

**Laura** 00:01

Welcome to the Next Level Leap podcast. I'm your host, Laura Meyer top growth strategist to some of the country's fastest growing brands, and mentor to consultants. My signature leap methodology has changed the way 1000s of companies look at growth strategy, and this podcast shares, best practices, and inspirational interviews to help you make that next level leap in your business. Stick around and join me as I share the journey of how we as founders can multiply our income impact and influence by landing on the other side of our next big leap. Let's go!

**Laura** 00:46

Hey, everybody, I want you to meet somebody really special. I know I say that every time but this time I really like every time I say it. I'm like they're so special. Because everyone who comes here is so special, Catherine Wood is the CEO and Head Coach of Unbounded Potential. She's also a master certified coach and sees her work as most impactful when she's helping people who are empathic, highly sensitive personality type new also are leaders and want to leave mission driven companies and want to lead movements. So welcome, Catherine. I'm so excited you're here.

**Catherine** 01:19

Happy to be here.

**Laura** 01:21

Yeah. So we connected we have a lot of mutual friends. And I was so attracted to your work and was so excited to invite you here. Because I don't know that many people that specialize specifically in the work that you do with empaths. And HSPs, which you see is very, very connected. Tell me a little bit about what makes that type of person unique. And why having a coach that like gets it and understands them as particularly important?

**Catherine** 01:50

Well, first of all, I identify as all of those traits I identify as highly sensitive empath and introvert, and I love working with empaths in particular, because empaths care so much about the work they do, the people they help, they are extremely mission oriented and purpose driven. And when we as a society can put more economic power and wealth in the hands of business owners who care as deeply as empaths do, I think that we can change the culture of business, I think that we can bring empathy back into the world of business. And, you know, empaths, they read, they redirect their wealth, right? They reinvest in their communities, they're intentional with their spending with their giving. And so there's so much capacity to do good by supporting businesses, who cares deeply as empaths run businesses do.

**Laura** 02:46

Oh, my gosh, so much goodness in what you just said. And it's so funny, because I completely identify as an empath and an HSP. And I'm off the charts extrovert, which I think makes me extra weird. Because most introverts, but it's so fascinating to hear you talk about how important this is. And I think in I'm curious on your thoughts on this, but I think this is particularly important in the post pandemic world because people have experienced so much trauma and so much hardship. And if they if they're business owners, they're adjusting to a customer base that has been through so much. And if they're consumers, they're trying to navigate the decisions that they're making. And their whole value system was probably completely changed during that time. Have you seen a pretty big shift and awareness around your work and last few years?

**Catherine** 03:40

Coaching can be particularly impactful when people reach a point of no returns a point where they are no longer willing to continue life, business relationships and the way that it has gone. And I think the pandemic caused many people to get to that breaking point. Now, I think that is only one access point to change. One of my favorite quotes about change leadership comes from Dr. Michael Beckwith, who says that pain pushes until vision pulls. I think pain points that we experience personally in life are oftentimes a motivator and incentive to change. And they're not the only point. I think we can be pulled forward by a vision. And that can also be a compelling place to create change from and for many of us being pushed by pain can often be the initiating point. Oh my gosh, that was so beautifully sad. What is it that you're seeing? That is some of the common challenges that the people that you help face? What are what are some of the common signs? It's like, you know, if you're an empath, what are some of those items?

**Catherine** 04:52

So I work with lots of clients in a couple of key industries. I work with clients and finance my backgrounds in economics, I used to be a senior economist for the federal government. So I speak in numbers and data, and attract that type of clientele. I work with a lot of women in healthcare, because I think there's many entrepreneurial women who were really pushed out of a nine to five during the pandemic, and looking to really thrive in entrepreneurship. And then I also work with lots of entrepreneurs in the creative fields. So marketing, branding, social media strategy, things like that. And some of the common themes I notice across the board is, let's see boundaries. Probably my favorite topic to talk about, aligned leadership models, really running their business as an expression of themselves, building their business out in a way that's aligned with their values, their lifestyles, how they want to manage their business and also be in their homes.

