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With Your Host

Aaron J. Jacobs

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What if you could write your own life story? How would you spend your time? What would your career or business look like? What kind of parent or partner would you be? Welcome to *Storied Life Coaching*, the only podcast that will show you how to stop living life by default, and teach you how to build a thriving business that fuels an amazing life on your terms. I'm Aaron J. Jacobs, and as a master coach and CEO of OMH Creative and Storied Coaching, I've had the privilege and opportunity to learn what it takes first hand to rewrite your own life story. It's never too late for a rewrite.

Hello, my friends. Welcome.

This week, we are going to talk about how I can help you fail even more than you are right now. Some of you might be wondering why I'm having a topic like this and it's because I'm getting some fantastic results right now by failing more often. And this is so different than the way I used to approach things. And at first, it feels so weird, but I'm getting results so much faster now in my business because of it. And I want you to know about this. I want to shout it from the rooftops. So in this episode, I'm going to teach you three key things. One why planning to fail on purpose gets you to your result faster. And show you why, number two, why the traditional pattern of avoiding failure equals slow, slower results, which almost none of us want. And number three, why and how to be a scientist to get faster results and cultivate a team atmosphere of innovation instead of perfectionism. And perfectionism just slows you down and I can tell you this as a recovering perfectionist.

So I'm right there with you. I was very hesitant to go in this direction. But we are getting fantastic results. I'm going to share those with you in just a moment. So if you want your business to start getting faster results, I'm going to show you something today and talk you through something that seems counterintuitive at first, but it's really going to help you to get what you want faster, to help you tell the story of where your business is going to go and help your customers and sell more things. So we spend so much of our time avoiding possible failure. Don't wait. If you're anything like me, you like to be able to go after things that you know are probably pretty sure and

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you're going to do well at. When you are, perhaps, even if you're working for a larger corporation, and you are meeting with your manager for the start of the quarter or halfway through the year or the beginning of the year and you're planning and you're looking at what you're going to agree are your success metrics, that's a lot of times they talk about, like, "What are the key results?" success metrics that you're going to agree to, they're gonna go towards. You usually try to stack that deck. I know I did with things that I knew that I could probably do so that, I, at the end of the year, my manager felt really good about it and so did I.

So, the, because of the way that we've been conditioned towards that anyone that's been in a situation like that, or worked in a company like that, you know that that becomes the common cultur. And so perfectionism gets amped up. People that are able to do things right on the first try are touted as heroes and people that get things wrong on the first try are usually in some way looked down as less than. And then that creates a culture of them trying to hide those mistakes so that they don't get in trouble and then it just gets less and less results and slower and slower progress for the company. Ultimately, it is a horrible cycle to get stuck in. Yet, it's everywhere. And it's so how my mindset used to be as well, because that's what I was taught that's what you're supposed to do go after the goal that might be a little bit ambitious. But don't go after the one that you're really going to have to risk and maybe figure a bunch of stuff out and fail publicly in front of people because that means you're not successful.

We are doing some stuff in our business right now where this is absolutely not the case and it's like magic. Right now we are launching a new product. It's this new, amazing course we're going to be doing. This specifically helps coaches to be able to like look and feel amazing on camera and also how to make all their content, video content, and podcast content and all their, like, social media things all in under an hour a week. And we walk them through the whole process and how it's gonna go and I'm so excited about. It's going to be great. But in doing this, we need it to start building what we call a funnel. If you're in the marketing or sales world, you're familiar with this. If you're not I'll walk through this real quick: just, at a high

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level, is, you're building a list building funnel. And so you're trying to find out who are the people that might be interested in this new program or course or product that you're building. Once you're ready to start telling it, once it's built and tested out and people and you know it's going to be great, who are the people that are going to put it in front of first? And so that work starts now-ish for us, if we're going to release it probably in early September. And so as we are putting together our list building funnel, we are looking at some different ways that people like consuming information. And we are pasting all these things together as far as you know, what leads to where, and what system and all this stuff and nurture emails and all of these things that all tick and tie together. And what's working really well for us right now is in the, is not doing what I did in the past.

What I did in the past is: I wanted to test everything out and make sure everything worked and get lots of feedback from people and all this kind of stuff before we tried it out. We started doing it. Instead of doing that this time, we are building more of the airplane in the air and what I mean by that is we are coming up with a, we're being scientists. We're putting on our, our imaginary lab coats and having our clipboards and we are saying, "Okay, we think in order to get this results, our hypothesis is that if we try this, we will get that result," and we're doing it very quickly. We're implementing right away and seeing and measuring and seeing what the result is. Now the key, here, that we're finding is not to get hung up on getting it right on the first try and being perfectionists going and, just, really being neutral by, like, a scientist and going, "Oh, the first thing we tried didn't work. What do we want? What did we learn? What do we want to try next and not to punish anybody for it, whoever's idea it was to try that thing?" Whoever's idea it might be the next thing, it doesn't matter. We're just all being scientists. And we're figuring it out together and we're not creating that culture of "You're better if you got it right on the first try." We're just going towards the result and we know that we're gonna get that result and we're gonna keep trying things until we get it, whether it's time one, or time five, or time 10, or time 100. And it's working really well for us. It's, it's allowing us to not get hung up on picking the perfect thing, and staying in an action before we start growing our business and moving towards building that list.

