

ALIGNED DECISION MAKING

EP #27

“Do I need a life coach?” You’re listening to Episode 27, with Rhiannon Bush

Welcome to the Do I need a life coach? Podcast. We’re here to discuss the ins- and outs- of the life coaching industry and give you tools to use, to see for yourself. I’m your host, Rhiannon Bush. Mother, management consultant and a passionate, certified life coach.

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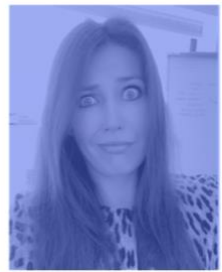
I was recently on a flight to Melbourne, going over for one of Damien’s friends weddings. We were so excited, we were leaving the kids behind with family and going away to have a weekend for the wedding in to just have some quality time as a couple. So exciting. Also back to the place where our lives began together, I mean really where we started. So many great memories and yes it was really lovely and nostalgic and Melbourne turned it on. The weather was spectacular, the city was buzzing with the Australian Open and other events, it was magical.

So I’ve travelled a lot in my life. Living in London that was my sole purpose for being there, to be able to hop, skip, and jump around Europe and the surrounding countries and I had an absolute ball. I couldn’t afford to go and visit for more than a few weeks so instead I moved there for 2 years and I recommend it to anybody that has an inkling or desire for adventure, and travel, and fun. It was scary on one hand, yes and amazing on the other. I certainly didn’t go to party my way around Europe. I’d done my partying in Sydney. I was going for lessons in history and the arts and culture and a whole lot of things that I never could’ve anticipated before I got there.

But travelling still, sometimes makes me little bit nervous, I’m not what I would call a light packer, and therefore the airline regulations around how much weight you can take in your carry on etc., is often a cause of stress for me when I travel, especially if I haven’t packed well, or if I’ve packed last minute.

The Melbourne trip we recently went on, I packed very well, and had no concerns or stress about how much weight I had in my carry-on luggage, or that I was going to be charged additional fees. And right before we about to board the airline, two staff showed up and they began weighing everybody’s hand luggage. They had two weight machines – one per staff member and they were asking everybody to put their bags on the scales to check that they were within the range that they had paid for or had been allocated as part of their ticket.





What was really interesting to me was that there was one guy originally weighing everyone's bags and he was able to make decisions about the people who he would let go through the gate, and who he needed to charge, and he made sure everybody was weighed on the way through. And as soon as this other staff member showed up who looked like his senior, you could judge that by the uniforms they were wearing, I literally watched as his indecision creep up all over him.

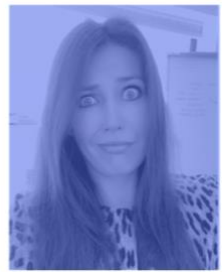
He was like merely by her showing up and by her presence, all of a sudden he felt dizzy, empowered and suddenly like he needed to ask permission. And I watched this happen over and over again. As soon as she showed up suddenly he couldn't make decisions for himself and he would keep asking her questions and he would make comments to her and it was like he was seeking permission and validation. He was doing it perfectly fine on his own!

I can guarantee you that this was not her intention. I don't think anybody has this type of an impact on someone purposefully, after all why would they? Unfortunately the truth of it is that it created more work for her because her presence had an impact on him in a negative way – it created an inefficiency in him, because before she showed up, he was happy to make decisions, and he was really happy to do his role and do it confidently and do it well. It was like by her being there all of a sudden he felt he was being observed, and maybe judged, and like he needed to do it differently, or in a certain way. Before she was there, he was doing it perfectly anyway, in terms of the business process, or a procedure that they have to follow. Unless I had an opportunity to speak to him, I couldn't tell you exactly why her presence had this impact on him, and without knowing what this is about for him, you can't coach or help the behaviours to create the efficiency with her present, does that make sense?

I'll confess I've had a major go at an airline staff member once upon a time over being charged \$60 for an additional 2kg when I've seen people much larger than me get on the plane that would've paid the same price for their ticket as I did. It was actually my brother who had the extra kilos but because we weren't on the same booking I couldn't take some of his weight, and I just got so angry with the hostess. It's not something I'm proud of and this is again what I'm saying about life coaches being human too. Even though we know the tools, doesn't mean we can always access them and apply them. Even though we do our best. Especially in heightened emotional moments.

But this, I believe, happens in organisations, over and over again. You've got staff members that are empowered, and you've got bosses who want to empower their staff and give them free reign and really, you actually want your staff to do their jobs, because that's why they're there right? You bring on staff to alleviate you from having to do everything, and having to make all the decisions, and when your staff members, then turn around and don't do the very thing you want them to do, because they don't feel empowered or safe, or like they are confident or capable enough intrinsically to do their





job... well you get this co-dependency, or reliance on them. And this looks like asking a lot of unnecessary questions, always confirming things with somebody else, always seeking that final sign off or tick of approval. Not being able to take accountability and responsibility for what they are meant to be doing. Which is really hard. Because there's both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that are creating that lack of confidence and empowerment in somebody.

