And it's a lot of little things that add up to really affect, you know, your emotional state in the course of a day, the very first thing you need to do to cultivate that awareness muscle is, could this be a catalyst event? Ask yourself that question, because it's the awareness first, and like I said, normally, we noticed catalyst events in retrospect. But the very practical way that you can begin to become more attuned and aware and open is to simply ask, could this be a catalyst event for me? Mm hmm. Could there be a lesson here, for me, and simply by opening yourself to the potential that there's a lesson there that there's growth there, you will naturally become more receptive to it, and you'll be more attuned and aware to notice that growth taking place?

Laura 12:01

I love that, my gosh, that's so good. And that awareness is so powerful. And that along those lines, like why is taking action? Why do you say it's the least scalable thing a small business owner can do?

Courtney 12:14

Laura, this goes back to the early days of my business, okay, when I was growing a business, you know, this startup, essentially birthing a business. And I had become a new mom, around six months after launching my business. So I had birthed this business, I birthed this baby, and I was trying to figure out both and it was crazy. And I was just like, What have I gotten myself into. And so I kept hearing these messages from these experts in these influencers that I would follow in these podcast hosts that I would listen to, and they would say, you could just take action, you know, just keep showing up. Just keep putting in the effort, take massive action, take action, when you're scared, just do it, you know, hashtag Nike. And it was like, this was the message that I kept getting. And I was like, this is not working for me, I cannot take any more action, I'm taking all the action that I can take, there is no more action to take. I'm at my capacity, you know, made up my energetic capacity, I have no more time, realistically in the day to be able to take more action. So I started to quickly realize that, as business owners, there are several resources that we have to pull from that we can use to bring about results. And among some of the most common is not money, and one that often gets overlooked. Or energy. Yeah.

Courtney 13:30

But at the end of the day, there's only so much time, or energy, or capacity or money to go around. Yes. And most people think well, no, they're renewable resources, right, you're going to get another 24 hours on the clock tomorrow, you're going to have more money in your bank account when that next client signs are you'll have more energy after you have a good night's sleep. But what you've got to realize is that renewable does not mean unlimited. Right? So when you're trying to grow your business based on limited resources, then the results that you're able to achieve will always be limited, right, at least to some degree. So as entrepreneurs, you've got to start thinking differently and shift our focus and look at what are the unlimited resources that I can put in place in order to help me leverage the limited resources that I have to make them go forth? Yeah, that boils down to systems, there's no limit to the systems you can put in place, or structure to help you streamline operations, save time, automate, delegate, and really support to there's not really a cap to the amount of support. Because for everyone that you hire, you're essentially buying back that time for yourself that you could go out and generate more revenue to hire people to support you and creating really a flywheel of getting leveraging your time. So all the influencers will say take action, take action, take action. But yeah, it's the least scalable thing because at the end of the day, it's a limited resource.

Laura 14:55

That's so good. And it's so true. And I love that you're saying that's because the Take Action girl bossy, what I call coach whoo, whoo stuff is so it's so you know, a lot of times when I see it, I was like, Oh, that's sweet. They haven't been an entrepreneur that long. Because you know, because if you've been an entrepreneur for a long time, you know exactly what you're saying, if you're a leader, you, you know, there's large organizations that listen to this podcast, too, if you're any kind of leader, just thinking that way of systems. It made me laugh, because it reminded me of that last summer, I signed up for a tennis tournament that lasted the entire summer and had to be scheduled, and I sent everybody my Calendly link, and they must have thought that I was out of my mind, because everybody else would schedule their matches through a string of 10 or 15, emails back and forth. But I was like, listen like this, I'm not doing that, you know, and they probably called me OCD behind my back. But I don't care because those things got scheduled really, really efficiently. So it's like, funny, we can do this in any area of our lives, whether it's home family business, like really just being protective of the fact that it's not, it's not unlimited.

Courtney 16:06

Totally. And you might have given them an idea to be like, Oh, I should do this for myself, I get that all the time with our email, auto responder, we have an autoresponder that says, hey, we are a small team. This is when we check emails, this is when you can expect a response from us. Please don't bump it to the top of our inbox, because we promise we'll get back to you in this timeframe. You know, if you don't hear from us in that timeframe, then you can bump it up. But just to you know, communicate expectations with people. And it goes a long way to saving you so much time, but it's just looking at your life from that lens, right? And a lot of us don't do that. We just go through our day, we go through the motions, we're trying to check boxes, and we're not really thinking about how to create real leverage.

