

Ep #27: How to Grow Your Capacity for Uncertainty



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Becca Pike

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Oh my gosh you all. It is Halloween. Today, my friends. During this recording, it is October 31st. It is the perfect overcast fall spooky day here in Kentucky. We are t-minus six hours from filling my travel mug with Fireball and bourbon and apple cider and walking these streets. Letting my kids eat so much candy that they turn from sweet little boo bears into assholes right before my eyes. I cannot wait. It is going to be phenomenal.

Before I do all of the Hallows Eve shenanigans, I came here to talk to you about the role of uncertainty and how it plays in your life. Why you need it, why you should stop resisting it, and what it will look like when you do. This is episode number 27. I am your host Becca Pike. It is time for your weekly dose of Hell Yes Coaching.

Hey, guys. I'm Becca Pike and welcome to *The Hell Yes Entrepreneur* podcast, the number one show for entrepreneurs looking to create their first six-figure year. If you've got the drive and you know how to hustle but you're not sure where to channel your energy, we've got the answers. Let's dive into today's show.

Hello guys. As you know, I often have guests on this podcast, and I ask them all the same question. I ask them what quality do they think the top contributor is in successful people. So I've heard answers from grit and tenacity to willingness to fail to willingness to learn. I have finally decided on my official answer to this question, and I wanted to share it with you guys. Are you ready for it?

All right. I believe that a successful person in business has a higher capacity for uncertainty than the average person. They are more willing to sit with uncertainty and all of the shitty feelings that it brings up. Successful people are not harder workers than the middle class. They aren't working longer hours than the middle class. They aren't smarter than the middle class. But they are willing to sit with risk and uncertainty way more than the middle class.

People that are unwilling to feel uncertainty cannot grow. They will always retract and climb back into their safe space, never expanding their

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possibilities. So guys if you want to grow your business and honestly not lose your hair while you're doing it, you must expect, hold space for, and make peace with large levels of uncertainty.

Now we must admit uncertainty is obviously very uncomfortable. In fact, we are wired to stay safe. Being uncertain yields a response of fight or flight. If our ancestors were walking through the woods and heard something following them, uncertainty would be rearing its head. Am I being followed? Am I being prayed on? Am I being watched? Am I in danger? Is a tiger about to jump out? Is my husband going to drag me by my hair back to the cave because I ate his berries? All the things.

The more uncertain we are of our surroundings, the more stress we feel, right. The more we try to keep ourselves from feeling uncertain things again. So we start doing things, taking actions to protect ourselves in the future. As humans, we are no longer dealing with the same uncertainties that our ancestors dealt with, but we are still wired exactly the same.

So our brains have found new threats to occupy us. We find other uncertainties to be just as dangerous, like the uncertainty of being accepted. How will we be seen, what will be said about us, what will our families think about us? Why the fuck are we steal eating Taco Bell in our 30s? There's just so much uncertainty, right?

Guys entrepreneurship requires uncertainty for growth. So does finding love. So does learning new hobbies. So does everything that propels growth and breeds ultimately happiness, right?

Imagine someone looking for love, but they're completely unwilling to feel the effects of uncertainty. They're unwilling to sit in uncertainty. So they are not willing to put themselves out there or go on dates to meet people. They're unwilling to show someone their true authentic self because it just feels too scary. It wouldn't work out super hot, would it? They wouldn't be super successful in finding love, right?

So imagine that versus if this person said, "You know what? I'm going to sit in the uncertainty. I'm going to go on 50 dates, and I'm going to be my

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truest most authentic self. I'm going to find gratitude in each person that I date. I'm going to be open to anyone, even though uncertainty is super present. That would, of course, work much better, right. Much more successfully.

It's the same in business, okay. Being comfortable with uncertainty can only happen one way, guys. There's only one way to do it y'all. It's a practice. To get good at it, we must put ourselves in more uncertain situations. Our comfortability with uncertainty grows every time we are exposed to it, and it is a compounding effect.