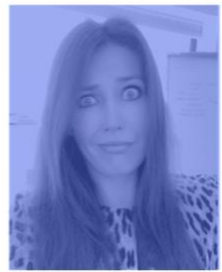
Often when people don't want to be accountable in a role, it's because they are worried about the consequences of making a mistake. Whether this is being fired, whether this is being reprimanded, or, even if they are aware that there are no consequences but maybe it will cost the business unnecessary money, people can use that to seek permission and not take responsibility.

But there's also an internal factor whereby somebody isn't prepared to back themselves enough to make decisions and really own their role and lean in. They're happier to play it small and play it safe, instead of stepping up to the plate and really owning their place to make their managers and bosses lives easier, and make the whole business procedure more efficient by them carrying their weight.

Empowerment comes from making decisions. And if you can't, don't or won't make decisions, you'll find yourself in a disempowerment spiral, whereby your lack of making a decision-making will lead to bigger things. Often it starts with a small thing – put yourself out there or not, apply for that job or not, wear that outfit or not. The little things that seem insignificant and aren't time-bound to eventually force you to make a decision (like if you want to go to that party or not – the party will come and go so at some point, you have to make a decision). But there are decisions like asking somebody on a date or telling them you like them, or applying for a new job – where they're not timebound and because you don't have a definite timeframe in which to go or not go, if you don't make a decision you can end up in this spiral. It's sort of like this disempowerment erosion happens and your confidence will suffer. While not making a decision at the time may seem neither here nor there, in an ongoing capacity, it can be quite detrimental to your mindset, confidence and self-worth.

When you're in momentum and you purposefully make decisions, you get the validation fairly quickly, either way that you were right or wrong. There's no sitting on the fence and there's no one-foot in, one foot out. You make a decision and suddenly you're two feet in, you're on a side of the fence or the other and in that zone you'll get immediate feedback to say yep that was a good move, or no it wasn't. Then you can make another decision from that place to either go to the next level or rectify that previous decision you made. So you are continually moving forward and making progress.



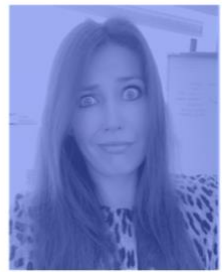


In a business or work context, if you feel uncertain about the decision you're trying to make or you're not empowered to make it, as in you might be reprimanded or you're unsure of the consequences you might face if you make a bad call, you will often not make that decision at all. Instead, you'll revert to your superiors or those around you to make decisions for you and guide you, especially when it comes to the final big decision that carry the weight. You'll do all that work, just to pass it over to somebody who's head will be on a spike if it backfires. And look, sometimes we're in roles where we're not paid enough to make big decisions, but say you do a piece of work, but someone else finishes it and signs it off, they're **the ones I get a credit for it. I think it's important to ask yourself, if you just backed yourself and made the call after making sure it was well thought through, in line with company policy whatever, and it was genuinely as good of a decision as you could have made with the information you had available to you, then do it. Because when you do, that credit will come to you, you'll be seen in a different light and then you can go from strength to strength. I heard a story of a grad that started at Facebook. He saw some code, rectified what he thought was incorrect – without permission or checking – completely stuffed it up and took Facebook offline for 4 hours (which is a lot of money and transactions when you consider ads and user-base) and he got promoted. So this won't work in every culture, but you must ask yourself the question as to whether it will work better for you than sitting in a corner, doing what you're told.**

This has taken me a really long time to learn in work. When I first landed in consulting land, I was an associate, I was junior, and I was there to support many other people on their projects. I didn't have the power to make decisions, I certainly wasn't given the freedom or the liberty to make decisions, liaise with clients, or take control. Let alone take risks or do anything autonomously. I was definitely there to support other project managers, and that was the extent of my responsibilities, and as such that's how I was paid. It taught me great lessons in terms of what my PMs wanted, how they wanted me to do it, and it also taught me very efficient ways of doing things, but I'm glad I didn't stay in that environment longer than I did, because I got the lessons and left. Now that I have consulted on behalf of myself and for another agency environments, I believe it's better to take risks and seek forgiveness, not ask permission because of how much you learn. If you're a reasonably intelligent person, or even if you're not but you consider things for what they are – pros and cons, most of the time you'll make fairly well informed decisions. As long as you can justify why you've decided something, I believe being bold and making decisions will enable you to exceed expectations.

That's not always a case, sometimes I will do things that are wrong, and I need to say I'm sorry and take those consequences, but on the balance of probability, if I add more value by taking risks and saying sorry if I'm wrong, or taking the risk and have it pay off, over the multitude of events when I will do that, if I win more than I lose then the business wins more





than they lose too. And therefore, I'm adding more value to my role, and therefore I'm worth keeping.

So when it comes to making decisions, I know from clients I've worked with as I have really decisive clients who just take action and make things happen, and those clients are the ones that are often very empowered and they come to see me as a sounding board, a fine tune, or to overcome a very particular hurdle they may be experiencing, and I have clients who are in a... let's call it a decision-making spiral, where they don't make a decision... and this just keeps going. They're in a bit of a holding pattern until something external happens and they are forced to do something different, opposed to them taking the reins, making the decision for themselves, making it happen, getting a lesson, and moving forward with those lessons for next time on their own terms.

