



EPISODE 12:
HOW TO EMBRACE
PERFECTIONISM IN
BUSINESS PART 1

Full Episode Transcript

WITH YOUR HOST LAUREN CASH

YOU ARE LISTENING TO THE EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEUR PODCAST WITH
LAUREN CASH, EPISODE 12: HOW TO EMBRACE PERFECTIONISM IN
BUSINESS PART 1.

Hey there, happy Monday. How was your weekend? Was it incredible? Did you make it amazing? Is it super cold where you are yet? What's happening with the weather? Are you bundling up and going for walks? I have been. It's been 44 degrees in my area this week and I get all bundled up with the thing on my ears, on my head, and my gloves. And I still bring my coffee with me sometimes when I feel like coffee. And I have a Patagonia jacket on. It's ridiculous and out of control for Southern California. It's so funny.

All of you that live in actually cold places would make total fun of me and that's okay. I still love going for walks, even when it's cold, and I always am bummed when I miss the sunrise on this hill that I walk on. And I will really be bummed when I am no longer at that hill because I'm actually going to be moving states again. If you know me, I've moved a lot the last few years, and actually growing up I moved around a ton. So for me, moving is much more normal than most people. The last three years, I forget how many times I've moved, but I've done it in the middle of a workweek and nobody really knows that it's going on and it's just, it just happens.

So anyway, this week we're introducing a brand new segment on the podcast that is all about shoutouts to my lovely folks who are reviewing me with the app store. And I want you to be able to submit these and then also submit to us what your Instagram handle is so that we can connect with you on Instagram and also let everyone know who is listening, what you do, what you're interested in, what they can find on your Instagram profile so that if they want to go follow you they can go follow you and I get to shout out your review. So everybody wins and we can connect as a community through The Effective Entrepreneur Podcast.

So, I'm going to read out a review today. I don't know what their Instagram handle is, but definitely reach out if this was yours so that we can put it in the show notes in the future. And for anyone who does reviews now make sure you submit them in your info at vivere.co, so v-i-v-e-r-e.co/review. And that link will also be in the show notes so you can fill that out and I can shout out all your details and then we can connect on Instagram which would be so fun. Let's connect.

Alright. So, this is a five-star review. Thank you so much Turke Bay from October 29th. The title is Systematic, Warm, and Thoughtful. Aww, I love it. And they said, “I came across this podcast serendipitously.” Amazing. Yay. I love that. “And sparks went off. It was like someone crawled into my head and could hear all the thoughts and saw all the to-dos and all the wrong places, laughing, crying face, in my solopreneur head. I’m a day in and I’ve thought more about effective versus efficient. I’ve thought more about that than I have in a while. And I’ve hidden my doc for a few hours at a time, gasp baby steps. This is a great podcast full of tips, systems, deep thoughts on how to handle our own thoughts. Perfect lessons you can chew on in bites.”

I’m so glad that’s what I wanted this podcast to be for everyone. I know you all think you’re super busy so I wanted it to not be a super long podcast episode that you have to get through and really be bite-sized pieces. So thank you so much for that review and I look forward to shouting out future reviews from all of you and you never know when I’m going to do another giveaway so make sure you get those in. I appreciate all of the reviews so that more people like you can find the podcast.

Alright. So let’s head into the episode. Have you considered how perfectionism could be making your business less effective? Most likely if you’ve been listening to this podcast you probably have considered that and you’re mad about it. In this episode, we’re going to talk more about what perfectionism is, how to recognize it. And then next week in part two of this little mini-series of two episodes, we will focus more on how to embrace it. And I’m sure you’re scratching your head right now about, “Lauren, why on earth would I want to embrace perfectionism if perfectionism is “blocking me” from creating what I want in my business?” And I’m going to teach you more about that so don’t you worry.

Let’s define perfectionism because what I’ve noticed is a lot of my clients have perfectionistic tendencies but they don’t identify that way. They identify as usually, they notice their behavior of procrastinating and they don’t realize that that is only a symptom of this perfectionism. That is their tendency and this is the label that we put on it. Not that the label is necessarily useful, but it can be in the sense that then you can find more resources to work with and embrace your perfectionism if you know that that is what you can call what you are doing or not doing or the thoughts that you’re thinking.

So, perfectionism according to our friends Merriam-Webster, “a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable.” Let me read that again for you, “a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable.” Which leads us to the question of, what is perfection? The definition of that by our same friend is, “The quality or state of being perfect such as freedom from fault or defect, flawless. The quality or state of being perfect such as freedom from fault or defect, flawless.” So to be perfect is to be entirely without fault or defect, flawless. Which is impossible on one level because the work that we produce as humans could never be flawless, “flawless.” Yet we also tie our own worthiness into what results we produce and even if things have “defects” or “flaws” that is all subjective like beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Perfect is in the eye of the beholder as well, like something that you think is perfection I might not think is perfection.

