
Episode #10 Transcript

My Biggest A-ha Moments: Lessons from Spark+Victory Season 1.

So Mavericks, we just wrapped the first season of Spark and Victory podcast and I'm really excited. I can't believe how quickly this went and it's been so much fun to meet with all the entrepreneurs. And so much fun to share this with you guys and hear your feedback and I'm just so grateful to everybody for being part of this with me.

So this is kind of a bonus episode.

It wasn't something that I initially intended to do, but as I was listening back through each of the episodes, I really felt like there were these insights that I had, as a listener, that I didn't necessarily pick up while I was being the interviewer. I'm very present while I'm talking with people, but not necessarily from the point of like really taking in the wisdom that they're sharing. So I thought it'd be fun to do sort of a compilation of my biggest *a-ha* moments from each of the episodes this season.

Linsi Brownson: To start us off - Episode 1, I talked with **Gina Benedetto** who is the creator of the botanical scent line **Veyali**. She has another business that she's running with her husband for a number of years, so she's definitely a seasoned entrepreneur and we were talking about those challenges, the problems that we have as business owners and as entrepreneurs and how sometimes those problems kind of build up to a point where we feel like there's something wrong with us or something isn't the way that it should be simply because we keep having these problems in business. It's almost like we have this invisible meter of what we think is a *tolerable level* of problems before you decide that you are just not cut out to be in business for yourself.

And so my *a-ha* moment with Gina was when she was talking about how we are always going to have hurdles and challenges in business, but it's really like setting yourself up with this understanding that this is a long game. You're running a marathon and not a sprint.

Basically what she's saying is that you need to learn to manage your energy and set the expectation of what this is going to look like over the long haul. Right? And it really is so much about how we decide to frame our expectation because when you start a business or if you set a goal and you know ahead of time that you're going to have lots of problems and you're going to try a ton of things that fail. But if you can see that and accept it as part of the process, then when you inevitably come up against these problems, you can see them for what they are instead of making them mean something bigger.

So here's the thing that I would like to recommend, no matter where you right now: think about the very next thing that you want to accomplish. Maybe you have set a goal for the year or that you want to launch a project like a podcast or make a video series or create a new product. Whatever it is that you have in mind right now that you've either committed to working on or you want to commit to work on, but maybe you just haven't found your Mojo yet. So even if you're working on this already, this is a really good exercise just to check back in and make sure that you're really setting yourself up for success.

My question to you is, what are all of the things that could go wrong as you tried to do this thing? I want you to write these things down. So this is like a brain dump. I want you to sit and think and write everything that comes into your head about why what you want is either impossible or why it's going to be really hard. Just every single challenge that you can possibly think of in making this happen.

The point is to get it all out of your head right now. Not if you're driving. Don't do it right, right, right now, but as this exercise, do it all in one sitting. Get it out. Because this is going to do two things for you. First of all, the most dangerous obstacles are the ones that we don't see, right? The hidden obstacles. By simply getting these thoughts out of your head and acknowledging that they exist, you have the opportunity to either move around them or to address them, take them head on, or to simply let them go because a lot of these things are just fear based thoughts.

Here's my example: The thing that I really, really, really want to do this year is get my message and my brand out in front of way more people and I want to do that by being a guest on other people's podcasts and by doing interviews and by being a speaker and doing workshops and you know, all that kind of fun stuff. And so as I'm doing this work for myself and I'm writing down all the reasons that I think that this is either impossible or it's gonna be hard, one of the recurring thoughts that I was having was that I don't know how to condense my message and I don't know how to write a pitch and I don't know how to say what it is that I'm *so* passionate about in a way that is both succinct and clear AND won't make people roll their eyes or fall asleep on me.

Now I want a sidebar just a little bit because it's really important in that exercise that you are giving yourself the space to be completely free of judgment. You've got to allow all of your thoughts to come out without trying to add it or talk yourself out of them or any of that while you're doing the exercise.

I am sharing my thoughts with you after I've already done that work and so I really gave myself the opportunity to just let it free flow and let it be what it was. But as you're probably noticing, most of these thoughts are complete nonsense, right? I mean, I don't know how to write a pitch, really, is that what's going to stop me from doing what I want to do? Because I don't know how to write a pitch? And the truth is I've done so much damn writing in my life and I've written tons of press releases and bios and entire websites and marketing copy

for myself, for my clients. I mean it's actually really ridiculous for me to think that I don't have it in me to write a pitch, but I let myself get it all out there, lay it on the table. And so then I had the ability to go through it and actually call some bullshit on myself. At that point, I could decide that there were thoughts that I was having that just were not going to be an issue for me moving forward. They weren't going to stop me from doing what I want to do.

Alright. And the second part of this is that once you can, you know, just let go of the stuff that is not legitimate, then you can start to see anything that is legitimately a challenge for you and you can build those things into your plan of action.

