

Ep #21: The Ripple Effect in Decision Making



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Ellie Frey Zagel

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Hi, this is episode 21 and today we're talking about the ripple effect when you're not making decisions. Enjoy.

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.

Hey, all, how are you? Today I want to talk a little bit about making decisions. I was recently on my way to the horse barn, some of you may know that I've taken up dressage riding and it's very, very fun. And I was really thinking about decision making and the ripple effect of being in indecision. So let me give you the scenario that I was thinking about just to give it some context.

There is this woman who owns a horse at my barn, I'm going to use a horse example. And she asked for my, the barn owner and my trainer to sell the horse. And that was her decision that she made. She was like, "I would like you to sell the horse." And so that trainer, the barn owner went out and sold the horse, basically got an offer. And then the owner of the horse waffled. "Maybe I should lease the horse. Maybe I don't want to sell the horse. Maybe I need more money for the horse."

So she made a decision and now she's second guessing her decision. And so here is what happened. The horse stayed in the barn even though the owner of the barn said that she could only be in the barn for a very short period of time, until the horse was sold basically. Well, the horse has not been sold yet because the owner is in indecision. So meanwhile another horse which happens to be the one that I'm going to be leasing is slated to come into the barn and can't because there isn't a stall.

So that horse, Chanel, we call my horse, Chanel, is at another barn. But because of this indecision whether or not to sell the horse, Chanel is in a stall that actually is needed for a horse in Europe. So somebody's having a

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horse come in from Europe, I know this is very fancy schmancy, and can't do that because my horse, Chanel, is in her stall. And Chanel can't move because this horse has not been sold yet because this owner cannot make a decision on what she wants to do with the horse.

Then what I just found out is that there is actually the woman who is selling the horse in Europe has another horse coming in. And she can't have that horse come into her barn until this horse is sold and brought to the United States. So now this seemingly simple indecision is now an international affair, international issue. Because who knows on the other side of that European, the woman who's bringing in the horse, who knows how far this ripple extends?

And I have to tell you, when I started thinking about this, I was blown away. I was just like, "I have never thought about that." Usually when I think about my decisions I think of them in terms of my clients, how these affect my clients, or how they affect my family, how this will affect me. I don't think about it any farther than that, and I'm pretty sure, nor did this horse owner. I didn't and she definitely didn't. So funny.

I just was thinking about that. I wanted to share that with you because where are you not making decisions? Or where have you made a decision but now you're waffling, you're second guessing yourself, coming up with ideas. Well, maybe I should do it this way. Maybe I don't want to sell. Maybe I don't want to, I don't know, where you've already gone down that path. And so now it's starting to inconvenience other people. Where is that showing up in your life?

And so I really kind of thought about this for me, where was this showing up in my life? And there are definitely places that I am not committing to my decisions. And so I got coached on this and I have kind of done my own work and just kind of want to second check my work as well as explore what I haven't thought of yet. And so I reached out to my good friend, Niall and she coached me on this. And I came up with two models. And a model is basically it's a thought, it's a mindset model to basically understand why you get the results that you get.

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And so if I was thinking that I was committing to an idea that I had but I wasn't doing anything except for shaming myself for and judging myself for not doing anything. Why was I not doing anything? Why wasn't I taking further steps? So what we really started to discover is why I was staying stuck, why I was procrastinating, why I was judging myself, why I wasn't doing anything. And maybe this sounds familiar to you. So my model included realizing that I'm going to idea, I love to come up with ideas. It's something that fuels me, it makes me feel super excited.

So I'll come up with a whole bunch of different ideas and I just I'm a child in candy shop. I get all sorts of giddy, high on sugar. So once I realized that my first step was ideating and coming up with an idea, and the thought that I had about that idea is usually something like, that's fun. Let's see what we can do with this. And you can tell even by my voice that I'm excited about that, whatever idea I came up with.

Let's says it's an event, I have an idea for an event. This is a real life example. So I have an idea for an event and I'm super excited about this event. And so when I'm super excited about it, I am going to create a plan, I'm going to ideate some more. I'm like, "How can I make this happen? Where can I make this happen? What do I want to teach?" I'm going to reach out to people. I'm like, "Hey, what do you guys think about this idea? Do you think this is as awesome as I think it is?"

And I'm just going to have some fun with thinking about this in a very abstract tentative way. I'm not creating an implementation plan. I'm not putting this on my calendar. I'm not saying this is when it's going to be. I'm not booking the space. I'm not hiring people to help me with this. I'm just really in the ideation, this is super fun, it's one of my favorite activities type of phase. And the result of that is it stays a fun idea. I'm like, "Okay, I completely see that model for myself."

If you're like me, you love to come up with ideas, that may seem very familiar and kind of staying ideas. When does it become a decision? Because the problem that I presented to my coach, Niall was when does it become a decision? I want to make a decision about this. I thought I had

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made a decision about this. I want to do this event. Isn't that a decision? And what we realized is that was just a thought for me, that wasn't a decision. I want to do this idea. I like this idea, for me doesn't create the results of making that idea into reality. It's still in the ideation phase.

I think that I've made a decision but I haven't. Because what I also realized and Niall helped me see is that I am not committed to an idea until I'm actually committed to an idea. And so getting excited about something is very different than the feeling – and that's a feeling, excitement is a feeling, is there for me, is very different than commitment. Commitment and certainty are the two emotions right now that I'm working on that actually propel me and getting some amazing things done.

So you can even hear it from my voice. When I think to myself I am going to do this, I am going to make this happen, I am committed to this. My energy drops into a very calm place. It's heavier than excitement. It just feels more certain and powerful than the excitement that I was experiencing about the idea. I am going to do this for me. The first thing that I do, is when I feel this commitment to do something is I make that decision. I'm going to do this, that's my decision.