Laura 16:42

Yes, so good. So this is our last for today. And it's something that, you know, now knowing your story. I'm so curious about that. How do you leverage adversity to your advantage?

Courtney 16:56

Yeah, this goes back to developing the habit of receptivity. Because I like to look at life in our darkest moments, as not being the end. But the beginning of something, your darkest moments are the harbingers of the light. So often, when we face those rough seasons, you know, the past nine months, I'll be honest with you have been very difficult for me in my personal life. I lost some loved ones, friends, a family member was experiencing a lot of grief. Yeah, we had a lot of transitions happening on our team, people moving on for various life reasons, all positive things, but the shuffling of, you know organization behind the scenes, and what that looked like, and the stress and the pressure that comes with that. And I knew

throughout this entire season, as hard as it was at some moments was that this was all about to birth, something new. This, you know, is the this season where you know, that seed goes in the ground. And it's dark, and it doesn't look like anything happens. And it actually has to die in order for the new life to spring for.

Courtney 18:09

And so you can look at your life in this way when you're facing adversity, which really is just a broad term for those difficult seasons that you face. sort of thinking of it like this, you know, I look at you know, we've got mountains, and we've gotten valleys, right? There's the ups and the downs of entrepreneurship. For most of us, we want to be at the top of the mountain, because it feels good. Yeah, that's where we get recognized. That's where we get acknowledged, that's where we can pat ourselves on the back. But often we look and keep our sights fixed on the pinnacle, or the peak at the expense of the valley. And if you look back at ancient civilizations, when they were, you know, exploring the world looking where do we set up camp, they didn't set up their camp at the top of the mountain, they would find the valley because it was the most fertile ground. And so when we can start to look at our life, and ask those difficult moments, days, weeks, months, seasons, as valleys, and remember that, hey, hold on, slow down a second. Don't try to race through this valley. Yeah, I know you want to get out on the other side. It's difficult. Of course, it's uncomfortable human nature dictates that we want to get out of that uncomfortable situation as quickly as we can. But to recognize that, hey, there's something here for me in this. And again, going back to receptivity. Is this a catalyst event? Could it be and if so, what do I need to be paying attention to in order to reap the fruit from it?

Laura 19:44

That's so good. That amazing advice and just lots of wisdom dropped during this podcast, Courtney, I really appreciate you being here. And if people want to connect with you and just learn more about you or have it chance to share with you what they experienced listening to this podcast, what's the best way for them to get in touch with you?

Courtney 20:06

Yeah, so two ways. First is our podcast, which is Anti-Fragile Entrepreneurship. So if you're listening, you're an entrepreneur or a leader, who's looking to build a self sustaining business that can run without you. And or you just want to learn how to better navigate the ups and downs on this journey of entrepreneurship, that I invite you to follow the podcast, you can find it on any app, whatever app you're listening to, right now, type it in, it'll pop up or just type in my name. And then the second place is my Instagram. I'm on Instagram and LinkedIn, I have a presence on both. But shoot me a DM, I would love to connect with you and hear what resonated the most, for you from this episode. And, Laura, thanks so much for having me. This has been an honor to be here with you and to talk about some of these things that, you know,

we don't often talk about as entrepreneurs, a lot of times we're focused on the growth and the tangible results of that, but not so much on the hidden or the invisible elements that actually bring about that growth.

Laura 21:04

I love that. Thank you so much. It's been such a pleasure to have you. And I'm so grateful for your time today.

Courtney 21:10

Thank you!

Laura 21:11

Thank you so much for tuning in to the Next Level leap Podcast where we explore the transformative power of marketing to create positive change in the world. If you enjoyed this episode, and you want to learn more about how we can work together to create positive change through better marketing, please visit our website at joybrandcreative.com. That's www.joybrandcreative.com. There you'll find more information about our services, our mission, and how we can help you use marketing to make a real difference in the world. And if you want to stay updated on the latest episodes of the next level leap podcast, make sure that you subscribe and leave us a review on your favorite podcast platform. Your feedback and support means the world to us and we're excited to continue this journey of creating positive change in the world through the power of marketing. So until next time, keep spreading joy and making a difference. I'll see you soon!