Have you ever wondered how one entrepreneur can emotionally handle owning five to ten businesses with multiple millions of dollars on the line and hundreds of staff members? While other entrepreneurs emotionally break at the start of even starting their first business. The only difference between those two people is that the higher level entrepreneur allows a larger amount of uncertainty while the other one hasn't yet grown their capacity. That's it. That's the only thing.

My friends, here's the good news. So we're not just born with larger small amounts of uncertainty capacities. Some of us just have practiced courage while others have not. That's right. Courage is a practice. The very first time an entrepreneur offers their service to someone they just met, it feels super hard and scary. The second time it is less scary. The third time even less. Then by the 500th time you're not only offering to help people, but you're doing it without thinking, without even realizing that you're doing it.

So let's rewind. The first person that you want to tell and offer your services to, but you feel really scared about. With that first person, you're uncertain as to whether they will say yes or no or whether they will judge you or reject you, right? On the 500th person, those exact same possibilities are still there but your capacity to handle them has grown.

Also consider this. Growing your capacity for certainty in the right areas will grow your capacity for uncertainty. So if you can grow your capacity for certainty in the right areas, you will grow your capacity for uncertainty. So

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here's what I mean. You're going to have more allowance for uncertainty if you are certain in yourself, in your ability to figure out solutions and problem solve. Think of it like this.

If you're wanting to start a business, you have no idea if it will be well received. If you have self-trust, like you know that you are a really good problem solver, then the uncertainty won't matter as much. Because whatever problem arises, you're going to fix it, right. If your audience isn't responding, you're going to go and tweak your messaging. If your audience isn't engaging, you're going to go figure out why. If your staff isn't giving together, you're going to get in the arena and find your problem, right. You're just a problem solver.

The more that you have certainty in yourself and in your abilities, the more muted the uncertainty will be. Imagine being uncertain in yourself while starting a business versus if you knew that no matter what came your way you would just figure it out as it comes.

The possibilities for dumpster fires are still there regardless, but the difference is the trust that you have the extinguisher somewhere. You might not know where, but you're like, "I'm going to find it. I know I have this fire extinguisher. Whatever dumpster fires happen, I'm going to put them out.

I also find that playing worst case scenario in my head has been a very helpful tool for finding certainty in myself, okay. So if I'm worried about something, I ask myself what's the worst thing that could happen. Most people resist even thinking about their worst case scenarios, much less getting as detailed on exactly what it looks like as I do. Resisting the thought of what could happen brings me more anxiety.

Not only do I picture the worst case scenarios, I get very detailed on how I would handle such a thing just to test myself to see if I'm equipped for the worst case scenario. Spoiler alert, we all are. We're all equipped for the worst case scenario.

So let's say that I am feeling very uncertain about hiring an assistant. Let's say that I am worried about spending a lot of time training, and they won't

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be good enough to stay on the team. My worst case scenario with hiring someone that doesn't work out is that I'm going to waste a bunch of time hiring them and training them only to have to let them go or something like that, right?

So what I do is I list out all of the details of how I would handle the situation. I would first have a serious discussion about their performance. Am I capable of this? Yes, check. I would then retrain them. Am I capable of this? Yes, check. If this still didn't help after an extended period of time, I would let them go. Am I capable of this? Yes, check. I then calculate how much money I lost. Am I capable of this blow? It's uncomfortable, but yeah, I am. Check. I calculate how many hours it would take a new person. Am I capable of that commitment? Yes, check.

When I look at my worst case scenarios and all of the details that it would require to get through it, I remind myself of my capabilities. Everything that I'm listing I am capable of handling. I'm capable of firing, of training, of paying this money, of the emotional load it takes to say goodbye to a teammate. Of hiring and training someone new. I get detailed in order to grow my certainty within myself.

So here's a story. It's going to sound kind of weird and morbid, but I feel like it illustrates it really well okay. So a few years ago, I had a good friend. She lost her husband unexpectedly. They were young. They were in their early 30s and their kids were super young. I think like 18 months and three years old.

