

Episode 001



The 5 Interrelated Parts of Any Problem

January 3, 2021

Hello my friends.

Welcome to the podcast.

I am so glad you've joined me today for our very first episode. So exciting!

This podcast is all about helping people like you drop the self-doubt and build the clarity and unstoppable confidence to go after whatever you want.

My practice focuses on corporate professionals and aspiring entrepreneurs or side hustlers.

And I was certified by The Life Coach School in something called "causal coaching."

Causal coaching means we work to find the root cause of an issue so we can identify what's REALLY in your way or holding you back, so you can solve that issue for good.

And it means that a lot of the work we do is centered around how your brain works.

I know this is different from most other career and business coaches who focus on 'how to' strategies. We'll do some of that too because it's important, but I focus primarily on mindset for one very simple reason.

Every single problem we have in our career, business or life comes back to how we're thinking about that problem.

How you're thinking about it.

What you're making it mean.

What you believe is possible for you. Or not.

And what you think is causing you issues.

Hint, I'm quite sure it's NOT what you think it is. At least not for most people.

So, I wanted to start this podcast – Episode 1! – with a foundational concept I call “The Five Interrelated Parts of any Problem.”

I know it might sound overly simplistic, but the truth is that every problem we have in our career, business or life can be broken down into one of these five interrelated parts.

The circumstance or situation.

The thought you have about the circumstance or situation.

The feeling you have which is caused by what you're thinking.

The actions you take, or don't take, which are caused by how you feel.

And the result you get which is always the result of that actions you take or don't take.

Any issue you are facing always comes down to one of those five things.

And the beauty of it is that because of this, you can use this framework to understand why you are getting the results you are currently getting in your career and if you don't like them, you'll know exactly what you need to change them.

The most important part of the five things is that happen in that order.

And that's not how we usually think about it.

We think something happens.

And we think that situation or circumstance causes us to have the results we have.

And then we think we have a feeling about those results.

But that is NOT the way it works.

And this is good news.

Because if it worked that way it would mean you have very little control over your career or life.

The great news is that while we may not be in control of many of the situations we encounter, we are ALWAYS in control of how we respond to them.

So, let's take an example most of us would be familiar with in our career, which is a reorganization.

Let's say that one day you go into work and you're notified that your entire division was just reorganized and now you have a new job (one you're not sure you want).

Most people will believe that their reaction/emotion about this reorg was caused by the reorg itself.

But it wasn't.

It was caused by the THOUGHT you have about the reorg.

And that THOUGHT caused you to feel AN EMOTION.

That EMOTION then inspires you to take a set of actions (or inactions).

And based on the actions you take or don't take, you'll get a result.

So, we all know this scenario well.

And we all know that most of the time, we don't have any say in how a reorganization shakes out. That's for the senior execs.

But the thing we DO have control over is how we choose to THINK about that reorganization.

We're just not always aware of what we're thinking in the moment because our brains move so fast.

We think our feelings are caused by what happened...not by what we THINK about what happens.

But it's the THOUGHT you have that is the key to the five interrelated parts.

That is your point of power.

Because while we can't always control what's going on, we CAN control how we choose to think about that thing.

And if you choose a thought that serves you, you'll stand a better chance of getting the result you want.

In this case, what you think about the reorg, won't change that the reorg happened.

But if you decide to choose a thought that's about how to make the best of it, you'll stand the best possible chance of making that situation work for you.

On the other hand, if you choose a thought that doesn't serve you, you might end up feeling angry, frustrated or fearful which might cause you to spend your time gossiping or complaining or applying to jobs you don't really want.

And none of these actions will create a result you're probably looking for.

Let's take an even more specific example to make this real.

Let's say your situation is that you've had a series of challenging meetings over the past few months with your boss.

This might cause your brain to serve up a thought like 'My boss hates me.'

So that is your mind's interpretation of what you've made the last few meetings mean.

That thought isn't true.

You don't know that it's true because the truth is...even though the meeting didn't go as you had planned your boss might have a very different thought or opinion of how they went.

They might just be frustrated about the slow progress of the project you're leading.

They might be frustrated about the politics that are getting in the way.

Or it could be something completely unrelated to you.

Maybe it's something in their personal life or to do with their own boss. You never know.

But let's stay with the thought of 'My boss hates me.'

When you think that thought it would likely create a feeling of fear, because maybe you're making it mean you could lose your job.

So now the emotion you're feeling is fearful.

And when you're feeling fearful, what do you do?

Maybe some of us would avoid the boss.

Maybe make an excuse to postpone the next meeting because you dread it.

Maybe you fantasize about getting another job, so you dust off your resume and even apply for a few. Maybe you eat a cupcake or a handful of M&Ms.

Maybe you go home and drink a few glasses of Pinot Noir.

Maybe you commiserate with co-workers over what a challenging boss you both have.

And what do you think any of these actions result in? Nothing good, right?

None of those things - eating a cupcake, drinking the wine, avoiding the boss, postponing the meeting - none of them leads to an outcome that you want.

And they're ALL going to keep you stuck and obsessing over why the boss doesn't like you and why the meetings are all bad.

So, none of these things are going to move you ahead in your career.

One of the most important things to understand here is learning that just because your brain serves up a thought in this case it's 'Every meeting with my boss is worse than the one before' ...just because you have the thought doesn't make it true.

And I know. Listen, I know.

Right now, you're probably thinking of a specific example from your own career, maybe last week and you're telling yourself that whatever you're thinking about that thing is just true.

Because it feels true when we think something.

But they aren't true.

They're just a thought.

And thoughts are optional.

