

Podcast Episode #014

A Huge Obsession that Blocks Your Progress and How to Stop it

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Announcer: Welcome to the Lift Off Project with Coach Pamela.

Pamela: Hi, and welcome to The LiftOff Project. I'm Pamela Mitchell, your host and your coach, and this is the podcast devoted to helping you meld your professional self and your personal self into an enhanced version of your best self. My goal is to help you take control of your work and your life, feel more relaxed and confident, and experience the satisfaction and fulfillment of a sustainable, successful life.

Lots of great stuff for you today. In Tales from the Coaching Front, we talk about a huge obsession that blocks your progress and how to stop it, so those things you think might be hindering you may not actually be. In Ask Coach Pamela, I answer a question from Gloria, who wants resources for how to interview better. Let's dive in and get this show started.

Announcer: And now, it's Tales from the Coaching Front.

Pamela: I have a client who is writing a book, and having written my own book, I know what a long, drawn-out process this can be, and she's been working on it for a while. It's really a huge thing. It can feel sometimes very overwhelming. We spent a long time talking about her book, and she's in the proposal stage now where she's outlining things. In this particular session, she came in with some other concerns. She was worried about how she was going to pitch an agent. This seemed like a big, big thing like, "What am I going to do? How am I going to pitch an agent?"

Then the other thing that she was concerned about was how she was going to build a website and also a Twitter following. We were talking about these things and I was suggesting to her concerning her website that there were lots of resources that could be brought to bear on that particular issue and that the same was true for building a Twitter following. In fact, I knew somebody great who could do that for her, but it didn't matter all the solutions that I brought up to her. It didn't really help her feel like she could move forward knowing that those problems could be solved.



Every issue she would bring up, I would say to her, "You know, actually, there are resources that can help you do that and when we get there, we can figure that one out," but somehow that wasn't enough. She was still really concerned about feeling like, "Oh, my God, I just don't know, and until I know what I'm going to do about that, I'm stuck." That was the refrain, "I'm stuck because I don't know." Even if I would give her a more specific suggestion like, "I know somebody that can help you with your Twitter following, and I actually know some resources online that can help you find a really good developer for a website," it still didn't matter. "Well, how am I going to pitch?"

Finally, what I said to her is, "What you're doing is you're having all these abstract assumption-filled conversations about issues that really aren't here today. What I call that is the what-do-I-wear-to-the-Oscars conversation. This is it. You're worried about what you're going to wear to the Oscars, but you don't have an invitation to the Oscar's today, so it becomes a big abstract thing about what you're going to wear.

"You got to take action today on the things that are in front of you today. If you feel stuck because you don't know what you're going to do about those things in the future, then you can't move forward. This obsession that you have about what you're going to do down the road is actually blocking you from making progress. How to stop it is to do the thing that's right in front of you today, which is to finish the proposal." This became my refrain, "You know what? Finish the proposal and then we'll deal with it. Finish the proposal."

Eventually, it started to get through to her. This is the thing: when we're obsessed with all these future situations that might be happening, we can really get hung up, and sometimes it's very insidious. We don't even know that this is happening. We're thinking, "Well, I've got this problem to solve and I've got this problem to solve," and it just feels like an avalanche of issues that we don't know what we're going to do about. Then, all of a sudden, we're being sucked in like we're in quicksand and all of a sudden, our momentum starts to drain out.

When you find that happening to you, my lovely LiftOff listener, what you want to do is take a step back and analyze, "Am I worrying about situations that aren't actually here today? Are there things that I can be doing today to move myself forward?" This is how you break that obsession. You look at, "What's the next step for me to do in this moment?" You ask yourself a really tough question, "Does it matter what I'm going to do down the road if I don't take this step today? Will I even get there if I don't take this step today?"

If the answer is, "No," then you know what you have to do. Whatever it is in front of you, whether it be like my client finishing her proposal, whether it be something that you want to accomplish, if your big goal is to be fit and you're worried about how you're going to do a triathlon but today you just need to get to the gym, then don't spend time obsessing about, "Oh, my gosh, I don't know what I'm going to do." Just do the thing that's here today. Just show up at the gym and take every step that's in front of you to take,



because the only way that you have a shot at celebrating success in the future is by taking action on the next step that's in front of you today.

Announcer: That's it for Tales from the Coaching Front. Now, on to our next segment. Got a question? She's got your answer. It's time for Ask Coach Pamela.

Pamela: Today's Ask Coach Pamela is actually a written question that I received. I'm going to read it to you in just a sec, but before I dive into this, I just want to say for those of you who are thinking, "Oh, good, I can write her a question instead of leaving her a voice mail." No, that is not the case. This question came in actually before the podcast launched, so I'm going to be reading it. In general, if you have a question, then leave me a voice mail at liftoffproject.com/question. That's the way that you get the free deck of reinvention cards, so don't think that you can just send me an e-mail and, "Oh, if she reads my question, I'll get the cards." Nope. I may use your question, but the only way to get the cards is if you call and leave me a voice mail!

