



What's Underneath Your Fear?

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Have you ever been stopped by fear – fear of conflict, fear of taking risks or fear of failure? The problem is, it is innate for some people and holds them back from doing what it takes to get more clients and create a life and business of their dreams. You see, we're all naturally hardwired a certain way. This hardwiring impacts how we communicate, how we behave, and how we give and receive information. There are both strengths to that hardwiring and limitations. For some people, fear of conflict and risk is part of their natural hardwiring that could be hurting their business if left unmanaged.

The best way to describe how your hardwiring can be the underlying cause of your fear is learning about it through Hazel's eyes.

There once was a business owner named Hazel. Hazel shied away from conflict in her life. She didn't realize it, but she worked in fear: fear of conflict and from taking risks. She often says, "I'm afraid or concerned that this or that will happen" and spends a lot of time consumed in what others will think or say and worried about all the things that could go wrong.

Hazel lives in "what if," and tries to remove all barriers before taking action. She carefully weighs risks, and often delays decisions or takes no action because she has talked herself out of it. She works well in a team environment primarily because that team gives her safety and security she innately needs. She seeks consensus from the team especially if there are risky decisions.

Part of Hazel's natural hardwiring is her need to remove or retreat from conflict. In fact, when people are in disagreement or disagreeing with her, she will not say anything. In those situations, she walks away often with incorrect perceptions because she wants to avoid the argument. Her employees are left with unresolved feelings that only build up over time.

What To Do

What's underneath Hazel's fear is, in part, her natural hardwiring to avoid conflict as well as a fear of taking risks. This hardwiring, if left unmanaged fosters an environment of unresolved conflict, prevents her from going big with her message, and ultimately hurts her business. She often walks away from conversations because she doesn't think it would accomplish anything to debate a situation anyway. Since debating ideas, comes across as conflict, and that type of interaction is naturally draining for her, she wants to avoid it.

If you feel your blood pressure rise, your face turning red and your first instinct is to shut down and run at the first sign of what you view as conflict, you may have a bit of Hazel in you.

So how do you handle that conflict and risk taking when you're naturally wired to avoid it?

1. **Take a deep breath.** Often times when under stressful situations, your breathing shallows placing stress on the body. A deep breath gives you a second to gain some perspective and gather your thoughts.

2. Clarify Assumptions. In situations where there is conflict, your instinct is to shut down and walk away without clarifying your assumptions. Spend more time finding out why the individual feels or thinks they way they do about the situation by asking clarifying questions. Clarifying questions are open ended that require a response. They begin with words like what, who, where, when, and how.

If it's risk you're not taking and it stops you in your tracks, you need to also consider what you could gain versus what you would give up when making decisions. People who naturally want to avoid risk often will look at what they need to give up (time, money, etc.) versus what they will gain. Much of the fear for people who are naturally wired to avoid risk, is because they are going into unknown territory and that is unsettling to them. By identifying what you can gain, helps balance your assumptions.

3. Focus on the Problem or Situation Not on the People or the Personal. Resist getting into the blame game or focusing on who's right or wrong. When you focus on the problem or process that is causing the issue, it focuses the energy in developing constructive solutions.

4. Identify a Plan and Timelines. People who are naturally wired to avoid conflict or risk may never implement a solution because they are fearful that the solution may create more conflict or not work out. Give yourself a time limitation to think through the next steps. Write down the steps creating a plan for yourself. Identify timelines for yourself and stick to them. This gives individuals who are risk averse to create a tangible plan so the solution becomes more real (or known.)

5. Recognize That you may Gravitate Toward What you Know. Because what you learned or what you know, you may stay where you are because it is comfortable and less risky than something new. This causes these entrepreneurs to not implement or invest in those new things that very well could bring in more business, more clients or bring their business to a new level. Simply recognizing this behavior can help you understand why you may be resisting a new idea or solution.

Interacting with Hazel

If you interact with someone like Hazel, understand that she has an innate ability to be a team player but may be perceived as not saying what is on her mind, especially if she believes there may be conflict with something she says. She may not feel safe enough in the situation to share her ideas. If you interact with someone like Hazel acknowledge her contributions and consider her ideas without an immediate comeback, which she will see as debate. Instead, consider her contributions thoughtfully watching for tone and pace in your conversation.

As a business owner, if you are naturally hardwired to avoid conflict or risk (as risk is often seen as a conflict to avoid), it can prevent your small business from growing, if left unmanaged. Remember to create awareness about your natural hardwiring and implement these simple techniques to manage it. When you make the investment in yourself to grow personally, you'll see the investment grow your business exponentially.

Lisa Mininni's is Best-Selling Author of ***Me, Myself, and Why? The Secrets to Navigating Change*** and President of Excellerate Associates, home of The Entrepreneurial Edge System™ the only developmental and marketing program taking a systems approach to profitability for small businesses helping them fill their business in record time. To learn more about your hardwiring and other business growth techniques, pick up your free copy of Get Ready, Get Set, Go! 3 Steps to Jump Start Your Start Up at <http://www.freebusinessplanformat.com>