

CAREER

REINVENTION

BOOTCAMP

Module 12:
Building
Momentum

Audio + Transcript

Pamela: In terms of building momentum for your reinvention, you need to think about a couple of things.

We've covered a lot of ground over these past five weeks or so. You've created your vision and identified myths. We've talked about signifiers and fears. You've polished your resume. We've talked about networking. We've laid out all of the pieces of this process.

The key to doing it is to actually do it and make the tasks happen. What kinds of strategies can you use to stay in the flow, continue moving and not get derailed?

I like a saying by Charles Reade, who was an English novelist. He said, "Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

The first thing that you want to focus on is habits. You want to focus on creating rituals and actions that produce favorable habits. A lot of times people think, "I have to do all these tasks." No. You really want to do habit-forming actions that support your reinvention.

There are two layers on this. You actually want to include some self-care. If you're running yourself ragged it's going to be very difficult to get anything accomplished, much less a reinvention.

That's just the basic piece of it. You want your habits to support self-care. That includes getting enough sleep, eating some healthy foods and taking time to enjoy yourself. That's the foundation for doing this.

If you're thinking, "Oh my god! I'm so overwhelmed and frazzled," just know that that you need to start with self-care and create the space so that you're calm enough to actually start doing these reinvention tasks and habits.

There are some career reinvention habits that you want to actually incorporate into your day-to-day life. Some of that can involve writing a daily success list. This is something that I always give as an assignment in my high-level group.

You write your big and small successes at the end of the every day. That's a way of tracking your progress. We don't reinvent our careers in a day, week or month. It takes time. What we have to understand is that these reinventions benefit from cumulative actions. It's a bunch of little actions that turn into a big result.

Creating a habit around having a daily success list shows you these daily actions that you're taking so that you can begin to feel your progress and success. Once you're feeling a sense of progress and momentum, this keeps you going.

If you think you're not making any progress then it's very easy to get derailed and feel depressed. All of a sudden you are pulling energy-wise and trying to get yourself going again because you're thinking, "Nothing's happening."

In fact, when I have a client who comes in and says, "Nothing is happening," I say, "Are you doing your daily success list?" They say no. I always know that that's the case. That's the dead giveaway.

This is one of these key reinvention habits. It's to write down your daily successes so that you can see your progress. Maybe today you made a phone call. Maybe two days from now you schedule a meeting. After the meeting you do a follow-up session.

Over the course of a month you think, "Wow! Look at how far I've come in what I've done." You want to pursue that kind of positive habit. You can pursue a new contact a week. It's a habit that you make.

Maybe it's I do one outreach a week on Monday afternoons at 2:00 because that's an open time that I have, surfing the job boards for 30 minutes each day or reading the newspaper and seeing what companies are doing. I'm much more of a fan of looking out to the world because I think job boards are very competitive and not a lot of comes out of that.

Tapping into your creativity and creating habits that support your reinvention will give you a sense of momentum because they create positive energy. That positive energy propels you forward.

I like another saying that Hafez, a 13th century Persian poet, said. "Habits are human nature. Why not create some that will mint gold?" Look at habits that pay off in gold in your life.

Let's talk about that. You have supportive habits in place. They become your character. Character defines it. All of this is really based upon action. At the end of the day action is at the root of this strategy. What does it really mean to take action?

Our actions are really part of a three-level process: the thoughts that we have, feelings that we have and then movement, which actually turns into action. All three have to be congruent and in harmony for you to fully benefit. If your thoughts are not in line with what you do, every step that you take will be a struggle. If you align your thoughts, feelings and actions you'll tap into momentum.

For your actions to be effective you have to work with your thoughts. This is something that is fundamental to the reinvention process. In fact, my Law 10 talks about how the world is

attracted by an aura of success. The aura of success really comes from how you think about yourself in this process, if you believe in yourself and all of that.

Your thoughts are very much at the root of whether or not it's an easy or tough process for you. Depending upon what you think about it, the same situations can both be true. You have to understand that your thoughts are a choice. In any given thing you can choose what you want to focus on. You have far more control over your thoughts than you realize.

Not all of your thoughts are even true. This is something I love to tell people. Our minds lie. People think, "Just because my mind is saying it, it's true." Not always. Often our minds tell us things that flat out aren't true, usually because we're trying to keep ourselves safe, our ego is worried that we're pushing our boundaries or whatever it is. Our mind starts chit-chatting.