**Catherine** 06:01

I think there's so much pressure to do business a certain way that taking back that permission, realizing that there's no rulebook, you can run your business, you can operate in business, you can follow any work schedule, and it's all an expression of permission. For me, it all comes down to being willing to give yourself that permission to run your business on your own terms. And by your own rules, and by your own SOPs. Let's see those are a couple. What are others? Scaling in a way that's aligned with your values? Again, I think there's so much external pressure to do things a certain way to think we need to be bigger to think we need to grow, grow, grow. And one of the books that I just picked up that I'm so excited to read, it's called, I think it's called A Company of One. And just the and I love what it represents, right? Like the idea that we don't need to be big, better, larger in order to feel fulfilled and satisfied and content.

**Laura 07:03**

My gosh, you're speaking to my values for sure. And that is something that I love the way that you just said that. Let's talk a little bit about boundaries, boundaries for leaders. And I think for many of us who are empathic, who are sensitive, but also our dreamers and visionaries, then we get excited about the big idea. And what makes boundaries be said it was your favorite topic particularly challenging when you're going out to accomplish your mission. I think the reason it's my most favorite topic is because it's had the most life changing impact on my bottom line, on my time, on my energy and on the people that I attract into life. And I think as empaths, we are natural givers, we were great enrollers we all have enrolled, that feels like a bit of a jargony term.

**Catherine 08:03**

So we're great at enrolling other people in services that we believe in or deeply value. So we're great at talking about other people. We are natural sellers for the people and the missions that we believe in. Sometimes we do that at the expense of ourselves. Sometimes we're so good at talking up and selling other people that it can be at the detriment of valuing our own impact our own contribution, our own value proposition. So I think that's a huge mindset shift that empaths have to make. I think in terms of the business partnerships that we can attract, where we're producers were givers, we, we were so inspired by the visions that we bring to life, that we just feel so connected with the mission, that it can oftentimes be at the expense of the partnership agreements that we set up, or the workflow dynamics that we align with the people that we decide to partner with. So I always say that givers attract takers.

**Catherine 09:11**

And there are unhealed qualities about being a giver, and then there can be a healed way of being as givers. Right. And so I think that, you know, empaths, in particular, have to do the internal work to really heal the wounded, the wounded aspects of their empathic ways of being,

so that they don't continue to attract unhealthy people who will just take from them in business. Yes.

**Laura 09:45**

And that could be clients. It could be partners, it could be anybody write anybody and team members. I've had that dynamic with team members in the past, where all of a sudden you're like, I feel like I'm working for you. How did that happen? So what are some of the steps that you you've made you said it's one of the biggest changes that you've made on your own business that has changed the way in which you how you bring in revenue and your overall happiness in your company leading your companies what I heard you say, so what are some of those shifts that have taken place?

**Catherine 10:16**

I mean, I think it's a vulnerable place to start. But I, I'm the youngest child, and I don't talk about this, but I have an older sister who I am estranged from and for me, that was a very early relationship of me being a giver, in a relationship with a taker. And I think many empaths in particular, have those family of origin relationships, that they will continue to recreate and reinvent in adulthood. So I think for me, and for so many of the people that I talk to in life, it really starts by getting clear on how we are reinventing relationships in the present that we have still unhealed from the past. How are we recreating those unhealthy relationship dynamics, in order to gain approval, in order to gain love in order to gain respect, and we are looking in all the wrong places for that love, approval and respect. So I've done a lot of work around that clearly. And that is the number one place to start for me. And for most people that I speak with, I think that therapy is certainly a modality that can help and coaching can also help that dynamic through a different lens, right? In coaching, we often say that it's a present to future based conversation. But we can always draw on moments from the past, so as to point to how we are recreating the past in the present. And what there is to do differently in order to create forward in order to create the partnerships, the relationships that are aligned with who we're in the process of becoming and what we're committed to creating.

**Laura 12:10**

I love that designation of what their how therapy helps, and then how coaching helps. And I'll say that's been my experience, too, is that therapy tends to look at, you know, that unhealed trauma and tends to assist with understanding how the brain functions right? Coaching does that as well, but has more of that future momentum, and helps us redefine our relationships with our future selves, I want to ask about something else that you mentioned, which I think was so interesting is that people who are empathic need to look at scaling a business differently. And the reason why I share that is because I don't even know if you know my background, many of the listeners do. But I had this big huge company that I walked away from because it was so hard and it was so heavy. And it wasn't the right fit for my personality.