It sent me spiraling into how fragile life is. I noticed myself being abnormally concerned I could lose my husband. I started feeling anxiety about the possibility every time he left the house or did the stupid dangerous shit that he loves to do. To be honest, it kind of crippled me for a few months.

Until one night I had had enough. I remember it clearly. He was hopping on a plane. He was going on a super quick trip. After the fourth time that I pictured it going down, I decided I was likely going to accidentally manifest

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his death if I didn't do something about this anxiety. I was just tired of it to be honest.

So I sat down with a pen and a paper, and I asked myself. Okay Becca, what would you actually do if your husband passed away? I decided to go right into the mouth of the lion because my brain was telling me that I couldn't handle it. That's what was bringing me anxiety. I think if you look at anything in this world that's bringing you anxiety, it's that you wouldn't be able to handle it or that you don't have the tools to handle it, right?

So I started writing. I wrote for seriously like an hour and a half or two hours or something. Every single detail. Here's what I found. I found that I am capable of extreme sadness. I am capable of grief. I'm capable of anger. I'm capable of fear, of making money, of raising kids. I wrote out my whole support team. I'm capable of asking for help. I'm capable of sleeping alone.

I went to the absolute worst scenario possible, and I got detailed. I got dark too and detailed. Dark and detailed. I asked myself, "What would I actually do if this fear happened?" Guys after I did this writing exercise, my anxiety lifted completely. Literally gone overnight.

I still to this day worry about him when he says he's going to go whitewater rafting or when he's drinking beer and playing with his chainsaw. He loves woodworking and drinking beer at the same time. It's the worst. But it's a healthy worried. I am nowhere near debilitated by it. I have certainty in myself. I have certainty in the universe. I have certainty even in the worst case scenarios. The certainty helps me grow my capacity for uncertainty.

Just remember, growing this tolerance for uncertainty takes time and is a compounding effect. So let's get back to how this plays out in business, right?

So when I first started Massage Strong, I was debilitated by uncertainty. Everything was up in the air and terrifying. If you had somehow come back from the future magically and came to me back then, back when I was a solo massage therapist working for a chiropractor and dreaming of starting my own business.

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If you had came to me and said, “Hey Becca I'm a future teller. I'm from the future. In five years, you're going to have this thing built up to 35 employees and two brand new locations and pulling in seven figures while also weathering a pandemic.” My brain would have short circuited. I wouldn't have believed you because that was too uncertain for my brain to understand. It would have skipped all the baby steps that my brain would need to get from A to B.

See I had to take time to grow my tolerance. I first needed to grow my tolerance for uncertainty enough to decide that I was even going to massage school. Once I did that and got comfortable with that idea, then I had to grow my courage to tell people that I was a massage therapist for the first time.

Then once I got comfortable with that, I was able to offer to help them. Once I was comfortable with that milestone, I get it enough to rent a space of my own. After that milestone, I was able to hire people. After that it was build a new location. After that it was run two locations at once.

See guys there was like six months, eight months, a year in between these milestones because my brain was growing at a baby stepping level capacity for uncertainty. I couldn't have skipped any of those middle steps, any of those middle milestones. I couldn't have gone from choosing to go to massage school straight to handling two locations at once and managing all the people. I wasn't ready for that. I needed that compounding effect and the time it took to get comfortable with the uncertainty of each milestone.

So guys, I want you to know I get it. I don't like feeling uncertain. As I've grown these businesses, uncertainty is always there now. I don't resist it anymore. I just see that it's there. I notice it. I'm okay with it. Uncertainty is with me all the time. Certainty that I will be okay also is. You got this guys. You are capable of loads of uncertainty. Uncertainty is the key. Keep on keeping on.

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When it gets too hard, turn on some Ted Lasso, enjoy yourself some weed, and try again tomorrow. See you guys next week and happy Halloween. Bye.

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