I recently, again another horse example, I recently decided to do a 30 day challenge. This challenge would involve me to drive basically half an hour one way and back multiple times a week to work with a horse, do some training exercises and then videotape my progress, videotape, did you hear that, record my progress. And send in my progress to get judged. And I decided when I learned about this 30 day challenge. I'm like, "I'm going to do this. Done. I'm going to make this happen." You probably believe me too.

That's exactly what I did. I made the decision, I committed to the decision, these are all actions from a place of certainty and commitment. I created a plan, this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to watch the videos. I'm going to create a plan for the week, what days am I going to be at the barn, what times on those days, what I'm going to work on, on those days. I'm going to

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then schedule that on my calendar, so it's physically there. I know exactly when I'm going to work on what.

Then I'm going to communicate to everybody who needs to be communicated to, whether that's the barn owner, the owner of the horse, my lessons horse or my husband, my son, I'm not going to be here because I'm going to be at the barn at these times. I'm going to recommit if I'm feeling like I don't really want to go to the barn. No, I committed to this. I said I was going to do it. It's going to happen, let's do this. Get in the car. So I'm going to constantly coach myself and recommit. And then the result is not only is the decision made but it's done.

And that is also really powerful, kind of getting into this what my business coach, Stacey Boehman says, is like getting into done energy. It's like you can get into done energy, this is done before you even start the project. And that can be a really, really powerful place to be because it's just inevitable, you make it inevitable. I realized that there was a problem because the decisions that we make do have ripple effects. So for me, I've told people about the event that I want to have.

If I don't have the event, people are going to be looking for it, maybe even scheduling, putting some tentative plans on the calendar to do it. And if I am not fully implementing that idea I could really throw other people off in their calendars. Ellie said she was going to have a retreat in January, I'm going to keep January open because I really want to do that. And if they don't do that, that's going to really inconvenience others. Have you ever thought about that? I had not really, I mean I hadn't really thought about it to this extent.

So I also want to talk about what happens when it's not your decision to make. So we're in family business oftentimes are we are leading but we're not necessarily owning the family business. The owners, maybe parents or relatives have to make a decision, they're not making a decision and you're like, "Now what?" Do I just wait for them to make a decision?" That feels kind of like, it feels kind of powerless.

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So if we go back to my example of the barn, there are things that my barn owner and trainer can do to kind of help unclog the pipeline. So for you, you might want to think about where are the decisions not being made that's going to be wishy washy in a way, they're just not being implemented. There's a lot of indecision going on, so where is that happening?

So in this case, my trainer could go up to the owner of this horse and force the issue, "Hey, this needs to be done by this time. This is what our verbal contract said, that you're now on the outside of that contract. You need to make a decision, yes or no, are you in or out? Are you going to sell this horse or are you going to do something different?" And if you do something different then we need to move the horse elsewhere. Or you could just take the decision off the table. You do not have to sell the horse. You do not have to lease the horse. You don't have to do anything, you just can't stay here. I love you but you just can't stay here.

And by the way, and I say that, I love you, it's always fun to talk about love in – business. But you do not have to say any of these things through frustration, or anger, or betrayal. You don't have to feel negative emotions when you talk about interrupting or unclogging as I'm calling this, unclogging the pipeline.

No, listen, I understand, you're not ready to make a decision, totally fine. But I am wanting to make a decision. I do need the stall so therefore I'm going to help you and I'm going to find a barn for you and the horse needs to be out of the barn by this time. And you could also find another solution, help the person in indecision just to find another solution, whether that's maybe a new barn, change the timeline. Maybe my trainer and barn owner could figure out another stall, that's an option. This horse can stay in the stall until he is sold.

And my trainer and barn owner maybe could find another horse that can move outside to the pasture or stall can be freed up. That basically unclogs the pipeline so she's not at the effect, she doesn't feel powerless of this woman's indecision. So hopefully that made sense. Where are you feeling

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powerless when it comes to somebody else's decision or indecision? And they can make whatever decision they want to make, but what do you want to do? How do you want to show up? Are you okay with feeling powerless?

Or do you want to do something different? And can you do that from a place of neutrality, from a place of love and caring? Not a place of anger like I'm losing all this money because you're not selling the horse. Or you're not making a decision or whatever that is, not from that place. But a place of, listen, I care about you. This horse needs to be gone. I don't mean this horse needs to be gone in a negative way, we love horses. We're not suggesting anything nefarious here.

We're just using this as example of someone's indecision causing this massive, in this case, international ripple effect. And if you think about it, how are we in our indecisions creating these massive ripple effects? It's just a really fascinating thought process. And then if we are doing that, are we okay with that? Just owning it. I realize that my indecision is creating some inconvenience for a lot of people. I'm sorry, this is where I am right now. This is where I need to be, I really apologize.

Or realizing that and being like, "Okay, I do not want to inconvenience my clients. I do not want to inconvenience my family or whatever that is. I want to do something about it. I am committed to making this happen. I am going to do that." And getting yourself into that commitment model and making whatever you're hesitating on, or whatever you're second guessing yourself on, and just making that happen.

Alright, hopefully it wasn't too confusing because I talked about you making a decision. I am talking about other people having to make decisions and your role in that. If you have any questions let me know, I'd love to hear of course from you. But just your homework is, how does this show up in your life? What is the ripple effect? Are you okay with that ripple effect? And you can be, this is your life, you can totally be okay with that. But if you're not now you have a new model, a new mindset that can help you take some action. Alright my friends, have an amazing day and I'll talk to you soon.

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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.