

Laura 00:00

For most of our existence as humans, fear has been a great thing. It's part of how our brains are wired to operate and kept us safe for so many hundreds of years where we would know to run away from tigers, or we would see something dangerous and avoid it, or it keeps us from running our car off a cliff because we're afraid of what happens. And a lot of ways our brain is wired for fear to prevent us from doing something dangerous, and this is a good thing. But now when we are entrepreneurs at this point, and we are making really tough decisions, a lot of times fear comes into that decision making process in a way that isn't beneficial- in a way that when we really examine it, is probably a little irrational. So, this happens all the time. And fear can be packaged up in a lot of different ways. It can be packaged up as ego or pride. A lot of times it can be packaged up as inaction, or it can be packaged up as a procrastination. There are so many ways in which it shows up, that sometimes it's hard to identify what is driving the decisions that we're making in our business. But every single day, we are making decisions every single day, we are trying to figure out what we're going to do next with the resources that we have. And to say that fear isn't part of that decision making process is really not accurate. It's something that our brains naturally go to, to protect us and to keep us safe from danger. So how do we know when to use fear to our advantage as entrepreneurs and as business owners, and when do we know how and when to squash it to the ground? Today, I'm going to talk about that in this episode. And I'm really excited to share it with you stay tuned.

Laura 01:58

Welcome to the AI-Driven marketing podcast. This is a place where we deliver quick and insightful weekly tips about 10 minutes or less on what's new and groundbreaking in the world of marketing AI. I'm your host, Laura Meyer a 20 plus year entrepreneur and marketing expert. If you are excited about staying ahead of the curve and harnessing the potential of AI in your marketing strategies, you're in the right place. Let's go!

Laura 02:23

Hi, welcome back. My name is Laura Meyer, and I am a growth strategist to some of the country's fastest growing brands. I'm also an author of a book called Win, which is a five-week Amazon Best Seller. I'm a mom, I'm a tennis enthusiast. And I'm here to share with you today how to manage the feelings of fear as you're growing your business. Fear can really keep us safe, as I had mentioned in the introduction, but it can keep us from implementing new solutions. And I see this a lot in the marketing tech space that we operate, where technology is always bringing up new opportunities, new possibilities, but also for a lot of people fear. And some of that fear is very understandable. There's a lot of conversation that's happening in the AI space right now, that is related to whether or not AI should be opened or closed or how open it should be. And Microsoft just came up with an isolated environment where AI can operate without that information contributing to the greater open AI infrastructure from which organizations like chat GPT, or products like chat GPT draw their information from if I lost you

there for a second, don't worry, you don't need to know this information other than AI is pretty uncertain right now, there are some things that we know it can do really, really well in the marketing tech space. And for the most part, we don't know about the bigger impact that AI is going to have on our community.

Laura 03:50

So, some people are naturally afraid of it. Some business owners are naturally fearful of it, even if what they're doing right now isn't working that great, even if they would admit to themselves and me when I speak with them, that their marketing or sales processes isn't something that they would even follow themselves. I've had many business owners say to me recently, my marketing process, my sale online sales process wouldn't work for me. I wouldn't like to be part of it, which is kind of interesting. And I think telling, right. So why aren't we taking action in order to improve something that we know that we can't even stand behind? Well, one of the reasons is because maybe we don't know how we don't know what resources are available. We don't know who we can trust. But another reason could be fear. And a lot of times in the beginning stages of business, we don't have a lot to lose, right? We're at the ground level. We're making mistakes. We're blowing stuff up by accident, but it's kind of doesn't matter because there isn't anything built yet, right? But as we become more and more successful, we have more and more to lose. And this is where it can be kind of tear are finding. And this is where we can start becoming really protective of our businesses, understandably so. And even when we're looking at something that could make our lives or our businesses so much better, it's natural to be fearful of it for that reason, as I often like to say to entrepreneurs that I'm working with, whether it's in consulting, or it's in the tech side of our business, new level new devil, right?

Laura 05:24

Somebody said to me recently, oh, I'm struggling with some things in business that you probably don't deal with, you're probably past that point. And I said to them, I was like, new level new devil, like, you're never past that point where fear doesn't creep in, or when you don't second guess yourself, or when something you have that natural fear of something coming out being like, oh, gosh, you know, like, what if Chat GPT, like, goes haywire tomorrow, and we've based a lot of our technology on integrating with it. Like that happens all the time, it happens to all of us. And if it didn't happen to you, there's probably something wrong with your right brain wiring, no offense, if you're listening, and you're like, I never feel fear. But for the most part, this is just again, the way in which our brains are designed to protect us. And especially when it comes to changing tech or participating in changing tech or implementing new tech in your company, just being able to navigate the fear that naturally arises within yourself or your team. It's just a skill that I think everybody needs to have. Otherwise, you stay paralyzed, you stay in an action, which doesn't really benefit anybody. So, when we're looking at fear as its own attribute, right, and we're looking at it, and we're saying, okay, how can we honor it without,

