

Ep #2: Same-Page Leadership



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With Your Host

Ellie Frey Zagel

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Hello and welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*, episode two.

Welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. A podcast for multigenerational family business leaders who want to become the leader they were meant to be. If you're ready to learn how to develop your own authentic leadership style, successfully lead your family business and create your own lasting legacy while still honoring theirs this is the podcast for you. I'm your host, Ellie Frey Zagel, family business leadership coach and third-generation family business leader. Let's get to it.

Hello and welcome to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*, episode two. Today we're talking about leading together. So, some of you work together with your significant other. You may also work with a parent or another family member, could be a sibling, could be an uncle, grandparent. And today I want to talk about a concept that I created called Same-Page Leadership.

I work with several couples who work together. And what was happening is they were bringing work home with them. And so work was blending into family life and their parenting. In this case my clients also have kids and were expressing to me some dissatisfaction with this arrangement like basically I want my spouse back. I don't want to argue all the time about work. I just want to have a relationship. There's a reason that I got married. I want that relationship back.

So there's no one else you would want to start a business with, no one else you'd rather grow a business with than your significant other or a family member. I mean this is a person that often you trust more than anybody else. You know exactly where they're coming from. You know them at such a deep level. Somebody who is not family, somebody who's not your significant other you just don't know them in the same way, you don't have that same trust.

But as a business grows or if you walk into a situation like what many of my clients are facing now where the business environment is pretty volatile there's going to be a lot of overwhelm. There's going to be a lot of I've

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never done this before type of mentality. And the stress and the fear that comes along with that is real.

So today what I want to talk about is when you are constantly feeling like you are not on the same page as your significant other and it's starting to affect your relationship within and outside of the business. I wanted to share a framework with you to help you get and stay on the same page as your, I'm just going to say significant other. But it could be, I mean really honestly it could be anybody, your business partner. What I mean by on the same page is in agreement with or aligned with.

My clients share with me just these arguments that they have over one thing or the next. And they have this argument over, and over, and over again until finally they're like, "I can't have this argument anymore, we're just not on the same page. I just don't even want to deal with it. I love my significant other. I just don't want to fight with them anymore about this. We're just we can't get on the same page."

And what I want to share with you is that the awareness that you have that you aren't on the same page is actually the first step to solving the problem and the first step to getting on the same page. And that's the first step of Same-Page Leadership is to create that awareness that you're not on the same page. Once you have that awareness you have the opportunity to stop, take inventory, if you will, and do something different. Now, to back up a little bit it's also really helpful to recognize a couple of things or a few things rather.

One, my clients really truly believe everything is better when they and their significant other are on the same page. So as I mentioned I coach both the husband wife, one family business are second generation. And then I coach a wife who works with her husband who is first generation.

And I coach some other family business leaders who also work with their significant other in more of a family enterprise context. And they all tell me, and I know this from personal experience, everything is better when I am on the same page as my husband. Or I work with my cousin, everything is

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better when she and I are on the same page when it comes to leading the Fry Foundation.

The second thing to recognize is so often we're not on the same page. We're not even on the same book. She's reading this iPad; I've got an old paperback. We're not even close. And we'll talk a little bit about that in a second. But recognizing or even thinking or believing that you are closer in agreement than you realize.

And then third, it's also really helpful to recognize what hat are you wearing in this argument, in this discussion? Hopefully it hasn't evolved into an argument yet in this discussion. And I'll give you an example in a second. So what hat that you're wearing and I'll do a podcast on this. In the future but for instance the hat that you're wearing, are you a mom? Are you a CEO? Are you a wife? What hat are you wearing in this discussion?

And both of you identifying that hat will help you stay in control of the conversation versus just being like, "We're not in the same agreement, we're not in the same page. We are not in agreement and everything is a mess", which is not helpful to think. We've all been there. It's not helpful to think that everything is a mess. We can't get on the same page. We can't be in agreement. And suddenly you're thinking that's confusing because are you speaking as everything's a mess in your marriage, everything's a mess in the business, everything's a mess as a parent, everything's a mess?

