

Podcast Episode #010

Three Sure Fire Ways to Unlock Your Personal Power

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Announcer: Welcome to the Liftoff Project with Coach Pamela.

Pamela: Hi, and welcome to The Liftoff Project. I am 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 good stuff on tap for you today. In Tales from the Coaching Front, I talk about three sure-fire ways to unlock your personal power. It all begins with permission, but something unique about permission. In 'Ask Coach Pamela' I answer a question from Sandy who is wondering how to handle fear when you have a big decision to make, so good advice on that front as well. Lots of stuff as I said on tap for you today, so let's get this show started.

Announcer: Now it's Tales from the Coaching Front.

Pamela: Recently I was having a conversation with a client about the topic of permission. Usually when we talk about permission, it's because we need to give ourselves permission to be who we are. That's a good thing. Being honest, being true about our desires, our feelings, and putting that out in the world is definitely how we want to show up. It's important to be authentic to our preferences, it's healthy to be truthful about all that, and so that is usually where we're working in coaching sessions.

However, there is a flipside to permission as well. The flipside of that is being authentic and being okay with who we aren't. With my client, for example, it came up when she was looking at a colleague who had a very unique way of staying in contact with her clients. My client was looking at this and saying, "Gosh, I wish I could do that." I knew



exactly how she felt because I often felt that same way in my own business. I would look at my colleagues and the thing in my field is to send out these long chatty email newsletters, and I would wish I was that person that could send out those email newsletters. I would do it, I would get all fired up, then basically I would fail. After maybe a month or so, I'd just stop doing it.

I would always think, "Oh, gosh, I wish I were that person." I would try to force myself into that box, so I knew exactly how my client felt when looking at her colleague and wishing that she could be the way that her colleague was. However, in this situation, what I talked to my client about was giving herself permission to be who she isn't. Just as much as we know who we are, we also have to know who we aren't, and give ourselves space to be who we aren't.

As I told my client, in my case I just needed to say, "All right, I am not that person who is going to be writing long chatty email newsletters, but I do love to have conversations. I need to build a mechanism for staying in touch with my community that fits who I truly am." This is why you guys are listening to this podcast now because that's much more in line with who I am.

I encouraged my client to figure out a way that she could stay in touch that fit her personality as well. That was the first step in all of this. To unlock her personal power was not to expect herself, and I'm advising you not to expect yourself, to master all skills. If you're not great at something, it's okay to compensate, it's okay to figure out a different way around it, but it starts with giving yourself permission to just say, "I am not that person."

The second thing that you want to do is that sometimes there are cases where you really do maybe need to try and develop a skill set, but what you want to do is you want to evaluate the amount of time that it's going to take you to master that skill set versus the return on investment. If you don't have a natural talent for something, is it worth the work?

I had a different client who was faced with this situation. She had gotten promoted to a C-level position in her company, and at that level it was important to be able to play golf. Now she did play golf, but she hadn't spent a lot of time at it, it wasn't a natural talent, and she didn't have a natural passion for it. But in her new position, in her field, she recognized that it was very important to play golf. In that case it was actually worth the investment to try and develop that skill set because there was going to be some payoff to it. Sometimes we make that analysis and we realize that there really isn't a huge payoff for the amount of time it would take for us to try and master a skill set that's not naturally within our wheelhouse, so you definitely want to make that assessment.



The third piece of this is to focus on your unique talents. Now the world says, “Hey, focus and do what you’re good at,” but there is another piece of this that you really want to be aware of: when you focus on your unique talents, you are sitting in your chair and by doing that you leave room for someone else’s chair, so you don’t try to sit in their chair. The great thing about this is that by doing this the world works beautifully.

My favorite example of this is in a home design project that I had. I have a really dear friend who is a wonderful interior designer and we were discussing what to do with a wall in my place. She said, “Why don’t you stencil it?” I said, “That’s a great idea. I would love to have a stencil.” We picked out a stencil and she said, “It’s really easy to do, you should just go ahead and do it.” I thought about it for about a minute, and I was like, “Okay, I don’t think I’m the person to be stenciling.” She said, “No, no, no, it’s easy, just do it, just do it.”

Even though I love all these home design things, I read the blogs, I watch HGTV, in my fantasies I’m that person, in reality I had to recognize: I’m the girl that goes out to the hardware store, buys all the paint, gets all fired up and then it sits there for months on end. Once I admitted that I was not going to be the person who was going to do this to the level that I wanted it done, I went on Craigslist and I found this amazing decorative painter. He came over, he and his wife, and they did a beautiful job. They did such a great job, I had them do walls in my bedroom as well.

That was my big lesson, and this is the lesson I want to leave with you. By focusing on my unique talents, by doing my work, I could turn around and hire him to do his unique talents. He loved it, it was gorgeous, and everybody is happy. That’s what you want to do in those situations. Just remember that you are leaving space for someone else. If there is a part of you that still feels like, “God, I really wish I were that person,” then you can take this little saying that I say to myself when I start thinking, “I really wish I had that skill!” What I say to myself is, “Okay, in my next lifetime I’ll have that skill.”

