

Hailey Thomas 0:00

There's no right way for growing an online business. And honestly, me and my guests are more than fine with that.

I'm Haley Thomas. And this is the podcast that lets you be a fly on the wall for candid conversations in many lessons through a variety of online entrepreneurs who are growing their businesses based on their own visions. We are on a mission to normalize and laugh about the behind the scenes truth of achieving a new level of success in your business. This is one year from now.

Hello, hello, and welcome back to the podcast.

How are you? I hope you're doing great. And I'm gonna go ahead and apologize in advance because my sweet pup, my sweet nine year old dog is in my office with me and he's making a lot of weird mouth noises. And he only does this when I'm trying to record a podcast or when I'm on call. So he is just licking his paws and making noise. Hopefully that is not too distracting. I will tell this brief dog related story. So I my dog is like 110 pounds or something. He's a massive laugh mix. And he's old. And he like demands that he lay on like furniture or on special, like dog mats. And he's really picky about where he lays. And so I bought him this, it's not an orthopedic bed, but it's kind of made of like that memory foam type of like bedding. And then I bought this cute waterproof blanket. That is it's like kind of got like a cow hide for, I don't know, design on it. But he loves it. So now he spends almost all of his waking hours in my office on his cool little bed. You know, being adorable, making a lot of weird mouth sounds. And I just spent my time before the podcast, like bringing some toys upstairs for him. And I brought him some we got him some dog cookies, some special treats. And so I brought him some treats upstairs. So he should be set. He's like a toddler. He's like another child, but he should be set. And we can get into this episode. So today we are going to be talking about the capacity of entrepreneurship. So one thing I've noticed over and over again, especially with coaching, and with entrepreneurship, in general, when you are transitioning from someone who's been an employee, like when you're transitioning identities, from someone who's been an employee is someone who identifies defines themselves as an entrepreneur, a lot of what has to happen is you have to expand your capacity and expand your ability to have and to be and to operate in this new way. And so capacity is the way that I've kind of thought about how to talk about this. So that's we're going to talk about three areas of capacity that need to, you need to be willing to grow and stretch in as an entrepreneur. And we're gonna be talking about why this stuff matters, and how you can actually go about expanding your capacity for these things. So first of all, I define capacity as how much can be held how much something can hold. So if you think about a water balloon, which is how we're going to talk a lot about expanding capacity today. But a water balloon, that shape is irrelevant, right, because it's squishy and moves around a lot, but it can hold and it can increase its capacity to hold water. A vase. On the other hand, something you might put flowers in is rigid, but it still has capacity to hold that capacity is just fixed. Our brains and our bodies have different levels of capacity. And it is my thought people who are entrepreneurs have more of a water balloon type capacity, meaning it can grow, it can shrink, it can be manipulated. And I find that one of the biggest struggles is identifying the places where you have more of a

fixed capacity. And like kind of working on loosening that and softening that this matters, especially when it comes to first generation entrepreneurship because entrepreneurship requires you to grow your capacity for the things we're going to talk about discomfort, decision making, and simplicity. That's a requirement. It just is. And even if you're not a first generation entrepreneur, like those are the things that have to be in play. If you are unaware, that's what

