A person with long hair

Description automatically generated with low confidence

False Control

February 21, 2021

Well hello friends. I hope you had an AMAZING week.

For those of us in Texas, it was a bit of a challenge. In last week’s episode, I was having a little light-hearted joke about the dusting of snow we got, and the frigid temperatures and I made light of the fact that it would probably shut the city down for a week.

Little did I know what was about the happen.

Over the next few days, we got snow and a bit of ice and the temperate stayed very cold. As a result, people across the state went without power and water for days.

It was not fun. Or funny.

It was scary and devastating for people and businesses. So, I regret my lighthearted banter about it last week. I was tweaking Texans a bit for not knowing how to handle the snow and cold and in hindsight, I wish I hadn’t.

People and families went through a lot. And stayed resilient through it all. So today, I honor my fellow Texans and now that the weather is back to our usually sunny 70’s, I hope everyone is starting to recover the power and water you lost. And if you live in a different part of the country and find yourself digging out from last week’s storms, I hope you are doing well.

The power issues hit us, but we fared better than many. The first 18 hours were rough with rolling and lengthy blackouts. And I’m not gonna lie. It got pretty cold in the house.

But after the first day and a half, we had power and we never had water issues.

Still when you go through something like it, it makes your life seem completely out of control. It’s scary.

A few of my Dallas friends are people who, like me, came from up north and so they know what to do to protect their pipes and such. And they **STILL** experienced frozen and burst pipes and had flooding and such, because many of the houses just aren’t insulated for that type of extreme cold.

These people did everything in their control to proactively prepare and still, the unexpected and unwanted thing happened.

As it turned out, they **DIDN’T** have control.

And this is the perfect lead-in to what we’re going to talk about today, which is something I call **False Control.**

This happens when we mistakenly believe that **if we do THIS then we’ll prevent or get THAT.**

And it happens to be one of our inner critic’s favorite ways to torture us. As you know, all through February we’re looking at the various ways our Inner Critic tries to “help us” but of course, doesn’t **REALLY** help us.

And on this one, our critic is trying to convince us that **if we just try a little harder or do a specific thing**, we can make the situation turn out the way we want.

This is a good one because it comes up for so many of us in our career or life.

So, let’s dive in.

Control is a loaded word, right?

On the one hand, we all want to have control over our life – at least wherever we can, right?

I mean, like I was saying with my other Dallas friends from the North. They knew what sub-zero weather and ice meant. And they took every precaution to take the smart actions to protect themselves and their families.

And guess what?

The thing they didn’t want to happen, happened. And a week later, they **STILL** don’t have water.

So, when it comes to our career, this plays out all the time.

For those of us in corporate America, we’ll do everything we can to prepare for that meeting and still end up with an outcome we didn’t want.

Or we’ll go above and beyond all year, fully expecting to be first in line for that promotion, only to get passed over. Again.

And when this happens, our Inner Critic swings into high gear as our negative internal talk track starts tearing us apart, blaming our actions or lack of preparation or foresight for the reason the thing didn’t turn out.

As if we could have somehow gotten a completely different outcome if we had done things differently.

As if life or our career is EVER that predictable.

Now here, I’m not saying we shouldn’t look ahead and prepare and take actions we think will best position us for the outcome we want. We should.

What I AM saying is that we’re not in control of everything that happens. And it’s important to remember that SOMETIMES we can see around all the corners and identify all the smart actions and perform them with absolute perfection and STILL not get the outcome we want.

And listen, the “trying to take smart control” over our life and career makes sense. It positions us to get the things we want from our life. To achieve our goals.

The problem comes into play when things DON’T work out as we hoped – which, let’s face it, many times they don’t – and then we fall victim to this false narrative from our **Inner Critic** that somehow, it’s all our fault.

* We weren’t smart enough.
* We weren’t prepared enough.
* We weren’t good enough.

And so, it’s all our fault that we didn’t get the thing we wanted.

The problem with this is that sometimes, we actually **BELIEVE IT**.

And the danger of that is…

We stop having confidence in ourselves.

We stop trusting ourselves to do the things we need to do in order to get the things we want.

We stop believing in ourselves.

But the problem here is…it’s all a lie.

The truth is, we were NEVER in control. We ARE NEVER in control of the things that happen to us.

All we can do is bring our best to the situation.

If it’s a promotion you want, do your best to outperform and continually up-level your game. But if you DON’T get the promotion on the first or second or third try, don’t beat yourself up. Just evaluate whether you think there IS an opportunity with that company or that boss, evaluate where you might be coming up short and then run at it again.

Same thing in our personal lives. So many people will beat themselves up when a relationship they wanted or worked hard at doesn’t pan out. Guess what? You’re not in control of the other person. You’re only in control of yourself.

That’s why I call this concept **False** Control.

If we were to listen to our Inner Critic, we’d believe that we can control EVERYTHING if we’re just good enough.

And that is BS.

You can’t.

You DO NOT have control over everything that happens to you and every person you interact with.

All you can do is what I call the BIG FOUR:

1. Know what you want.
2. Evaluate what you need to do to make it happen.
3. Choose an empowered thought that’ll deliver the grit and confidence to power those efforts.
4. Then dig deep and keep persevering until you get it.

Do not let your Inner Critic convince that you are in control of everything and that if it DOESN’T HAPPEN it means you’re not enough.

That’s a lie. And you don’t have to believe it.

When your inner critic starts down that path, you can choose to ignore it and avoid all the internal berating and self esteem erosion that it tries to deliver post disappointment.

And remember, your Inner Critic is not trying to hurt you or harm you. It is trying to help you, to prepare you so that you DO succeed next time.

It’s just very misguided.

And it’s okay to ignore it.

Believe instead that you can do and be everything, you dream of. And then, go make it happen.

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