That’s it for Tales from the Coaching Front, and now on to our next segment.

Announcer: Got a question? She has got your answer. It’s time for Ask Coach Pamela.

Pamela: We are back with my favorite segment. Today we have a question from Sandy who has a big decision to make in her business and is wondering how to handle the fear that wants to sit in the driver’s seat and make the decision for her. Let’s hear what she has to say.



Sandy: Hi, Coach Pamela. This is Sandy from Wisconsin. I'm a flower farmer and I'm wondering if I should expand my business and hire extra help or stay small and continue working with just one employee. There is room in the industry to grow. Of course, growing bigger means more resources. This question is about when we have important decisions to make. Sometimes it's better to listen to our hearts, and sometimes it's better to listen to our logical heads. But then sometimes this little guy we'll name Fear wants in on the decision-making process. How can we tell when fear has made our decision rather than our hearts or our heads? Thank you, Coach Pamela, for your podcast. I love it. Bye.

Pamela: Hi, Sandy. Thanks so much for a really great question. So many of us feel fear, it is just a natural part of the reinvention process whether that reinvention involves making a change, or in your case, expanding into something new, like a bigger vision, a bigger playing field than what you're already doing. Understand that even though fear wants in at the table, that's actually pretty normal given what's going on. Fear is a healthy sign that you are moving beyond your comfort zone. It's not surprising that it wants in on the decision-making process because any time we decide that we want more, any time we decide we are going to do something different, fear will be knocking at our door.

In my book, *The 10 Laws of Career Reinvention*, I actually talk about this whole thing around fear because what's really important to understand is the difference between functional fears and false fears. Functional fears are ones that come up in response to a situation that exists today. It requires you to take action in this moment to forestall a negative outcome. In your case if it were, today I want to expand my flower farm. Should I hire extra help? This very moment, maybe you've got a certain amount of cash flow, but you are worried about how to bring on the cash flow for the next person. If that's an issue today, then that's a functional fear.

Functional fears are really important because what they do is they help us forestall potential negative situations, and they force us to figure out what we are going to do in this moment. Are you in danger in this moment? If you are, then it's time to brainstorm some solutions for how you can solve that issue. Maybe stepping up and saying, "All right, let me figure out how I can do a barter deal or maybe there is an intern that wants to come in." That kind of functional fear is useful because it sparks our creativity.

Now there is a different kind of fear, and those are false fears. False fears are when our minds go to potential negative outcomes that may or may not happen in the distant future. In this particular situation, a false fear might be, "I've got the funds to hire somebody, but what if down the road I don't have that or the money runs out or flowers



don't sell." Those are false fears because there is no danger today. It's not imminently happening today.

Why it's so critical to understand the distinction between functional fears and false fears is that false fears are endless. We can come up with all kinds of situations that may or may not happen, and when we do that we end up paralyzing ourselves. The worst thing about that paralysis is that it happens for something that isn't even real in this moment. It's critical to be able to distinguish between your functional fears and your false fears because the worst thing is to kill our dreams for something that, quote unquote, "might happen."

If there is a functional fear, look at it, come up with some solutions to solve it today, and move forward. If it's a false fear, what might happen in the future? Understand that you don't actually need to get over fear in order to move forward, you just need to take action in spite of it. This is an important take away for this because those types of false fears will continue to plague us when we are embarking on a reinvention path, when we are expanding into the things that we want. If we promise ourselves that we will continue to move forward despite having those fears knocking at our door, despite the fact that fear wants to sit at our table, then we know we are on the path to our dreams.

In those moments where you're wondering whether or not this is the right pathway for you, one technique that I always recommend to my clients is to ask their future selves what they wish would happen. Envision yourself down the road having the life that you love, that you most desire, that is your biggest dream, that you are living whatever it is that you want. Say it's a huge flower farm and it's all beautiful and it's making a difference in the world and you are getting to do cool, great things, and imagine yourself going in and sitting down with your future you and saying, "Hi, Sandy, I'm here at this moment and it's a turning point and I'm wondering what advice you have for me in this moment?" And ask future Sandy what she has to say to you.

When we ask our future selves what we need to know in this moment, it's really enlightening. She will tell you what she thinks for the you in this moment. Many times that is the thing that breaks that logjam and gives us the fortitude to continue moving forward into that big dream, that big future that's waiting for us if we can take action despite the fact that we're feeling fear.

That's it for this week's segment of The Liff Project. Be sure to visit our website, TheLiffProject.com/podcast where you can download a transcript of today's episode and see all that great advice in writing. If you have a question for an upcoming segment of Ask Coach Pamela, go to TheLiffProject.com/question and leave me a voicemail. If I answer your question in a future episode, I will send you a free deck of reinvention cards as a gift, so get on over there, leave me a voicemail with 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 Chris Evert who says, "You've got to take the initiative and play your game." Remember that. Give yourself permission to be who you aren't and play your own game.

Thanks 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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