needs to happen, that all of the pain, even if it's positive pain, right, like positive growing pains, all of that pain, you can add on to that by thinking it shouldn't be this hard. The expanding shouldn't be happening because expanding and increasing our capacity is a little painful. Like I remember growing up as a kid so I'm I'm Over six feet tall. And so I had multiple, very big growth spurts when I was growing up. And I just remember laying in bed some nights and my legs aching, like just being so like, it wasn't like sharp pain, but very dull pain, I remember laying there and just being like, Oh, I can't sleep, because my body was physically growing. And that hurt. I would also argue that when you're growing muscle, when you are lifting weights, when you are exercising, when you're running, the thing that actually increases your muscles strength is the deterioration is the breaking is a snapping of these little fibers in your muscles that then grow back stronger. That is what growth is, right. Same thing with like, I think emotional and the mental growth. What is required is some pain. So you can have clean pain, which is just the pain that is required in growth, or you kind of dirty kind of muddy that pain by adding on this layer thinking that it's not supposed to hurt, the capacity that I have is just what it is. And it doesn't need to grow, which I don't think anyone ever thinks that. But if you are unaware that this is what the process is, then it might seem like the stretching, or the failing or the hardship that's involved is a reason to turn around or means that you're not doing it right. And it's not, it's just a part of the process. It's just a part of what it means to grow. And for first generation entrepreneurs the speed of your success. So like how long it takes you to get from where you are to a place you want to be, is directly in proportion to how much you're willing to allow greater capacity in these areas, which means you have to be able to allow the clean pain of that growth and not think it's a problem, you need to be able to manage yourself through this process. So here are the three areas that I think entrepreneurs are need to focus on, particularly first generation entrepreneurs need to focus on as it pertains to increasing capacity. The first one is decision making many of us struggle to make decisions on our own. And we struggle to make decisions quickly and efficiently. It is by far, by far, the number one thing that I think most first generation entrepreneurs struggle with. And it's because either growing up or in your W two job, making a quote unquote, wrong decision always cost something, it always you might have been like ridiculed or belittled for failing, you might have failure might have equaled a major loss for you. And so we build up this really low tolerance for failure and for making a wrong decision. A lot of us have not also been in the position where we are the ones responsible, completely responsible for making all the decisions and making the things happen. So for instance, and this is kind of a silly example. But like one of the through lines of my life has been I've been a part of teams. Most of my life, like I played high school sports, and I only play team sports. I played college sports, and I only play team sports. I got married pretty quickly out of college.

And so early on in my life, I always had the backing of other people so that if my decision went poorly, I would be like, well, we made this decision together like it was everyone's failure instead of being able to be comfortable with the thought that I chose poorly. So when you get into entrepreneurship, you are the one making all the decisions, you are responsible for what happens to you as a practitioner and what happens in your business, which means you have to grow your capacity for making decisions, you have to grow your ability to trust yourself, you have to grow your ability to if you make a decision and you don't like the outcome, you have to be able to have compassion for yourself and make another decision. Okay, you have to be efficient with it, it can't take too long. That's what happens when people end up like spinning, spinning, spinning and exert a lot of mental effort. And energy is because they're not choosing. And often

when I see entrepreneurs not making the money they want to make not living the life they want. It's because they haven't made enough decisions. They're like, well, I made one decision, which was to go into business school, you need to make about 100 more. Okay, and they they're not all going to be that gigantic, but you have to definitely grow your capacity to make decisions and have trust in yourself. And also grow your ability to believe in something before it is live and out in the world. So when you're making decisions as an entrepreneur, you are basically making calculated risks calculated bets about what will happen about the skills you have and how those are going to like mix up and assume to create the results that you want. It's calculated risk taking. And so you have to, in some capacity, be able to believe in what's possible before it's actually possible and make action towards that you have to believe in enough To be able to act on it. And all of that is a part of decision making. And entrepreneurship requires that you grow your capacity like a water balloon to make decisions quickly and efficiently. So just like a water balloon, like when you first go to put water in a water balloon, it stretches like a little bit, but the more water you put in it, the more it stretches. Similarly, with decision making, like I said early on in my life, it took me a long time, or I needed a lot of input from other people to make decisions. And now I'm like the decision Queen, I can make fairly large decisions, large financial commitments or large decisions that affect our life pretty efficiently pretty quickly. Because I trust myself, and I trust my ability to make decisions and that has grown over time. Okay, the second area of capacity that needs to be grown for entrepreneurs is for discomfort. discomfort is just an ever present part of life, but it is ratcheted up even more. So when you're an entrepreneur, especially if you have a business based off of your individual brand, like you are your brand. But I want to offer that even if you just sell products that have nothing to do with your face, you still again are at a new level of personal responsibility. And so the discomfort that comes along with that is fairly high, versus being an employee, the discomfort is really, really high. So when I think about discomfort, it comes in a bunch of different ways. Sometimes it's discomfort of being seen and being visible. Sometimes it's the discomfort of like I mentioned before having to trust yourself and trust your decisions. Sometimes it's the discomfort of I don't know all the answers here. And that makes me uncomfortable. Sometimes it's I really like to move fast and efficiently. But entrepreneurship requires failure and experimentation. So all of those things, create discomfort. Additionally, you're not just managing your own