What actually are you talking about? What hat are you wearing? So I think that everything is better when you and your significant other are on the same page. Hopefully that is pretty self-explanatory. If it's not I want to hear from you, definitely email me. But assuming that that's pretty self-explanatory I really would like to start with the second one which is you're almost always closer in agreement than not.

It doesn't have to be the case that you are like throw up your hands after you're having an argument, while you're having an argument with your significant other. You feel frustrated, angry, a little bit hopeless. This doesn't have to be the case. So determining what you do agree on before

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you discuss what you don't will help you see the gap between what you do agree on and what you're actually arguing about. It's way easier to focus on and solve for that small thing that you don't agree on. And then you can schedule time to solve for that gap.

So let me give you an example because I'm hoping that I'm making some sense. But I want to make sure that I'm really clear. So this is an anecdotal example but I'm using the example as if it's coming from my husband and I. So I want to grow and expand the company. My husband and I are not on the same page with this. He wants to grow slowly and organically. I want to go. I've got big dreams, let's do this already, let's go, go, go. He is just like, "What's the rush? It'll happen, got the rest of our lives."

So in the past we may argue about this vision that I have for the company over and over again. And it would just lead to a lot of frustration. And now what's happening is we just avoid the conversation. I still have this vision, he still has his vision. They're not aligned. And instead of talking about it, instead of kind of creating a plan we just ignore it. And so things are staying status quo which neither of us really like. It just doesn't feel very good. He does want to grow organically but he still does want to do some planning. He just doesn't want to have the rapid growth that he thinks that I want.

So I am getting more and more frustrated. So here is the framework that I work on both my husband and I but also with my clients. So the first step as I've already mentioned is to stop, take a breath, realize that he and I are not on the same page. And I think it's also realizing that everything is better when we are on the same page. And then have this desire to get on the same page, get aligned, get in some sort of agreement together.

So the second step is spending a few minutes identifying for myself where he and I are actually aligned, where he and I are actually on the same page. For instance in this example about growth we both love the business. We both want to serve our clients to the best of our ability. We want to have a healthy business. And we do want the business to grow.

So the third step as you can imagine is to identify what we're actually arguing about, the problem we're actually trying to solve. The only place we

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are not on the same page is the rate of growth. I want to grow quickly. He wants to grow slowly.

So the fourth step now that we've identified that the only place that we're really not aligned is the rate of growth. We're going to start solving the problem together through curiosity which means we're not dropping our desires we're just kind of putting them aside so we can get to work. We're going to ask a bunch of questions. We're going to listen to each other as we determine why do you want to grow slowly? And he may ask me, "Okay, why do you want to grow quickly?" And we can get our thoughts out on paper, or on the computer, or in a notebook, or just in conversation.

We're not making a decision right now. We're just getting it out and listening to the other and then writing down all the obstacles standing in the way from making a decision or at least moving forward, and then creating strategies to solve the obstacles standing in the way. So for instance in my example an obstacle for massive growth is time management, my husband might think I don't have time to grow this business as rapidly as you do, Ellie. I am overwhelmed as it is. I just don't have time in my schedule to do what you want to do.

Okay, so now we're getting out some of his thoughts and fears about growing the business massively. This is good because now we can solve for that. Now he can really start to get curious about his time. Is that true, he doesn't really have time to grow? Maybe you solve it through really analyzing his calendar. He could analyze his calendar, asking questions like, "How much time is it actually going to take?" Getting some coaching on productivity or taking a class.

Hiring somebody to help, delegating, stop doing a whole bunch of things to free up time, maybe coming up with a mindset that actually we all have more time than we realize. So I know this is a very simplistic example but what we're trying to do is we're trying to identify the obstacles that are standing in our way from going where we want to go. In this case in this podcast it's really going, like figuring out how to be on the same page with

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my significant other because magical things happen when we're on the same page.

One obstacle for massive growth is time management. Another could be this fear of failure. I'm scared to take the risk. I'm scared to lose all of our money. And if that is the thought, we're going to lose all of our money if we grow this rapidly. Now we can start to create a plan how we don't lose all the money or we get aligned on what is an acceptable amount of risk to grow. So you're identifying where else within the rate of growth, where you're not on the same page that you're continuing to not be on the same page and you're solving for that.

