

The Power of Mindset - Episode 132

A couple of days ago I called my parents on Facetime and when the camera came on we realized we were all dressed in festive holiday attire -- completely unplanned. We had a good laugh and the moment brightened everyone's day. I haven't seen my parents in person since last Christmas. I miss them terribly, but I'm incredibly grateful for technology and the ability to spend time with them virtually. It's not the way I expected to celebrate this year, but we are making the most of it and i'm spending extra effort to connect with them as often as i can.

This year really has been about making the best of things....even though for most people it has been far from ideal and certainly not what was planned. Even if you've not suffered significant loss, there is still the loss of plans that have been scrapped, graduations postponed or retooled, and of what we want the holidays to be versus what they are. Vacations cancelled or postponed, and not being able to spend time with friends and loved ones the way had imagined.

As I was thinking about all of this, I was reminded of another dimension that ran through so many of the conversations on the podcast this year. But frankly not just this year, but since I started interviewing these incredibly interesting women about their stories.

Crises and disruption and stressful experiences are often opportunities for tremendous growth. The old saying "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" couldn't be more true, but there's an element related to personal growth that i wanted to spend a few minutes talking about today. And that is how a crisis -- in this case a pandemic -- can create new opportunities if we look at them from the standpoint of what we can learn....about ourselves, about each other, about our organizations.

I remember when I was first introduced to the work of Professor Carol Dweck a Stanford University psychologist, researcher and author who wrote a book called "Mindset." The concept deals with the way we think about challenges and outcomes. Essentially if you have a growth mindset you are much more likely to approach challenges (and setbacks) as an opportunity to learn and grow. If you have a fixed mindset you likely believe that talents and capabilities are hard wired and more or less predetermined regardless of your effort. So if your mindset is

fixed, you maybe less likely to view setback as an opportunity to learn and more as an inevitability. Or something you have no control over.

Understanding this concept was so illuminating for me, and explained so much about those who we see take failure and setback in stride and use what they learned, versus those who had trouble finding value in the experience and thus had more trouble moving forward.

Those who tended to use their setback ... also seemed to have an added curiosity that propelled them to dig deeper and keep going back again and again even when they failed repeatedly. If you haven't been exposed to Professor Dweck's work, it's worth adding her book to your reading list -- again it's entitled "Mindset". I will include a link in the show notes for this Episode 132.

As I look back on the conversations I've had this year with almost 50 women who are creating opportunities for themselves and others. I saw this idea of mindset play out over and over again. It was an important component and one that I found incredibly inspiring.

The idea of approaching life and new experiences with excitement about what you can learn, even if some discomfort is involved. That's saying quite a lot --- since most of this year's podcast conversations occurred once the pandemic hit and at a time when several of the entrepreneurs and business women i talked to were having to toss out business plans and do major pivots just to stay afloat. They looked at these shifts with a sense of tackling what was in front of them and what they could control v. what they couldn't. They quickly recognized that to pine away for lost business was a total waste of time and would actually set them back further. If i'm making this sound easy, I don't mean to. It isn't . it's hard. But it's the secret to so much in life.

A great example is my conversation in episode 106 with Kate Boyer who is the CEO of luxury activewear company [Anatomie](#).

Even before the pandemic, The company had been Recognized as one of the most disruptive brands (just behind All Bird Shoes) Kate, together with her husband Shawn who runs the design side of the business, had to even more fully embrace this notion of disruption. Using her keen understanding of her customer, she retooled the company's marketing while simultaneously reinventing a salesforce

to make up for lost revenue due to COVID. That's not so unusual, but doing it practically overnight ...and during a pandemic -- is! Up until COVID, Anatomie relied on high-end resorts and cruise lines for about 50 percent of its business.

Kate was born in Soviet-occupied Budapest, Hungary. Her journey from there to where she is today required tremendous grit, risk-taking, and determination, not to mention embracing entrepreneurship and free enterprise which were all but unheard of under the communist regime of her youth. If you missed the episode, it's # 106... You will love the story of why and how she got her start.... But more importantly how her upbringing and how the company's pre existing appetite for risk and disruption likely gave them the mindset and culture they needed to adapt during covid.

You can follow Kate and Anatomie on Instagram @AnatomieStyle

Similarly, when I spoke to Dr. Marissa Porges who is the head of the Baldwin School for Girls and author of a great book entitled "What Girls Need. She rounds out this idea of mindset by tapping into how you can develop it through risk taking.

You see, Marisa had dreamed about and worked her entire young life to become a naval fighter pilot. It was only after she achieved this milestone that she realized her physiology wouldn't allow her to continue. She got airsick. Even after all the training. She assumed it would go away. It didn't. She was devastated. What she learned about setback ultimately shaped her philosophy. She's using the experience to help girls attending her school to understand and embrace this idea of a growth mindset. By the way, this insight isn't just for girls!

Check our entire conversation in episode 114, and i'll include a link to both the conversation and her terrific book entitled, " [What girls need: How to raise bold, courageous, and resilient women.](#)"

These are only a couple of examples from this year. There are so many others and I urge you to check them out if you are looking for additional insight on this topic.and to see how it's played out in real time.

I was thinking about all of this in the context of the holidays. So many families are shouldering significant loss. While others are rightly sad and missing plans and gatherings that have had to be to be put on hold or significantly altered. It's

ok to be sad. But it's also important to be mindful of what is good and right with the world. There are always blessings - indeed they are everywhere when we stop to see them. ... and when we think about this idea of what we can learn and how we can continue to create magic by making the most of what we have and by seeing the blessings that are all around us.

I'll leave you with my favorite prayer The Serenity Prayer "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Words to live by today, during the holidays and as we embrace the promise and uncertainty of the year ahead.

I'm grateful you've joined me this year. Thanks for listening. I'll see you in 2021.