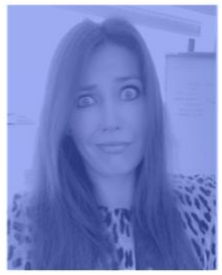
Do you see the difference and why one is really empowering, and one isn't? When you make a decision you get activation energy that comes from within you. You have to weigh up the pros and cons, and you've had to take the leap. You're the one that said "yes it is worth risking, I'm going to back myself and I'm going to do it and see what happens". Whereas the other way is "I'm going to wait. I'm going to wait, I'm going to wait" and then what happens is you've been waiting for so long that external things have shifted around you - because things change fast - and this forces you to do something that may or may not work for you.

So which one do you sit in more often? Which one would you prefer? Are you ok with letting the environment dictate your circumstances, or would you prefer to take your life in two hands and drive it forward the way you choose to? Are you the sort of person that makes a decision and then sees what the outcome is? Or are you the sort of person that sits back evaluates, and then often has to do things based on external factors changing? This is often related to how internal or external our locus of control sits. I'll pop a quiz in the show notes if you're curious. I don't buy into it too much, I've had clients who love it, but I like to be able to dictate how much faith I have in the universe helping and guiding me, versus how much I control and dictate in my life.

Brook Castillo says that empowerment comes from your ability to make decisions, and I 100% believe that to be true. It's also a lot easier to make decisions when you know what you want, and what making decisions will help you get. And when you can do that, in a way that is truly authentic and aligned with what you want, with your inner voice, your life, your soul or spirit.. then making decisions is a lot easier. Because when you know what you want, you have boundaries and guide rails for making decisions to move forward and get that thing.

The best analogy I have for this is buying milk believe it or not. I may've told this story before but I was pregnant with my son and had to buy milk. I found it very stressful. I popped in after work, huge and tired and just





wanting to relax after my day at work and I needed to buy milk. I parked and walked into the Mentone Woolworths. Now... if you go to the milk aisle in the supermarket, and you've never had milk, you don't know what milk you like, it's going to be really hard to choose and make a decision. And then, because we live in the world we do we've been conditioned right? So your brain will begin to revert to a metaphorical, neurological hierarchy which your beautiful mind has created in order to help you make all kinds of decisions. This can be to buy a car, a house, a pair of socks or milk. Maybe you look for the bright yellow tags to see what's on sale. Or it may be the size of the milk container - 1, 2 or 3 litres. Or maybe it's going to be about the brand, or the label, or a fancy marketing description about added vitamins. If you've never had milk, you don't know what milk tastes like and you don't know what you want in milk... you don't know right?!

Whereas if you know you like Ashgrove milk, for instance, because it's local and you've been out to the farm where they produce the milk and you've seen the cows, so you can literally see where the cows are, where they're milked, and then where the milk travels to get to the supermarket, and you know how much milk your family go through each week so you know which size you need, the decision-making becomes really, really... REALLY easy. Do you see?

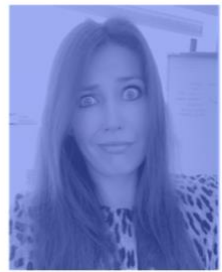
So, when you know exactly what it is you want, which is often the hardest question to answer, then you have boundaries and clear parameters for making decisions that will move you forward, closer to what you want. And every decision not related to getting you what you want, or where you want to be, dissipates because it doesn't even matter.

Knowing what you want to be or to do with your life - be it a big life goal you may have, or maybe just what you want to do when you're older, maybe something even different to that like do you want to renovate your home, or you want to have a certain amount of savings in your bank account, but when you choose what you want, no matter what that is, decision-making becomes a lot easier, because every decision you make will be helping you get there, either by making the right decision to project you forward, or because you inverted commas "fail", which will then give you a bunch of learnings to then make a different decision, or a better decision, and keep you on the straight and narrow until you get what you want. Then it's just about time and overcoming hurdles as they're right in front of you.

But when we coast through life and we don't really know what you want, we don't really spend the time thinking about it, we'll often become a product of the what's going on around us, and we'll be forced to do things based on external factors shifting, and not because we've chosen it for ourselves. And that creates disempowerment.

So what do you want? Can you take 10 minute, yes, that is all it takes, 10 minutes... if you ever meditated for 10 minutes feels like a very, very long





time, unless you are a frequent meditator. Can you take 10 minutes today, right now if possible, to really start asking yourself what you want?

At home, at work, for your health and well-being, for your kids, your relationships and mostly for yourself?

What decisions can you make right now, to start working towards what it is that you want by pro-actively choosing, and then by making aligned decisions.

One decision at a time. One lesson at a time. You've got this my friend.

See you next week.

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I you've found this podcast valuable, please take a minute to write a quick review about what you've found most beneficial for you, so other people can benefit from your insights, and listen in too. I would LOVE that!

Also, if there are any topics you'd like me to cover specifically about life coaching or the life coaching industry, visit rhiannonbush.com to contact me. Thanks for joining and I'll see you in the next episode of Do I Need A Life Coach?!

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