discomfort, you're managing your discomfort, the discomfort of other people, of clients of your customers, comfort of your family and friends and peers, as you venture into entrepreneurship, you are managing the discomfort of any relationships that you have with people that, you know, as you change and develop the dynamics of the relationship will change and develop. And that's uncomfortable, like there's a lot of discomfort to manage, and your capacity to allow the discomfort and not have to jump to fix it. Because that's when we get into over responsibility and trying to control other people's responses and thoughts and feelings about us and our work. That the ability to allow that the capacity to allow us comfort and still make decisions and move forward is huge. And you will grow in that over time. But the discomfort level, and allowing other people to be uncomfortable when you're not uncomfortable. That's a big one, especially for women and people of color. Part of our upbringing, our training might have been your job, air quotes, job, but emotional job is to make other people comfortable. And so we you know, bend and lean and be shaped in a way that makes people really comfortable as a way to avoid their discomfort as a way to avoid our discomfort at their discomfort, right. So it's this whole world is just wrought with discomfort. And you need to be able to navigate that and have capacity to allow it without jumping into action, allow it and staying focused on where you're going and what you need to do. Okay, the third place where entrepreneurs need to increase their capacity is in simplicity. So this might sound counterintuitive, because I think on paper, everyone wants a really simple business and a really clean business. And they want lots of spaciousness and room to think and to rest. But in action, we make loads of little decisions that pile up and create quite calm a lot of complexity. And it might be because we think that's how it's supposed to go. It might be because we are actually uncomfortable. with

simplicity. We're uncomfortable with things being easy for us, we're uncomfortable, when other people again bring their thoughts and ideas about our work, and what it should look like and all the things our business needs. We're uncomfortable with with not listening to all those voices. So we end up making our worlds far more complex than they need to be. And so when I think about thriving as an entrepreneur, it requires you to have capacity to make things more and more simple. And over and over again, commit to simplicity. Instead of like adding little pieces to your business for adding little things to your schedule. A dozen 30 minute a week commitments is still six hours, which is our whole work day. Okay. So same thing with our business. Like when I have clients when they start with me, we do a marketing channel audit, and we talk about the channels and the frequency and then we look at what the where their clients are actually coming from and we remove everything that's not those channels, it is often a really hard mental kind of hurdle for clients get over to allow simplicity to allow it to not be that hard and to be focused. So, and I think of entrepreneurs that have very large businesses, the thing that comes up over and over again, if they have multiple products, first of all, many of them have very few products, maybe just one. But if they have multiple products or offerings, it's because they develop them one at a time. And we're really disciplined about letting an idea grow to fruition before doing the next thing, they're very disciplined about that. They they're very disciplined about having an allowing the simplicity. So those are the three areas where first generation entrepreneurs, especially but entrepreneurs who want to enjoy their