Okay, done with the public service announcement on how to get your free cards and onto the question that I received.

"Dear Ms. Mitchell, I am looking for interview information. I have read about the importance of going to an interview to sell yourself and not just to be interviewed. I am looking for more in-depth information on this type of job interviewing. Could you suggest some resources, i.e., print and/or online on the subject? Thank you in advance for your assistance. Gloria."

Okay, Gloria, if you are listening, this is the answer to your question. Here's the thing. I'm kind of counterintuitive when it comes to the typical job-search thing. If you've read my book "The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention" you know that I just say that there are a ton of resources out there and I generally don't go into any kind of detail about the specific, typical ones. Basically, you can just go onto Amazon, do a search, look at the ones that get good reviews, and follow it from that. I tend to like to give people resources that give them a more unusual edge, so that's going to be the way that I'm answering your question today.

I'm going to recommend a book to you, but it's not a typical book about job interviewing. It's one that's going to help you repackage yourself and put yourself out there in a very appealing way. Before you dive into that book recommendation, I'm making a couple of assumptions that you've already taken a few steps for your job interviews. The first thing is that you've listed your accomplishments. You actually have gone through what you've already done in the past and you've written down all of those accomplishments from your previous positions.

Then the second thing that I'm assuming you've already done in advance is that you've identified the skills and talents that are needed to deliver those accomplishments so that you've actually gone beyond just listing the tasks that you've completed and you've



identified what kind of talents were necessary to do the work. That's a very important piece that you want to have done in advance so that you know what you're pitching.

It can't be that you've just actually done a task, but here are the skills that I'm using, because that's the key for reinvention: your skills and talents can be applied in multiple ways. For example, if you have a really good skill in writing, that can be applied in grant-writing or it can be applied in corporate communications or you can become a blogger, even a legal assistant. The good writing skill can be applied to multiple areas. You want to think about your skills and talents.

The third thing that you want to have done in advance is you want to focus on the key goals of the job that you're pitching yourself for, not just the tasks. Oftentimes, this requires reading the job posting in a little bit more depth and thinking about not just the list that they've given me about what I'm going to have to do, but what's the ultimate goal of this job. If it's an administrative assistant job, perhaps the ultimate goal is to help things run more efficiently and smoothly, to streamline tasks; or if it's a job that brings in business, a business development job, then the goal is to increase revenue. If it's a marketing job, then the goal is to become more known in the target market. Whatever it is beyond just the tasks, you want to know what's going to be measured as success for this job so that you can then begin to speak to that.

Then the fourth step is that you want to be very clear on how your skills and talents will help the employer reach their goals. This is where you draw it all together and you say, "Okay, I haven't just done these things, but here are the skills and talents that I have and here's how I can apply them in a way that helps you reach your goals." Once you've done all of that, then what I recommend is a really great book called "Good in a Room" by an author named Stephanie Palmer. Stephanie comes from the world of Hollywood, and this book is about pitching in high-stakes situations. I love this book. In fact, I've talked about it for years. I may even have to have her here on the podcast because it is such a great book.

Basically, what she does in this book is she takes the best of Hollywood pitch practices and helps you apply them in your own personal situations, from looking at teasers, which are little short snippets that are designed to pique interest, and trailers, which are really highlights which are designed to create desire, and how in Hollywood it's all about building relationships versus networking. It's not just about meeting a bunch of people and pitching yourself out there. It's really about nurturing relationships. This book really will help you craft a pitch that positions you in a very powerful light. This is the edge.

After you've read, Gloria, all these typical books about job interviewing, after you've done the four steps that I've said, go pick up this book and then take yourself to the next level. Come up with your teaser, come up with your trailer, look at how you can nurture some relationships to put yourself in front of key influencers. With all of that then, Gloria, I wish you the best of luck landing your pitch to get the job that you seek.



That's it for this segment of The LiftOff Project. Be sure to visit our website, theliftoffproject.com/podcast where you can download a transcript of today's episode. If you have a question for an upcoming segment of Ask Coach Pamela, go to theliftoffproject.com/question and leave me a voice mail. If I answer your question in a future episode, I'll send you a free deck of reinvention cards as a gift, so, yeah, get on over there and leave me a question!

You can also connect with me on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @thecoachpamela. If you enjoyed this episode, please leave a review for us on iTunes. Your feedback truly does make a difference.

Today's LiftOff inspiration comes from Napoleon Hill, who says, "Start where you stand and work with whatever tools you have at your command." Get started, move forward towards your goals. Do not let the future stuff stop you.

Thank you for listening today, and remember, why settle for good when great is waiting? Take one small step this week to lift your life. Bye for now.

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