You can decide to think whatever you want to think about whatever is going on.

Most of the time, when our brain serves up a thought, it just feels like, well, this is the way it is.

And we believe everyone sees it the same way.

The first time I heard that thoughts were a choice, I thought it was BS.

And I came up with a million reasons why it wasn't true.

After all, if it wasn't why would the brain serve it up in the first place, right?

Wrong.

Let's take a second to look at how our brains work.

Your brain is like a powerful supercomputer.

Neuroscientists say we have upwards of 60,000 thoughts a day. However many thoughts we have...it's a lot.

And they're moving really fast. Kind of like the ticker at the bottom of the 24-hour news channel. They're just scrolling, scrolling, scrolling.

And some of the thoughts that are scrolling by are helpful and empowering.

But many are not.

Many are very limiting and not only are they not helpful, but they're the product of past experiences you've had that you're interpreted as either good or bad.

Or maybe they're things people have said to you.

So these things get stored away in our brain without us even being aware of it.

And then, when we find yourself in a similar situation, our brain will serve up a thought based on those past experiences.

And that thought is going to cause us to feel an emotion.

And that emotion is going to inspire us to take the actions we take and the actions that we take will deliver the results we get.

So, your point of power in this situation would not be in in gossiping about the boss.

Or avoiding the boss or, you know, thinking mean thoughts about the boss.

Your point of power is in controlling how you're THINKING about the series of challenging meetings with the boss.

You can decide what you want to think about that.

You don't have to let your brain be in charge or run on autopilot.

We can teach you how to gain an awareness of your thoughts in the moment so you can choose what you want to think about whatever is going on.

And, get in touch with recurring thought patterns that you might have had your entire life and which might be holding you back in ways you weren't even aware of.

So, for example, let's go back to the thought we were working with 'My boss hates me.'

And you were making that mean 'Oh my gosh, I might be fired.'

So, you felt fearful.

Maybe your brain went there because you had a bad earlier experience with a different boss. Or maybe you've been hearing rumors of upcoming layoffs. And that's why your brain went there. Maybe it's like a self-protection mechanism. Or maybe you have a thought pattern inside your head that assume people don't like you whenever you have a less than ideal experience with them. There are so many things that could be stored in your brain that you're not even aware of.

And it's important to develop that self-awareness.

So, you can choose to think of thought that might better align with the outcome you want.

You don't want a bad relationship with your boss.

You might want a different boss and you could change jobs and get one.

But for the duration of the time, you work for that person, you want it to be as good and productive a relationship as it can possibly be.

So, it's important to understand that the things your brain serves up are not necessarily true.

And you can question them.

So, for example, you might decide that having a thought like, 'My boss hates me' is not empowered. And it's only going to lead you down a troubled path.

And you don't want to feel fearful.

So, you might just decide to choose to think something different.

And that thought might be something like 'I'm going to ask my boss for feedback about this project so I can make sure the next meeting is positive.'

That thought would lead to a completely different emotion.

Same situation.

But the new thought 'I'm going to ask my boss for feedback so I can make sure the next meeting is positive' would probably lead you to feel something like focused or determined.

And if you're feeling determined, what would you do?

Well, you'd probably go into the meeting prepared.

You'd create a list of questions to ask your boss so you can probe about their feelings about the last meeting and the project and what you can do to kind of turn things around a little bit.

You'd take notes.

And then before the meeting closes, you'd recap for the boss, what you plan to do and get agreement that it's what he or she wants from you.

And what would that lead to?

You'd have a more productive, next meeting with the boss. You'd make any adjustments that they wanted you to make.

And you'd have a better chance of getting the outcome that you want and that your boss wants.

By probing, you might even learn that the less-than-ideal meetings weren't even about you.

Maybe they would confide that it was about something else entirely.

And that they're pleased with how things are going.

That is the real danger of letting your brain be in charge and serving up whatever thought it chooses. You'd be feeling an emotion and taking actions based on something you just made up.

So, you need to always be sure that you're aware of what you're thinking when you're encountering a challenging situation so that you can dig in and decide whether the thought, you're having is something you want to continue to think, or whether you'd rather choose a different thought that would lead to a different set of actions and a different result.

You know, when I really understood these principles, I saw how it gave me the power to control the outcomes to the best of my ability.

Granted, you're not going to be able to control other people.

You can't control your boss.

You can't control corporate politics or reorganizations or layoffs or difficult colleagues or getting passed over for promotion or whatever, but you CAN control what you think about those things.

And when you choose a purposeful thought - one that's aligned with the outcome you want - you stand a better chance of getting the result you're looking for or something close to it.

And perhaps even more importantly, you're going to feel more peaceful and empowered while you experience it.

There's nothing worse than feeling panicked or victimized or fearful or angry or miserable in your career or business. And we don't have to feel that way.

When you understand this method - we call this The Model - it changes everything.

Situations, Thoughts, Feelings, Actions, or Results.

The Model is a visual tool that will help you pull apart, analyze, and solve any problem that you're having so that you can be at your strongest inside that situation.

This not only helps in dealing with challenging situations, but it also helps in dealing with challenging people.

It helps you achieve your goals.

It can help you deal with change.

It can help you cope with loss.

It can help you with personal things.

Like if you want to lose weight or stop over drinking or stop spending money or save more money or whatever.

Anything you want to do, or you meet in your life can be put into the model - into these five interrelated parts - and it can help you choose the most empowering thought that will best lead your emotions actions so that you get the result that you're looking for.

It really is life changing.

It was life-changing for me.

Thanks for joining today.

Until next time, make it a great week my friends.