You need to learn a certain amount of detachment for your thoughts and a certain amount of control, meaning understanding that they are separate and you have a choice about what you think. Then you need to begin making deliberate choices about what you think. You want to focus on what you want to achieve. That's your intention.

Your thoughts also need to be positive and open to possibility. You're looking at that same situation and choosing thoughts that are positive, move you forward and focus on the good that's happening. This is what a daily success list does. It trains you to focus on the good.

Many people make a list of what they haven't done for the day. What happens at the end of the day? You're feeling in deficit. "Oh my god! I didn't get this and this done." If at the end of the day you did your daily success list you could sit and think, "I got this and this done." All of a sudden you're operating from an increase. Now there's positive energy going on.

If you do your to-do list, I always say do it in the morning when you still have a whole day to do something about it, not at night when you're thinking, "Wow! The day is over." Use your nighttime for positive stuff.

We're talking about thoughts, but you also have to work with your feelings because your feelings are the hidden power behind your thoughts. Feelings are what give our thoughts resonance. They drive us and influence how we view our world.

Many people neglect working with their feelings. They give their thoughts a positive spin, but they continue to feel negative and hopeless. It doesn't work just to say, "I'm going to think these positive Pollyanna thoughts," but in your heart really be feeling something different.

If you're going to try to change your thoughts without changing your feelings, basically you've set yourself up for failure. When the two are in conflict you may be thinking, "This isn't so bad," but you attract the results that are consistent with the way that you feel because you're thinking, "Wow! This is really going to happen."

To gauge if your feelings are consistent with your thoughts about your target career you can ask yourself a couple of questions. First you can ask yourself, "What am I feeling about this topic? Am I actually feeling positive? Do I know I can make this happen? Am I feeling negative and that it probably can't happen but I'll try it anyway?"

The second thing you can ask yourself is, "Am I focused on what I want or have or on what I lack?" You can be sure if you're focused on what you lack you're feeling bad and thinking, "I want this but I don't have this or this." Focus on what you do have.

I teach all this stuff, but I use stuff myself because I want to see whether or not it works. We're all human. I'm human as well. There are times when my thoughts are focusing on what I don't have.

I dream about exercises. It's true. I am a coach. What can I say? One morning I was dreaming about, "How do I solve this problem?" and it came to me. I said, "What kind of technique can I have to shift my thoughts? I'm so consumed with what I don't have. How do I change that thought?"

What came in my dream was sit down, write about all the things that you don't have, and then draw a line down the middle of the paper. On one side write, "I don't have this." Opposite that write what you do have. Just do it back and forth. "I don't have this. I do have this. I don't have B but I do have C. I don't have this but I have this."

It was like a magic switch. Boom! All of a sudden I realized, "Wow! Look at all this stuff I do have." Once you keep continuing that list is a lot longer than what you don't have. I actually had three things that I didn't have in that moment but a lot more that I did have. Then all of a sudden I could work with what I did have to move myself forward.

That is truly the philosophy of reinvention. You work with what you do have to move yourself forward. Even if you say, "I don't have this particular skill set," what you can say on the other side is, "I have the ability to learn it and the knowledge of where to go get this skill set."

All of a sudden you think, "Now I'm focused on what I do have. I know how to solve this problem. Let me focus on that and get the problem solved." You want to focus on what you do have because that's what helps move you forward.

In order to take action you actually have to move and do things. Your thoughts and feelings are in order. Now it's going to be easier to act in a way that's consistent with what you want. You're going to take a lot of pleasure and joy in this because you feel like they're going to be bringing you closer to this result that you want and this vision and dream that you have.

You now have a sense of all these things when you're doing these daily success lists, focusing on what you do have and working off of that side of the list. Now you actually have to do it. You have to make it happen. How do you do that?

Talking is not action. As the Chinese say, "Talk doesn't cook rice." You need to actually be in action. How do you do that? How do you make it work? Here are some tips to actually work these things into your life.

One is to make it manageable. You want to break down your tasks into the smallest increments possible. Sometimes it's 15-minute increments. Sometimes I'll just spend 15 minutes.

Even if you don't have 15 minutes, I always like to say it's the five rule. What will I do if I have five minutes? Have a list of things that you can do in five minutes, whether it's shoot off an email to somebody, do a quick surf of a website or whatever it is.