So, we have these multiple levels of issues here because one as humans, nothing that we could ever do could ever possibly be perfect, and yet also in another sense that perfection that we can never achieve is also subjective based on what the person viewing that thing thinks about that thing. And then often those of us who are perfectionistic or have those tendencies that we label as such we also tie our own worthiness into how “something perfect” is. So, notice how messy this gets because if we’re tying our worthiness to something that we create or produce or some attributes of ourself that we are labeling as imperfect and then we’re using that as a correlation to our unworthiness, then it’s really difficult because it’s only that we’re thinking that the thing is not perfect that then we are not worthy. Or vice versa, the same thing can happen with if you’re thinking that something is perfect, it isn’t necessarily that it is perfect for all humans at all times, it could never be that’s impossible.

So, if you’re attributing your worthiness to that perfection so then when someone comes along and comments on the thing and says something that it’s not perfect and you’ve been tying it directly correlated to your worthiness you are going to completely crumble. But what if we are actually already “perfect” in our essence or our soul is, like our being-ness, who we really are if you get at that, if you believe in a soul or if you believe in an essence like the who you are without the character of who you are if that part of you is 100% perfect and worthy and nothing can change that then what we create or produce has nothing to do with that. And it’s okay that those things that we produce can never actually be perfect. And then perfect to whom, that’s always the question.

So, if we really move away from attributing our worthiness, our perfection as humans deep down with this inner being-ness that we could call soul or essence, if that has nothing to do with what we create or what we put out in the world, if we just are worthy no matter what, then we can just separate it from what we produce. And then we can make peace with what we produce as humans is always going to be imperfect on some level because we're human and we are fallible. If we make peace with that and if we know that always someone, somewhere is going to find imperfection in what we create, we can just make peace with that. It's okay. It's never going to be perfect, that's impossible.

In the words of Mean Girls, "The limit does not exist." Perfection does not exist in the sense of things that we create as humans can never be perfect. Now, this is different than excellence which at some point I will teach you about, but perfection does not exist. And perfection is often rigidity according to Radically Open Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, a giant textbook that I have that I'm going to be quoting for you by Dr. Thomas R. Lynch. I'll link it up in the show notes if you are a nerd like me and want to reference that at all. They say, "Rigidity is posited to be frequently expressed as maladaptive perfectionism." So I love this distinction that they make between perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism. And they say that this is a trait involving high-performance standards and hyper concern over making mistakes. And it's likely to look like disengagement, denial, somatization. You're like, "You're like what is somatization Lauren?" That is psychological distress that presents itself in a somatic symptom.

And you're like, "Somatic symptom, what are you talking about?" So I'm having a physical manifestation of something that I think potentially is medical. I want to go to a physician to get it sorted out but it's really that it's from psychological distress. So, that is a common occurrence for those with maladaptive perfectionism and also blame. So we often, when we tend to have what we would label as maladaptive perfectionism, we tend to blame others, deny, disengage, and have these physical manifestations.

Which this makes a lot of sense because if we're attributing that perfectionism to our being and worthiness then if we're ever wrong, "wrong," we don't want to attribute that to us or our doing so we deny it and blame it because that would threaten our worthiness or our goodness as a person and our identity. So we want to deflect all of that and be defensive towards all of that because we think our worthiness as a person, human essence, is being threatened. So, we think that we're being threatened if anyone ever tells us that something we did was less than perfect. Right? If we're associating the perfection of the output with our essence's worthiness then we will want to disengage, deny, blame and then we also will have that in our bodies showing up.

Alright, so in business, perfectionism can show up in many different ways. A few, I would like you to start to notice not to be judgemental and perfectionistic in your noticing, but holding with compassionate, loving watcher energy, just noticing where this could be showing up for you in your business and holding you back from being as effective as you could be. One is you could be obsessing over getting things “right.” You believe that there’s only one way to do things. You think it’s out there somewhere, someone’s holding it hostage or it’s on the internet. If you just Google enough you will find the right way to do something. You just need someone to tell you, you just need to find it, you need to “figure it out.” That doesn’t exist though.

You might often experience anxiety or worrying endlessly because as, Elizabeth Gilbert, says in her wonderful book, *Big Magic*, that I highly recommend. I haven’t read it in a long time but I always quote it, “Perfectionism is just high-end fancy fear.” She talks about it being fear walking around in a mink coat. It’s just the high-end fancy version of fear but it’s just fear. That’s all it is. It’s fear. So, that’ll show up as anxiety or worrying or overwhelm too can be an indulgent emotion that covers up fear. I see that a lot of times with my clients.

You also might not be getting things done and out into the world. This is a huge one that I see all the time. I used to do the same thing with that. I would want to perfect it, perfect it, perfect it before I get it out there. But my whole entire business, the last year and a half when I relaunched my practice. It has been built off of all the really imperfect stuff that I just got started, did not well and got out there and made money and made an impact regardless, and knew I could continue to improve it and change it as I go.