without its pausing, innovation or action, and especially when it comes to adopting new technology? So, the first step that I would recommend when answering that question is just to name the fear and shine the light. I think for so many of us, as entrepreneurs, we're go getters we like to achieve, we'd like to check off on the box every single day those, check the box of our to do list. If you're anything like me, that's how I operate. And I think it's important to pause and slow down the minute that you feel fear creeping in. In my past, as an entrepreneur, this is when I would get very reactive. And I would start inventing things really fast. And I would start just creating new products or in this is where it never works out. Right. Like when we react to our fear without acknowledging it or honoring it or processing it. This is where as entrepreneurs, we often just get ourselves into trouble. So, I think taking that time to pause, and shine the light on your fears, really does pay off.

Laura 08:06

And naming those fears, say I'm afraid of this happening, I'm afraid of running out of cash, I'm afraid that if I implement this technology, it will kill my sales process, I'm afraid of right, we never want to be driven by fear. Either way, I'm afraid if I don't adopt AI, that will be left behind. All of those fear-based reactions are never really great. Like they never, they never yield a wonderful outcome. Maybe they'll create a little bit of a, you know, a frenzy of activity that creates an output or result for a short period of time. But it will never lead to sustainable growth. So, naming that fear and really taking inventory of them, writing them down journaling, saying, is this something that I want? Is this, is this helping me? Is this useful fear? Or is this an irrational fear? I'm afraid of losing all my clients. Okay? Would that really happen? Is that really likely? Or I'm afraid of if I don't adopt AI technology? Am I going to be left behind? You know, I would probably argue that you might, but like, do you have to decide that in the next five minutes? No, right? Like, you can take some time to process it, educate yourself, listen to podcasts or videos like this and make the best decision for your company without being in that fear flight stage, right? Without being in that deer in the headlight state where you're just like frozen or you're you know, you're fleeing or you're fighting this is those types of reactions mean that we're not operating in the most sophisticated part of our brain, which is the frontal cortex. It means that we are in the reptilian part of our brain, which we can subconsciously go into all the time as entrepreneurs without even realizing it.

Laura 09:54

So that's why it's so important to shine light on it. People have different methods for this. You can just download all of your thoughts and then look, you know, take a step back and look at them. You could list all your fears, you can, there's so much that you could do, you could meditate, you could draw, you know, draw and illustrate whatever is a great mode of expression for you. But I recommend that when you start feeling this way, pause and take inventory. The second is to choose those thoughts and choose those fears intentionally based on what is the best path forward for your company. And this is something that I realized as a

consultant when I was, I had spent 15 years as a brick-and-mortar multilocation business owner. And then after about 15 years, I pivoted into the consulting space, and I started consulting. And I found myself doing marketing consulting, specifically online growth strategy and brand strategy for a lot of well-known brick and mortar brands. And for many of these brands, I was getting brought in about the same time that a hired CEO was taking over from the founder, there was one in particular that has since become my mentor, now turned business partner and a lot of the nonprofit work that we do together. And watching him operate as a CEO was fascinating. And the reason is, because he has no attachment to the outcome. Right? When he's looking at any type of problem, it's all logic, it's all based on fact, because he wasn't there, right in the beginning stages as founders, when we were just like, you know, hanging on for our lives, night, white knuckling through those beginning stages, those brutal stages of, you know, cleaning the toilets, and, you know, and making sure we don't run out of cash and putting payroll on a credit card, or whatever we ended up having to do.

Laura 11:55

They don't have attachment to any of that, which in a lot of ways is good when we're thinking about it in making a very clean decision on how to move forward. So, once you've taken inventory of your fears, you can really look at which of these fears do I want to take with me? And which ones do I intentionally want to leave behind, and no longer make part of my decision-making process moving forward? And this can be a really great shift in your mindset, where you can look at it and say, if I were to hire a CEO, from the outside, who were to come into my company, how would they look at this problem? Knowing that they have no attachment to what's happened in the past? They don't have any of the fears based on the things that I've experienced up into this point. What would they advise, and a professional C suite, executive or CEO would look at it very neutrally. And having worked in private equity, I can tell you, they still have the same types of challenges that we have as entrepreneurs, but they look at it from such a neutral perspective, that they are able to move through it a little bit easier than a lot of us founders can. Its why sometimes founders step out at a certain point of growth within a company.