Then have a list of what you'll do if you have 15 minutes. Maybe that's make a quick outreach phone call. It might be a little bit longer email that you need to send. It's something that you can do in 15 minutes.

Then have a list of things that you'll do if you have 50 minutes. It's 50 minutes, not an hour. We need 10 minutes to get up, stretch, go get a cup of coffee, and use the ladies' or men's room. You want to have a list of things that if you happen to have an hour between calls or whatever that you know what you're going to be doing.

Having all of this laid out in advance helps you to keep things going because when you have this unexpected block you have a list to pull from. I'm going to do a quick polish of this letter if I have 50 minutes. I'm going to outline some things, write a quick draft of a note that I want to do, read this particular website or whatever it is.

Then you want to say, "What do I do if I have five hours?" Five hours basically is an afternoon. If you happen to have an afternoon or a day off, that's what you want to say. "What will I do in those big chunks of time?"

You really don't want to go any bigger than that. You want to have a list for all of those additional smaller times. If you happen to have a whole day, then take half the day to enjoy yourself.

My philosophy is if you're trying to make your reinvention a grind and trying to say, "I should be doing this all day long," you're going to burn out. You're not going to make progress anyway because you only control 50% of the process. Life has to control the other 50%.

Spending five hours is more than sufficient on a particular activity. Then take a break. Let life handle its part. Put it out there in the world and then see what comes back to you. Take the rest of the day to enjoy yourself.

Build on that foundation of energy that you need to show up the next day to do something. Don't wear yourself out with these activities. Have a list in advance of what you'll do if you have these blocks, but don't force yourself to try to carve out artificial timeframes that may or may not work with your schedule.

If you're just a busy person because you have a job, kids and a family, just have a big five or 15-minute list. A lot can get done in five and 15-minute increments. Just do that.

Also make it consistent. Work on doing something consistently, whether it's your five or 15 minutes. Carve out that five or 15 minutes every day, every other day or whatever it is. Put it on your calendar. Do something consistently.

People say, "I don't even have 15 minutes." I always like to say, "Turn off 'Law & Order' earlier. You know how it ends." Just carve that time out. You have it somewhere.

It doesn't have to be every single day. If it's every day that's awesome, but sometimes it's not like that. If you have your list and say, "I'm doing it three times a week," then you move it ahead.

Make it realistic. Don't try to tackle the big picture every day. Don't try to say every day, "I'm going to work on getting my job." You'll get overwhelmed. It's a lot to take on. When you're overwhelmed you won't do anything because it's just too much for a day.

Break it down and say, "Today I'm just going to make this phone call. Today I'm going to send out this email." Look at the cumulative actions of that day and just know that the big result will take care of itself. Pace yourself. Don't try to take on your big goal every single day because that's a heavy burden.

Keep your tools handy. Make it possible for you to do it. Don't sabotage yourself by making it difficult to complete a task. If you're doing your success list, keep a notebook somewhere. Do what you need to do.

Also, make it fun. So many people feel like, "I need to do this or that." When you put it in a "need" and "should" of course you're going to avoid it. Think, "I want to do this". Make the way you do your tasks fun. If you're going to need a little break, take your 15 minutes and go for a coffee break and draft it. Go outside. Find ways to do these tasks and make them fun.

The other thing is also to make it optional. This is life. Sometimes we're in the midst of things where we're launching a new program, moving, we've just had a baby, the whole family is sick or whatever it is.

A lot of times there are times in our lives where other things just have to take priority. Give yourself permission and make it optional so that you don't constantly add pressure, which adds resistance to what you're doing.

If you find that pressure is killing your initiative, give yourself an out clause. Decide that you'll take action toward your target career for a month and then revisit whether or not you want to continue.

If it's just a timeline because it's Easter break and the kids are off, give yourself an out clause this week. Think, "This week it just needs to be about the kids. Next week I'll get back to it." Don't be afraid to give yourself an out clause.

Many times when you do that you'll come to it more freely once you know that it's not this heavy taskmaster pounding your back making you do stuff. You can get it done. If it's not this week then next week, but make it consistent.

Don't be giving yourself too many out clauses. If you do then you know, "Maybe this isn't something that I want to do. I need to revisit this." Those are some of the tactics to keep your momentum going.