He was heavy on compliance and legalities. And I was so excited to build it. And then once I was there, I was like, Oh my gosh, this is not a fit for me. And so, you know, sold off the license agreements and exited. But I'm curious like How should somebody who's empathic think about building their business differently than maybe what they're being told they should do by other people, or what would be considered the norm in terms of entrepreneurship?

**Catherine** 13:35

So a couple places to look. For one, it comes down to values. I think being really clear on your core values in business and in life, are so foundational because as an empath, whenever I make a strategic choice in my business, whenever I take on a new partner, I can always assess the decision through the lens of my values, and see whether there is an alignment. Now making decisions in service of values is futuristic. Its future focused, and it's kind of end goal driven. And the more nuanced version of that is making decisions from a place of wanting to be to please another person wanting to protect a relationship, wanting to take care of someone else. I have exited a couple of partnerships in business and what I have noticed in more than one of those is that I was making decisions from a place of prioritizing the relationship versus prioritizing myself and my kind of my higher my more metal level values. So coming back to my values and whether the decision is in support of my values is always an empowering place for me to make decisions from.

**Laura** 15:08

I love that. And when we're thinking about so thinking about our audience, many of them who are scaling companies who are entrepreneurs. And let's say that you are finding that you are out of alignment with your values, because you've made the other person bigger than prior, you've prioritized the relationship, and essentially, in a lot of ways, the other person more than themselves, because we're natural givers. What are some of the? What are some of the steps we can do to sort of avoid those situations in the future? Like, what are some signs of early signs that maybe we can kind of see it coming sooner?

**Catherine** 15:48

So coming back to the first point, I said, around relationships, asking yourself, who like, who in my life does relationship represent? What relationship that I knew in my childhood and I reinventing the dynamics of here? What am I earning? Right? Like, what am I trying to earn from being in partnership with this person or entity. So that's one that's one place to start a second place, which is not, I don't think this is comfortable for empaths. Because I think many empaths, at some point come to terms with being martyrs in life. Because I don't think we always take responsibility for the fact that we give, but it's not empty handed, we give so as to earn love, approval, trust, relationship, care, validation, whatever, we are always giving so as to receive something, it's just not the thing we want to be receiving, it feels a little hard to hear. I think that's like some of the tough love coaching that I do with a lot of my very successful

empaths CEOs who have no time and energy and are burnt out. And it is certainly a reopening to taking back your own personal power, when you start to take responsibility for how you are creating your relationships.

**Catherine** 17:24

And this is really cute, because empaths who are in unhealthy partnerships, relationships have unhealthy client dynamics, whatever it may be, we created those dynamics. So we get to take responsibility for how we caused the relationship to go this way for how we set up our partnership agreements, our SOPs, our operational dynamics. So once you can really start to discern how you are the source of how it's going, then you can take responsibility with that person or organization and see if there's opportunity to reinvent, like, hey, Jane, I've created this dynamic in our partnership, where I'm the one who's handling all the client interaction, who's managing the community who's doing all the invoicing, because I always used to do all invoicing. And I can see that I this was all on me, this was all my idea. And it's not working for me anymore. I noticed I'm resentful. I'm harboring some feelings, it feels like I'm putting in more than you are and, and it's totally on me, this is on me, this was my idea. And I'd love to see about reinventing partnership from here and seeing, you know, how we can have a more equitable way of partnering. And then from there, you actually, and I experienced this I can have, I remember having this conversation. And from there, you actually can have a more honest, transparent conversation and see whether reinvention is possible.

**Laura** 19:03

That's so wise. And I think it does, it shows what the other person's made of, because if they start gaslighting, or if they start, you know, raising their voice or something like that, then you have your answer, right? If they're like, Wow, thanks for letting me know. I didn't know let me think even like, Let me think about it, or like, I really don't want to put in more than what I'm putting in right now. Like, that's okay. Right. Like that's a, that's a fair response. I want to ask, because we talked a little bit about partnerships, which I know, you know, I've had partners, you've had partners. I think probably a lot of the people that are listening probably struggle with this more with clients. That's my guess is that that's the more common challenge. Even if they're running a big company, maybe they have a multimillion dollar agency, maybe there are a solopreneur, who's a coach or a consultant. How does the show up in the client work? And then how can we sort of rein that back in?