I haven't written a speech since, I dunno, probably high school and I really struggle sometimes to write the outline for this podcast for the intros so I know that it is probably going to be a challenge for me and I need to do a little bit of research and certainly a lot of writing and practice. But again, now I know and it's really not an issue. It's just a thing that has to happen in order for me to get what I want.

So do you see how that can really take the pressure off of you? I find that, so often, people really don't want to look at these things because they're afraid that by seeing all of the problems ahead of time that it's going to drain them of their energy and make them not want to do anything at all. But our willingness to see our problems and even to anticipate our failures ahead of time is really such a superpower.

Okay. Let's move on to Episode 2. So in this episode, my guests were **Ron and Lisa Beres**. And we were talking about their work-life balance as it relates to them being both business and life partners. They shared a moment in their history when it became really clear to them that they had been putting so much of their energy into just working in their business, that they were really disconnecting from each other and from their purpose.

The *a-ha* for me was really about the importance of business alignment. Ron and Lisa are really passionate about their message of health and taking care of our bodies and our environment, but as their business really took off, they got into this pattern of just giving and giving all the time and they didn't even realize how much they were taking away from themselves in order to do that. Which of course is not in alignment with their message that health is the most important thing we have.

So I really love that they were willing to share that story and how they turned it around because I will just say it: I think we're all guilty of this and we all carry a level of shame about it because, when we are mission-driven like they are, nobody wants to feel like they're not living up to their own mission. I think that's a big part of why social media fakery got so out of hand for a while, because we were all just so desperately afraid that people were going to see that we're all just struggling, flawed humans trying to do the best we can. And I love that this tide

is really turning right now and that more of us are wanting to hear people's true stories and they're true voices and their struggles.

But let's get back to business alignment because in my experience, it is very often the difference between moving to a whole new level and really seeing success and staying stuck in the same place toiling away, getting more and more frustrated and burnt out.

So alignment is not perfection. And that's what I'm hoping to share through Ron and Lisa's story. And of course through my own example. It does not mean that you have your shit figured out and that forever and always you will never have problems again. Alignment means that you are willing to do the work to really understand yourself and what you want out of life and how you want to show up for other people, how you want to serve with your business and how you want to be as a leader and in relationships. I could go on and on, but these are the fundamental values that you hold. These are the things that are not going to change, even though the way that you do business or the type of business you do, all of those things might change through the course of your career and through your life, but these are the things, this is the common thread that will always be present, and by bringing that stuff to the surface and really holding it in your awareness, it allows you to decide that you will always stay in integrity with these things.

And you may need to shift your priorities a bit in order to make sure that that happens. Lisa shared the example that, once they started taking better care of themselves physically, things started improving in their business. And some of it was in ways that completely make sense and some of it was just that magnetic force that happens when we get into true alignment.

In Episode 3, my guest was **Jaime Jay**. And I had a really great time chatting with Jamie about the struggle of hiring. We were talking a little bit about mindset, so when it comes to business owners wanting to hire but not feeling like they can for a number of reasons. And the biggest *a-ha* moment for me in this episode, I guess it was just the permission to take things slow.

That makes perfect sense for him because his company helps to staff businesses and I think that a lot of his clients are in very similar positions as I am, where they work alone and maybe have a few contractors. So his work is to help people start moving in that direction of having a dedicated team. But for me, it was just a really nice reminder to hear from someone who I consider to be pretty successful, that we all grow at our own pace and that's exactly how it should be.

It's so easy to get programmed by this idea that we need to accelerate our growth and hire staff and make our business look like this really cool, shiny, impressive thing in order to call it successful. But the reality is that so many of us entrepreneurs are just not ready for that and I think that, especially in my own hiring mistakes in the past, and I'm going to be honest here even now, a lot of

these have come from that feeling that I needed to go faster and bigger than what I was really ready to do.

Another favorite takeaway from this episode is when he said 'that if a task is something that you repeat, even occasionally, the next time you do that task, do it as if it's the last time you're ever going to.' And he gave the tip of recording yourself using like a screen capture software and compile this library of documentation that you could very easily then hand off to someone else.

And I do this, I love doing this. I use Capto, which is a screen recorder for my Mac. What's great about that too is that it's recorded in your tone of voice that really comes through. So someone listening our training can pick up the essence of what it is that you're currently bringing to the job. And if it's something that you want people to emulate, like your brand voice, it's very easy for them to get a sense of what it is that you want to sound like. So this is one of my favorite tips and I use it all the time.

Episode 4 was about getting smacked upside the head by something unexpected and completely preventable if only you had known better. My guest was **Sara Christensen**, and she told the story of getting fired from her own business, one that she started and then brought in a business partner, but she didn't protect her own share in the company. So the moral of the story, of course, is that we need to take our businesses seriously and that old saying 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' definitely holds true in business. Or said another way, 'don't assume anything.'