So getting curious, it's like you're a consultant, you're going to put your own goals aside and you're just going to identify the obstacles standing in your way on both sides. So I might say, "I don't want to grow slow because I'm a certain age and I'd really like to get to a certain dollar amount by a certain age." I don't know. I want to be a multimillionaire by 50. And slow and organic is just not going to do it. Or if money isn't it, it could be I want to serve a certain number of people.

Or I'm so compelled to get what's inside of me out, share my message with as many people as possible because it's life changing. So now we can solve for that. So now my husband can hear me when I say, "I just have this inside me, I need to get it out." And now we can solve for getting out my message to more people, or we can solve for making the money that I want that's my goal by the age of 50. Do you see where I'm going here?

Most of my clients, once they realize that they are actually more on the same page than not, the anger just goes away, the conversation becomes more neutral if you will, factual, more relaxed. There's just less fighting. And the result of all of this is you get on the same page even as you're doing this work to get on the same page. It's such a beautiful thing. By getting curious, by solving obstacles together, by asking each other questions, by listening to the answers it's so beautiful.

And just that experience alone is going to strengthen the trust that you have for each other in this particular conversation. And then the last is to

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create time to determine your small next step forward. You may not create that decision, you may not decide in this example that we're going to have massive growth and what that looks like. Your next decision may, we're going to meet on Thursday at 5 o'clock for dinner and we're going to talk about this again. And this is what our agenda's going to look like.

What I would encourage you to do especially if you're arguing a lot about something is just to move things forward in very small increments, but you're still moving them forward. Sometimes the way that you're moving forward is just having this conversation. "Hey babes, we're not on the same page, I'd love to get on the same page with you. Everything is magical when you and I are on the same page. I'd really like to have this conversation with you." Sometimes that's all it takes. That is your next step forward.

Alright, if this is something you struggle with. I will be diving into this topic, this getting on the same page, the same page of leadership more and more in the upcoming months. I just really believe especially when I work in family businesses that a lot of time is wasted by not talking about things because you don't think that you're on the same page and you don't want to argue, because you truly love your significant other, you truly love your family member. You don't want to fight with them again, maybe you do but most of us don't, and so you just avoid the topic.

And I think that you're really doing a disservice to not only your relationship, also to the business and to your goals. In the meantime a few resources I want to share with you and you can find them in the show notes is a book called Questions for Couples Journal by Maggie Reyes.

And Maggie I've had on the podcast before, in fact there's also a link to Getting on the Same Page as Your Spouse at Work with Maggie Reyes. She is a marriage coach extraordinaire. She is amazing. I would definitely check out everything that she does. Again her information can be found on the show notes.

I would encourage you to not only pick up her book Questions for Couples Journal, it's a book that you and your significant other can do together. But

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also check out our podcast. I invite you to listen to our podcast, Getting on the Same Page as Your Spouse at Work. She is brilliant.

I just listened to The Life Coach School podcast with Brooke Castillo. Her episode on entrepreneur couples was amazing. These are coaching couples but they're all entrepreneurs who work together. These are couples who work together. And I know that if you work with your significant other there are going to be a lot of similarities like yes, okay. I think she has four couples. And the couples that she has on kind of share with you why they decided to work together and some of the issues that they had to overcome.

Last but not least, I have created *The Family Business Leader Mastermind* for one of the reasons is I work with a lot of couples. And I wanted them to meet other couples who are grappling with some of the same things on working together. So if you and your significant other would benefit from a mastermind, email me at ellie@successfulgenerations.com to learn more about the mastermind or check out the website successfulgenerations.com and you can find more information there.

Alright my friends, I hope you enjoyed this episode about leading together and how to get on the same page, a very simple basically five step framework. And I look forward to talking with you soon. Alright, have a great week.

Well, there you have it. Thank you so much for listening to *The Family Business Leader Podcast*. If you've enjoyed today's episode, be sure to share it with someone who needs it. If you'd like more information about family business leadership development, please visit successfulgenerations.com. I can't wait to connect with you again next week, until then.