**Catherine** 19:57

Any coach that I've ever worked with any consultant that I've ever had, has, has always had that bad egg client, right? They've always partnered with those just like, worst case scenario, awful fit clients, and not if but when I coach any client through that, that experience, I always celebrate it. Because it is a point of such learning such growth, such opportunity and such clarity around who your people are, and who your people are absolutely not. So it's not a

matter of whether you can avoid those types of bad eggs. It's a matter of how fast you can experience them and how fast you can learn from them so as to prevent them from happening again. Which I think is really important to gain a healthy sense of humor around because I think for at every kind of level of business, you're going to be meeting new bad eggs that you then get to pivot and reinvent and realign from.

**Laura** 21:03

Yeah, I can share from experience that's 100%. True. Right? That's 100% True, like, the bad eggs, the multimillion dollar mark really aren't that different. And I'll say, as a consultant, one of my greatest joys is giving my personal- I work privately with clients as well as have different group programs. But to give the CEOs that I work with directly the support system that I didn't have, you know, when I was in their shoes, and obviously it has to be balanced. But there's something really rewarding about being empathic, sensitive, working with other empathic CEOs. And it wasn't by design, I just think that's who I ended up attracting them, who cared deeply about their work, who want to create a mission, who are creatives who are caring clients I work with privately or just their world changing entrepreneurs. And I think giving them the support of somebody who doesn't have an agenda, other than to see them win, is it's so fun to be able to do. So leading into that, as we're wrapping up here. What's on the other side of this, like we talked about some of the struggles, we talked about some of the ways in which you know, the types of people you want to avoid, how to navigate it, when you're in something that you realize is probably not a fit. But then once you sort of break through and you it's not the daily struggle, right, and you start really performing as a result of understanding who you are as an empath, like what does that what does that look like? What does that life look like?

**Catherine** 22:31

So I think it looks like working with absolutely ideal fit clients. I love every single one of my clients, I'm inspired by every single one of their missions and visions. And I gracefully exit out of any partnerships that were that's not the case. And with time you learn how to do it sooner, and more transparently, and with a lot more dignity and self respect. I think that's a huge shift. I think the time piece is another huge shift. I think that empaths who have really become generous, but boundaries know how to honor their boundaries with a lot of grace, their bodies, their boundaries are embodied rather than rigid. I think that that's a real shift. I think that when you're when you're just starting to take back your, your generosity and be boundaries about it, it can sound it can occur a little rigid or off putting.

**Catherine** 23:29

And then you get to a place where it's just embodied. It's just a natural expression of how you do business of how you communicate of how you operate. I think there's a lot more free time accessible from reclaiming those boundaries. And I think there's just a lot more, a lot. I think that alignment is a hype word, but I really, I really believe it and stand by that we just make

decisions from a more aligned place, and we realign with a lot more dexterity and speed. Because, you know, as entrepreneurs, we're creators, so we're always creating and we can't create more of what we know. Otherwise, you know, it would just be more of the same. So we're always creating new things. There will always be new learnings, new breakdowns, new breakthroughs. And so it's not a matter of you know, if we'll avoid failures, if we'll prevent missteps, it's just a matter of the timeframe with which we realign and re pivot. And without it being at the expense of our well being our family life, our joy, our work life balance, our personal satisfaction in life, right? We really gained some separation from our sense of who we are and our life and our lifestyles, with how we run our business. And what happens when we're in our offices from for whatever our work schedules are.

**Laura** 24:57

I love that. Thank you so much for sharing. That was beautiful. If people want to learn more about you, they'd like to get in touch with you. What's the best way for them to connect?

**Catherine** 25:06

Yeah, they can check out my website at [unbounded-potential.com](http://unbounded-potential.com).

**Laura** 25:11

Awesome. Thank you so much. It's such a lovely conversation for a minute there. It kind of felt like it turned into a personal coaching session. Yeah, like you're speaking directly to me, and I know that many of our listeners will probably feel the same. So thank you so much for sharing your wisdom. I really appreciate you being here.

**Catherine** 25:30

It was a pleasure. Thank you.

**Laura** 25:31

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