My biggest *a-ha* in this episode was the reminder that we put a lot of energy into trying to solve and prevent little problems on a day-to-day, but we don't really put that much thought into trying to prevent big problems. And I think a lot of that is because big problems cost us money like hiring lawyers or at least a considerable investment of our time.

But like Sarah said, you never want to look back and kick yourself for choosing not to spend a little bit of money that could have saved you a lot of money, and even more so, a ton of heartache.

I think this is one of my biggest business lessons and now I understand it on a totally different level. It is so important to make investments in our business. And the sooner that we can really see that the money that we choose to spend in our business is actually fueling, it's the lifeblood, and trying to cut corners and to do everything on our own, it's just not giving you the return of, you know, deciding to make the right investments for your business as early as you possibly can. Now I understand a lot of this comes from when you're a new entrepreneur, there's a lot of fear and there's a lot of different things going on and sometimes you legitimately don't have the funds yet and that's fine, that's okay too. But also, I think sometimes we wear a badge of honor in this idea of kind of like hustling and grinding our way through doing these things on our own and doing them the hard way. And if I could have learned that lesson sooner, I would have made

some very different decisions in my own business. And it's definitely something that I would love to help shorten the timeline on for the newer entrepreneurs who are listening to this.

In Episode 5, I talked with **Tiffany Scott**, who is one of the most effervescent people I've ever known. I try to be around her as often as I can because she just fills me with light and I think that is pretty high praise. So Tiffany, on the show, talked about sisterhood and the power of really coming together with a group of people, which is something that she facilitates as the creator of her company, **Sister Suppers**, and that's also something that she does as often as she can just because she is truly a community builder, which like I said, it's something I really enjoy and I'm really not community builder like that.

So my biggest *a-ha* was when Tiffany was sharing that the women who come to her events, they come looking for a nice experience and a way to potentially meet some new friends, but they leave feeling truly seen and heard. Which is a really empowering experience because fundamentally this is what we all want.

As entrepreneurs, we want to make our vision a reality, but why? It's because we want people to connect with us. We want to be understood and we want to create value so that we can be valued. Isn't that beautiful? Like I think that's just such a powerful expression of what we're here to do. And I can definitely say from my own experience of Tiffany and her work is that she is truly in alignment with her mission.

In Episode 6, we dove into one of my favorite topics, which is our brain. We talked about what happens when our conscious and subconscious brain are not in alignment, which is a lovely call back to what I was talking about in episode one and episode two. My guest was **Ressel Yu** who is an energy healer, and we talked about how energy healing can release us from some of those subconscious beliefs that are holding us back from taking the conscious actions that we want to take to move ourselves forward.

So Ressel's story was about failure and how she learned to really embrace even just the idea of failing at something which freed her up to go out and do bigger and better things. And of course, as we know, failure is going to happen when you try new things and expand your comfort zone, and yet many of us still resist doing anything that feels like it could be a failure. So that's why I think it's such a beautiful integration to talk about energy healing here because the subconscious fear of failing is what overrides our conscious understanding that we're going to have to fail.

So my biggest *a-ha* in this episode, and actually it's not that it had nothing to do, but it is outside of the episode itself. My biggest "aha moment" was that you guys were interested in talking about our conscious and subconscious beliefs and that you were open to this idea, this topic of different healing modalities as a way to be better versions of ourselves. And that's exciting to me because, obviously, it's a passion of mine and it just makes me so happy because this episode was the one

that I was the most afraid of putting out. It's funny because we're talking about failure and this is the thing, I was so afraid of this being a huge failure, and yet, it's one of the things that creates the biggest spark for me.

So we're talking about alignment and really being true to ourselves and that episode was really a full circle moment for me because I was in alignment and I was dealing with my fear of failure and so I did it anyway and I worked through my stuff and it gave me so much more clarity around what I can talk about here and what I can create using this platform of podcasting. And I never would have gotten that had I not been willing to take that action of putting this out there and talking about this topic that I love so much.

Alright. In Episode 7, I laughed the most of any of the other episodes and I realized for the very first time that my laugh is actually more of a “guffaw” and I don't love it. But we are talking about embracing ourselves and not getting stuck on stupid things, so we're just going to move right on past that. My guest on episode seven was **Rachael Kay Albers**, also known as **RKA**, and she's the host of my favorite video show called **Awkward Marketing**.

So we were talking about business FOMO and the challenge of, I guess, deciding to do something and then sticking to it. Meanwhile you're noticing that everyone else on the planet seems to be doing something that's also really cool and exciting and maybe even better and you know, it's just that constant state that we creative entrepreneurs seem to find ourselves in.