So, you can do the same thing too no matter what level of business you’re at. What if you just got it out there and then you can always improve on it and you always will be. You might be hiding, playing small, not being asked, or not saying yes to things that you could be, you know, judged by others for doing. You might not start a podcast, you might not get on video, you might not asked to be included in the room for something, you might not speak up in a group. You just listen, you say, “It’s just because I’m an introvert.” I used to do that all the time. “I’m just an introvert. I don’t really want to say anything.” But really it was for fear of what others would think of me. And then how I would treat myself if they had comments on how I was not correct or I could have done things better or whatever.

And that leads to my other point of not speaking up or out, that's often because of perfectionism. Yes, we can still be introverts and really recharge at home. I'm a hermit. That's a part of me too is I really need time alone. However, some of my not speaking up and out has not been because of that introversion recharging alone, that's just because I don't want to be judged. And really it's not just the judgment, it's I don't want to have to deal with my own mind's commentary now about that judgment. Because I used to beat myself up hardcore. That part was even worse than really the words that really meant nothing from the other human. If I really believed in my own worthiness and that I was amazing regardless of what they said and I had my own back and I wasn't going to beat myself up then bring it on, say whatever you want. It doesn't matter I'm me. I can take and leave whatever you offer me. It's not a problem. Maybe I'll integrate it in, it's a good note to know.

I noticed I've really been changing around this recently because I'm doing this really private launch for my current clients in January and I actually gave one of my previous clients the form. And I asked them to give me all the feedback, everything their brain offers them, and all of the things. And they pointed out some typos, some errors, all of these things. And normally in the past, I would have been really defensive and blamed or not even asked for feedback actually but I welcome it now. Yes, sometimes my mind still offers me things like my podcast got a two-star review recently and I was like, "Alright. Alright, that's fine. I don't understand why you listen to a podcast if you're going to give it a two-star review but that's fine." Some people are not going to like this podcast and some people aren't going to stick it out while I get warmed up on this podcast either and that's totally fine.

Alright. So, let me give you an example before we end today. Let's say that you wrote an email for your list thinking the thought, "It has to be perfect," which sounds super nice, right? It sounds super innocent like of course, you want to have it be perfect. You want it to be amazing for the people on your list. You don't want to put out crap, right? So notice the dichotomous thinking there like either we put out perfect or we put out crap, it's two polarized sides. We don't have anything in the middle, there's no gray area, there's no subjective area there.

So then when you think that it has to be perfect, how do you feel? For me, I put you probably will feel pressure. And then from pressure in that moment that you are feeling pressure because you're thinking that you're probably going to rework the email a million times over and over and over again in that moment with the rewriting. You're not going to get it out there. You're not going to press send from thinking it has to be perfect. You're not going to actually send it. You're going to just feel pressure and not get it out there. You might even go research, what do other people do for their emails? Is there a formula for this? What should I be doing? What should the copy be exactly? I'm not saying you don't study copywriting. You can at some point if you want, but you don't need to. And as you don't get the email out you're spending all this time not making offers or selling your thing to your people whatever you do.

And so then the result is that you have it's like \$0. So either you don't have clients booked or you don't sell the thing that you're selling because you didn't get the email out. And you're also when you're obsessing over the email you're not doing the other things that you could be doing to create the money and revenue in your business. So, thinking it has to be perfect is actually a thought that results in nothing, no money, no revenue created. So, that's why perfectionism can really be problematic if we believe its story. And then we also can have a story on top of the perfectionism story that it's bad and that we need to get rid of it or this whole thing which we'll talk more about next episode.

So, if you're considering that you may struggle with this, the perfectionistic thinking in your business, any of the things I've been saying are ringing true for you. I've created a PDF for you of common perfectionistic thoughts. So you can begin to have awareness. Just seeing what those thoughts are so you can begin to pay attention to what your mind is offering you throughout the week will be incredibly helpful. And then for the next episode you'll be able to apply then, "Okay so I'm noticing I do have some perfectionistic thinking, how do I embrace that? What do you mean?" And you'll get that PDF if you go to the show notes to grab it. You'll just throw in your email address. It's vivere.co/12. All the podcast episodes are the number of the podcast after the forward-slash. So just the awareness of those thoughts is going to change things for you.

So to summarize, perfectionism is this impossible thing that we think we need to create. It's very subjective. We can't actually create perfect things because we're human and we're fallible. Also, we often attribute our worthiness to what we create and how perfect it is and that's not useful nor what I believe to be true. We talked about what it can look like and what it can look like in business, an example of how a perfectionistic thought results in \$0 collected in your business. And then I offered you the PDF to download to see some common perfectionistic thoughts. Thanks so much for listening today. I hope you'll be super kind and sweet to yourself even if you feel like your perfectionism is a "problem." We'll talk about in the next episode how even that thinking is perfectionistic thinking and isn't helping you at all.

So, I will see you next week to continue this conversation. Thanks again.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "xo, L." The "xo" is written in a cursive, lowercase font, and the "L" is a large, stylized capital letter.

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