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Now, I've had plenty of failures in my life that have really informed where I went next. I had one in particular where I spent so much time. It was one of the first products I designed as an entrepreneur and it was when I was still a casting director and I saw this need for creating a course or a program or crash course, have something for young actors in their parents that wanted to get involved in the entertainment industry. Maybe their kid wants to do a commercial or is wanting to be on a TV show or something like that and really are, we're starting from zero, and didn't know where to start. And particularly this came about because of the fact that there are, unfortunately as there are in lots of professions, unscrupulous people that want to take advantage of people who don't know any better. And so I had heard some horror stories from, you know, friends and friends of friends, or people that came into my casting office and said, like, "Hey, we spent all this money with this service that was supposed to teach us these things and give us headshots, and do all this stuff and is supposed to make connections for us with casting directors, and they took our money and skipped town," sometimes thousands and thousands of dollars. And it just broke my heart because these kids, these kids just wanted to they wanted to try it out and they wanted to, you know, be in front of a casting director or audition and then they get taken advantage of and they have this whole horrible feeling for the whole industry.

And so I wanted to try and solve that. So, I ended up hiring a production crew. We filmed a DVD and a workbook that they'd be able to go through and parents would be able to learn how to safely what standards were in the entertainment industry: how, about getting an agent, a casting director, what auditions should be like, what's okay for people to ask money for, what's not okay, and it should be a red flag for you if they asked money for. And it was great. It felt amazing to make this product. And I thought "This is going to sell like hotcakes. There are so many people that need this. It's going to be great. I'm going to have to order so many of these" in the days of DVDs because we didn't have digital downloads at the time. And I released it and my mom bought one. I remember that day, actually. I was like, "Oh, I got a sale!" it was totally my mom. Literally my mom. That was it. No one bought it. I put all this time, all this effort into it. I tried to get

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everything right on the first try and it didn't end up working out. But I learned so much from that failure as a scientist, knowing what worked and what didn't. And one of the key lessons that now, then looking back on it, is, you know, 2020 hindsight, is: I did that all in a box where I wanted to get everything right. And maybe I asked a couple people about it, but I didn't try things out and get responses back and see what was really working, what people needed. And if it was delivered in a manner in which they wanted to consume it, I didn't do that failing faster methodology of trying it out with real people, getting feedback and adjusting as I went and *then* completing the product. So what I'm suggesting here is that, yeah, I failed at that. I've learned that you can adjust this by being a scientist and by involving your audience quicker in the process. And so, that's what I'm talking about here. So planning to fail on purpose.

Hopefully, we've covered topic number one right now. It gets you your results faster, and keeps you from being in an isolated black box where you think something's gonna work and then you release it and then it doesn't work. And then you want to go hide because you failed. It doesn't matter. It's okay. If you want the same result, what are you going to adjust and what are you going to change? Don't beat yourself up about it. If you were working with a team and all of you were involved in it, don't try to find a scapegoat. Even if you're not saying it out loud but everyone's kind of whispering like, "Wow, if Tina hadn't said that, that was the best way to do that we wouldn't be in this position," like, that's not helpful. It's not helpful at all. You're all scientists. You're all working together to get one result.

So number two: why the traditional pattern of avoiding failure is slow. So I've already talked about that a little bit but growth. Do you want slow or fast? Most people would say, like, "I want faster." Okay, which means a little more pain, right? We can go slower and on that continuum, if we're trying things out very slowly, we don't want to make mistakes. We want to be perfectionist. That timeline, it makes sense, is going to take longer because we want to go slow and want to make sure we know exactly what we're doing before we take the next step. And that's an avoiding failure at all costs and a perfectionism mindset. What I'm saying is move faster.

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Some things are gonna break and you're gonna have to try different things. And then you'll move on to the next stage with it. It gets you there faster. Also, like I talked about a little bit before, it makes your team more tentative and not risk when you have a culture of perfectionism and getting things right on the first try. Think about it: if people know that as a leader, you're going to judge them unless they have the perfect answer and get it right on the first try, they're not going to take as many risks. They're not going to try as many things that could be gold for you and your business and your product and what you're trying to do because of the fact that they are in a cover-their-own-ass mindset. They don't want to lose their job. They don't want to look bad in front of your team. They don't want you to not like them. And so they are going to put those guardrails up and keep themselves thinking very narrow with blinders on instead of exploring the different things that could be helping you in your business by doing that whole thinking outside the box and trying things out.