Rachael shared a lot of wisdom about staying focused but I think my biggest *a-ha* moment was when she said that she has always wanted to write a book, but the book isn't here yet and that the book will come when it's ready.

I remember reading one of my favorite books called Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert, and I was instantly on board with that sort of anthropomorphizing ideas and inspiration as beings, as energies that come to us, and we channel them and that's how we create really amazing and out of this world kind of work. So I know that idea a little bit out there for some of you, but I'm fully on board with this idea of magic in business. And I love the notion that Rachael has the intention of writing a book someday and that when she and the book are both ready, that they will come together and I know, of course, that it's going to be really amazing.

I also think that it's such a wise way to manage our FOMO - and I don't have to say fear of missing out, right? We all know what FOMO means - but that feeling that we constantly need to be trying and doing something else. If you can trust that everything you're meant to do in this life, and in your business, that it's all going to happen and it's going to happen in the right time when it's supposed to, it really allows you to take a breath and as Rachael said, just be where you are.

All right. Episode 8. I talked with **Suzanne Stavert** and we were talking about embracing the unknown. What a perfect segue, right? And I guess kind of how to

make peace with the discomfort of not really having any true roadmap for your business. So we are naturally wired to want to plan and to want to know everything that's going to happen before it happens and again, as we know, that's never going to work out that way. And really, the only way to fully step into our lives and into our purpose is to be willing to keep moving through the dark toward the things that feel good and the things that we feel guided toward.

And my *a-ha* in this episode was Suzanne saying that because she really trusts her intuition, she's able to explore new opportunities and say “yes” to a lot of things that she probably wouldn't if she gave herself the chance to overthink it.

And I think this is really powerful because I'm someone who totally believes in the power of intuition, but I really struggle to listen to mine. I've done a lot of work in my lifetime to learn how to tune in and to really hear myself. But my tendency is still to want to overwrite it with logic and thinking. And it's only been a pretty recent experiment of mine that I'm just trying to not question and that when I get a sense or call towards something, even if it seems completely absurd, I'm just really, like, putting myself out to be available to follow that. Because like Suzanne shared, it has only brought her to good things and I know this, I know it, but it's still so hard. So I'm working on that. And so far, I mean, following it feels good and it has only led me to good things, but I'm not quite there yet, so I'm still working on that.

All right. In the last episode of the season, Episode 9, my guest was **Brit Kolo**. And Brit shared a little bit about the shifts that she has made in her business that have not yet resulted in an increase in the numbers on her spreadsheet, or your profit and loss sheet, but they've made a dramatic increase in how she would define success, which, not surprisingly, is exactly how I define success. Which is that your business is in alignment and you feel like you're doing work that matters to you and you feel good and inspired and excited and you work with amazing people and so on. So this is the perfect topic to wrap up the season because it threaded everything that we've talked about together so well.

My biggest *a-ha* in this episode was that Brit asked the question, ‘how much of your day are you really loving?’

Because we don't start businesses to feel like shit all the time. And we kind of condition ourselves into thinking that it is okay if we do because we've created our own business. And as you definitely know by now, I am not on board with that. I fully acknowledge that we are going to have hard times and big challenges and days when we are so upset that we can't even get out of bed. I legitimately thought for a few years that I might be bipolar because of the frequency of the high and low moments that I was experiencing. So I totally get it. But there's a difference between doing hard things and slogging through your life. And if any part of you, right now, feels like it's a slog and you don't have a specific and really compelling end in sight, I would like you to imagine, right now, that I am gently placing my hands on your shoulders and looking deep into your eyes and saying, “cut that shit out.”

SPARK+VICTORY

It is my mission to support entrepreneurs in living full and inspired lives to help you create a business that fuels you. Sometimes we simply need reminders and moments of radical insight. That's what this podcast is all about and that's what I try to do through my social media and email and any way that I can connect with you from afar. And sometimes we need to go deeper and really look at what we want and why we're not getting it, and that is where I really think that personal support is so essential. That's why I'm a coach and that's why I continue to build Spark Collaborative into this holistic resource that provides business owners with tools and hands-on support to create what they really, really, really want.

Again, thank you guys so much for tuning into this season of Spark and Victory podcast. It means so much to me that you're here and sharing space with me and I really hope that the wisdom shared from my guests and, hopefully, at least moments of wisdom, from myself have been helpful to you along this journey.

I invite you to come and connect with me personally on Instagram, I'm @linsbrownson, and go to the podcast website, sparkandictory.com where, of course, you can find more ways to connect with me and my company and our podcast guests and all of that great stuff.

So I'm really excited for what we have in store for next season, season two, and if you've missed any of these episodes, but my *a-ha* moments have intrigued you, I would definitely love for you to go back and check those out. All right guys, until next time.