lives, and actually build something that allows them to leave a legacy that they're proud of the areas in which they need to be willing to expand their capacity is for decision making, discomfort, and simplicity. Okay, so when it comes to putting these practices into play, and actually growing your capacity for these things, here are my three tips for how to make that happen. And to grow. First of all, this takes time, and it takes practice. So again, if we're thinking about the water balloon, whenever I would fill water balloons as a kid, and I don't know why I don't know if it's an actual thing, maybe it is, but maybe I saw one of my older sisters doing this, but like I would stretch out the balloon first like to snow kind of target on all its sides and stretch it out a little bit first, and like kind of like warm the material a little bit because that allows the expanding. So what that means in our case is know that this is happening, like know that the clean pain of expansion and growth and that, you know, growing of your capacity to hold these things is coming like it's a part of the journey. So that's the first thing and then look for ways to increase your capacity often. So actively practice making decisions by yourself efficiently when you don't have all the details. Actively practice not taking on someone else's discomfort or not trying to alleviate someone's discomfort immediately. Okay, actively practice speaking something specifically and boldly out loud to other people on the internet or just you know, in your life. Practice in small ways, so that you can increase your capacity over time. Because every time you do that you're a kind of imprints on our brain and imprints on our body. Hey, we stretched and we didn't die, we stretched and it's okay. So that's number one. Number two, expect your brain to push back towards its original state. Again, the water balloon is a great example. Like if you ever filled a water balloon and like pulled it off the faucet, and you didn't tie it up right away. And all that water just come splashing out all over the place like that is what our brains do. It tries to get back to its original state as quickly as possible. Because this new state is not what's normal yet. And so our brains are constantly trying to bring us back to our original identity where we have very little capacity for discomfort or we don't make decisions by ourselves. Or we can hide in the details and complexity, even if it's painful, our brains will choose familiar, even if the familiar is painful. So you have to know that and you have to expect the brain to want to suck back in again, it's not wrong, your brain is doing what it's supposed to be doing. But acknowledge that and notice when your brain tries to suck you back in. And then the last thing is learn how to be aware of and how to calm your nervous system. So I am not an expert at this. But whenever, especially when I'm met with discomfort of visibility or not trying to jump in and fix someone else's discomfort, like I'm uncomfortable in someone else's discomfort. or whenever I am making a big decision. I make them efficiently. But I can feel like the discomfort for me. My body like reacts.

It panics a little bit. It my my heart speeds up. I always feel this like noodling in my back. I get really warm in my face, like my nervous system is like, Oh no, something's wrong. And there are experts, people who are more expert on this than me. But one thing that's helped me considerably is not trying to ignore the physiological aspects of what my body's doing. Because it's like it's sounding an alarm. It's doing what it's supposed to do. It thinks I'm in danger, it is sounding an alarm, saying get the freak out of there. We can't do this. So one of the things

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I've become aware of and efficient at is calming my own nervous system. Personally, I like to like be in contact with my body. So like Touch, touch my skin and keep touching my you know my arm or put my hand on my chest or my head until I can feel it both the hand that's touching the skin and the skin that's being touched. Because that's one of the things my body likes to kind of disassociate with physical touch when it's swinging into panic and being able to talk aloud like wow, I can feel this thing. laying in my back and my chest is beating quickly. So talking myself through it, just acknowledging like, I'm not in any actual danger right now, Haley, yes, thank you body, we are aware. And also we are not in any actual danger and breathing. So again, there are experts in this but that has been something that's been really helpful to me is to acknowledge how my body responds to the increase of capacity, or to the pain, the growing pains, it thinks something is wrong, and it raises an alarm. And part of my work has been to be able to notice calm my nervous system, and then take action in spite of that, take action knowing that it's okay, you're literally rewiring and reworking what your body sees as a threat. This newness takes actual like practice. So those are my thoughts on increasing your capacity as an entrepreneur, particularly in decision making your capacity for discomfort in your capacity for simplicity, I'd love to know your thoughts. So if you would like to connect with me on Instagram, I'm at brainspace optimize. Or you can go to [www dot brainspace optimized](http://www.brainspaceoptimized.com) calm and leave a comment on the podcast page or you can find a time to chat with me if you notice that these are things that you struggle with and want to work to get better at so that you can have a thriving career as an entrepreneur, a thriving life as an entrepreneur. So thank you for listening and I will see you on the next episode. Thank you for listening to this episode of one year from now you can find the show notes and all the links we mentioned at [brain space optimized comm slash podcast](http://brain space optimized comm slash podcast) if you want to chat me up about all things entrepreneurship, then head to [brain space optimized comm](http://brain space optimized comm) and join my email list. This is where we have rich conversations about the experience of business ownership is thoughtful. It's funny, I like getting responses and chatting with you all it's a good time. Lastly, you can find me on Instagram at [brainspace optimized](https://www.instagram.com/brainspaceoptimized) We will see you in the next episode.