If they know that you're not going to punish them as a leader—and this is a very, very key part that you know, that even through the way that you have your face, when they tell you something fails, your tone of voice, what you tell them to do next afterward, and how you tell them to do that—these will all inform whether or not they're actually going to believe you that you want them to try lots of different things and that you're not going to penalize them for it and that failures okay as long as they're doing it quickly. Let's try this out. Is it working? Let's measure it. Is it working? It's not working as well as we thought. What are we going to try next? Like, as long as that is a positive thing, you want to foster that environment with your people and with your teams so are you fostering that atmosphere with the way you lead and react if someone fails. And if you are doing that, if you're modeling that behavior for them, you will notice that your people are collaborating and they're trying to think of different things that might work. And it's positive and it's fun, instead of “Oh my gosh, I hope this works. It better work because otherwise I'll look like an idiot.” It's very, it's a very delicate leadership trait to cultivate, but it can be infectious to your team and create the kind of atmosphere that you want in order to grow. And also, if you're a solopreneur and you are a team of one, I want you to identify some of the

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stories and the thoughts that you have in your own brain, whenever you try something out. Perfectionists, and it doesn't work on the first try, do you beat yourself up? Do you tell yourself you suck? Do you tell yourself you're never gonna get it right because you got it wrong on the first try or the second try or even the third try? it gets really hard after the third try, doesn't it? Because you're like, "I obviously am bad at this. I've gotten it wrong three times." Who cares? Go for number four, number five. You're probably one or two away from, at one point, it's going to work. You're gonna get the result that you want. If you stop, that's the only time you're not going to get the result that you want. If you stop, there is a way to get it done. There is a way for you to launch that product the way that you want, for you to get that business result that you want, but you have to keep trying things like a scientist. How many times when they're trying to get the formula right for something, when they're trying to do research, how they're planning for failure? It's not, they're not going to get it right maybe even the first 100 times, but they're going to get it right. They're not going to stop. That's the only time they would actually fail as a scientist is if they stopped, they stopped analyzing the data, they stopped learning from each experience, and they stopped moving forward. So that's number two: why the traditional pattern of avoiding failure equals slow.

So hopefully, I've convinced you at this point that fast is going to be better. It's going to feel counterintuitive but it's going to help you get the business results you want faster. So number three: why and how to be a scientist to get faster results and cultivate a team of atmosphere of innovation over perfectionism. I've kind of threaded this through what we've talked about so far but let's be very specific about it. Fast is being a scientist, being neutral about it, putting on your imaginary white lab coat, your clipboard, planning things out. We are doing an experiment. We're gonna see if it works. What are the metrics of success? What is the result that we're looking for? And if we're planning this component of it, for instance, if we're doing our list building funnel right now for coaches, what is the thing that is helpful to them right now that we can help them with, that they'd want to sign up for and they'd want to learn more about our course? How can we give them value right now? Well, I think it's going to be this thing. So I'm going to

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make that thing and I'm going to see if that's what they want and I'm not going to beat myself up and stay in an action and start hiding, and not, you know, pouting if it's not. It was like, "Okay, it didn't work. What did they like about it? What do they not like about it? Did they download it? Did they not download it? Okay, what else do I think that they might need right now that would give them value? Okay, let's try that and not to beat myself up about it, not to signal to the rest of my team, my designers that worked on that first thing, that we're very proud of it, not to signal to them that they did anything wrong or that I would want them to do anything different in that area. That like, hey, we tried it. It didn't work. You did a great job. Let's try the next thing, energetically moving from failure to failure to failure until you get the result that you want so fast. It's really just think of yourself and your team as scientists and create that atmosphere. We're going for the result. Our first attempt may not be the way we get there and that is okay. It's absolutely okay. No punishing team members.

This is so, so important. So the way that you talk to yourself as a leader, when you get something wrong, you really need to focus that energy out. Once you correct that for yourself, aren't beating yourself up, make sure that the rest of your team really knows that they're safe to make mistakes, to get things wrong, to try things out, to know how long you're gonna give it until you know if it's successful or not, what channels you're going to distribute it in, what you're going to do, then measure results. If it's not what you wanted, what was working? Were there any components, any learnings there that you could take from it that you can take with us six little small successes to the next experiment? And then you can fine tune. Maybe one thing and the next experiment, and then see if that helps it or did it not help it? Okay, now, let's move on to the next one.

So really thinking about this as your approach is going to help you to grow your business faster. This is also a fantastic way to approach you working in a larger corporate environment. If you are clear with your manager, clear with your team that, like, you want to try this thing, and you want to measure it, and this is how you would see it being a success and if it doesn't work, this is what you want to try next. Really start to set their brain

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up for it being normal that you're going to try different things and that you are holding yourself to the standard of getting the results, but that you aren't holding yourself to getting it right on the first try. And being a perfectionist, it's amazing how when you start to lead the conversation with that attitude, that you're setting yourself up for success, and that other people know that that's normalized now. And it's kind of contagious, like, that's on with the rest of the team, which is fantastic. It helps with team morale.

So that's what I wanted to tell you about today, about really setting your mind for failing more often and to get out of that being a dirty word. Failure is not a dirty word, if you are planning for it, and you have the result in mind that you want and you're being a scientist and learning from it. Fail faster, fail more often, and get to your result faster.

Alright my friends, go out there, use this to your advantage however you can, and I will talk to you next week. Bye, for now.

Thanks for listening to *Storied Life Coaching with Aaron J. Jacobs*. If you want more information or resources from the podcast, visit us at storiedcoaching.com.