Laura 13:12

So, they might say, okay, we're undercapitalized. What can we do to find more capital? Who has access to capital? What are our different capital infrastructure options? What are our debt options? What are our equity options? What can we leverage? Where can we cut? So, they're looking at it very logically, when there might be a cash flow issue, for example? Or if there's a team member that's underperforming? They might say, okay, you know, we follow this process, when we are working through HR issues with team members, there's none of the drama that I think sometimes comes from us as founders, because we've experienced a lot of fear and a lot of hardship. And a lot of ways that's what's gotten us to this point, because we're so resilient and so optimistic, and so vision focused, that we are able to bring companies to a

point of, of that level of growth. But then when if we can switch gears to thinking about it as a CEO, and, and really thinking about it from an outside perspective of what do I want to do with this problem? Or how do I want to approach this opportunity, then we kind of the best of both worlds, we have that heart and soul of a founder approach with the same logic and sensibility of what would potentially be an outside an outside perspective. So that's step two.

Laura 14:32

And then the third is to evolve your business. So, when we can look at problems or challenges, like a science experiment, or like a math equation, all right, well, let's put this component together and this component together and run a test and see how it goes. Then we can start to evolve our company. And if you've reached any type of revenue plateau, or you've reached any type of sealing in your business and you feel like you keep bumping up against a certain level of growth that you'd like to break through, this might be the place, that is your biggest opportunity. So, for most fears in business, they're not advantageous to us, like most fears in business are fundamentally irrational when we really look at them from, from this perspective, from a neutral perspective. And so, what happens is, we reach these success ceilings, as entrepreneurs, as business owners, that are self-imposed, because of the inability to look at problems neutrally from fear. And, and when we kind of have to unpack it, we can say, okay, well, first of all, what are all my fears? Like, let's just get it on the table. So, it's not suppressed, and it's not creating all of these subconscious reactions. That's the first step. And then the second step is like, can we look at it from a place of neutrality? And then third step is what are some of those micro steps we can take, like, not just, you know, full path, your full force forward, which often tends to be a part of an irrational reaction? But what are some of the micro steps that we can take forward to determine whether or not this is something that is a great opportunity for us?

Laura 16:21

So, for example, with all the organizations we work with, we offer a one week free trial. Why do we do that? Because it's a micro step, it makes it easy for them to say yes, and not be afraid of AI technology, it puts a lot on us, because there is an expense to setting up AI for each individual location or business that we work with. It gives us the opportunity to prove ourselves, but it also gives them a window into what is possible, will they get rich off of a one-week free trial with our software? No, right. But what will happen is they will be able to see what's possible to break through that success ceiling that so many entrepreneurs have in their businesses, because they might not, they might just need a little bit more permission to take a step in a direction that could end up being that breakthrough. And so, for that reason, that's why I really like having that free trial and a place because it gives them the opportunity to evolve their business in a very sensible way that's low risk and gives them an opportunity to see what's possible. So ultimately, the choice is yours. You may think about fear or when fear enters your body, I know for me, there's a certain sensation that I experience when fear starts

creeping in. And you can choose to recognize it, or you can choose to push through it. I am somebody who used to just plow through it like I can, I can, you know, move forward, like the best of them. I'm an Enneagram. Three, if any of you know what that means, let me know or if you're a three as well. But we have a tendency to not feel things, we have a tendency to just drive and accomplish and achieve. But there is such a great value in processing the fears, looking at them from an outside perspective, and then choosing which ones you want to carry forward with you. And the truth is, we're no longer running away from tigers, we're no longer having to hunt for our own food. We live in a pretty safe, relatively safe society, most of us.

Laura 18:35

So, most of the fears that we experience in life and in business are left over from the days that we no longer need to worry about. So, for that reason, most of our fears are worth looking at and determining Is this a place where I'm creating a ceiling in my business unnecessarily and evaluating them and then using some of those micro steps some of those evolutions like AI and technology in your business to break through some of those success ceilings. If you've been listening, and you've been wondering, okay, Laura, what are you talking about AI in my business? Is this something that you can that you could help me with, I do have a free very brief training called get more sales with AI, it's get more saleswithai.com, where you can check it out and see if this is something that might help you in your business. And either way, I just really appreciate you being here. I appreciate you being part of the listening community. If this is something that you're listening to and you think you know what I know somebody who could really benefit from this, I would super appreciate you sharing it with them or leaving a review. If you're listening to the podcast and I'll just I'll see, you next time and I hope this was helpful to you. I hope it blessed you and your business, and I'll talk to you soon.

Laura 19:49

Thank you for tuning in to the AI-Driven marketing podcast. Before we wrap up, I just want to remind you that you can learn more about how to make more sales with AI by going to makemoresaleswithai.com. This is where I dive deeper into the AI revolution in marketing with our free training. And if you've enjoyed today's episode, please share it with others who might find it valuable. And if you can also just take a moment to leave us a review. I would greatly appreciate it. Your support helps us continue to bring you the top insights in the field of AI driven marketing. Until next time, remember AI is here and it's transforming the marketing landscape. Stay Ahead, stay informed, and most importantly, stay excited. I'll see you soon!