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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Spring is here! We hope this issue of EFM brings you some useful and relevant articles.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome our new Media Coordinator, Brandy Brown Hughes. If you would like to expand your marketing reach with a fresh new ad, create a new logo, or build a new website or app, Brandy can help you. Feel free to reach out to her via email at Brandy@54MediaGroup.com.

I would like to thank our regular and one time contributors, advertisers, and the amazing EFM team for all their amazing contributions. Without their tremendous talents, continuous effort, and hard work this magazine would not be possible.

With gratitude,

Fawzya Khosti
Editor-in-Chief

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Jill Yesko Diana, professional organizer and founder/owner of Discover Organizing, Inc. Since 2003, her team of professionals have helped individuals downsize, transition, and organize their homes and photo collections. They specialize in working with those with chronic disorganization and who are living with hoarding disorders. Jill also helps those individuals living with autism to become more organized when they are ready to do so. In 2022, Jill formed Safe Moves for Seniors, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting older adults who are economically disadvantaged to move to safer, more affordable housing with no barriers. The organization is experiencing exponential growth in the Pittsburgh region and expansion into Illinois. As a result, the successful business model is being replicated in other states across the country. And, Safe Moves for Seniors is the only NASMM A+ Accredited Senior Move Management Company in Western Pennsylvania.





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DO EXPERIENCES BRING MORE FULFILLMENT THAN MATERIAL POSSESSIONS? BY BETSY FEIN PAGE 23

After years spent voluntarily helping friends, neighbors, and relatives organize their homes and offices, Betsy determined that the growing demand for organizing services, combined with her background in human resources, sales, and management, made her an ideal candidate to start a professional organizing business. Betsy researched the industry and learned the optimal way to present her services to the public. She began to attract a steady stream of clients, and enlisted the help of other professional organizers to help handle the workload.

Since that time, Clutterbusters!! has grown quickly, and has become the largest organizing company in the region. Betsy believes strongly in education and professional development, and is active in several organizations, including the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO) and the International Association of Professional Organizers (IAPO). She's become a well known expert on professional organizing, appearing on several radio and television programs, and authoring many articles.



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STRATEGIC PATIENCE: THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS IN
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Kristin Marquet is a renowned PR strategist, branding expert, and entrepreneur with experience elevating high-profile businesses and thought leaders. As the founder of Marquet Media, she has led innovative PR and branding campaigns for startups, executives, and global brands, helping them craft compelling narratives and establish industry authority.

With a background in data-driven storytelling, executive personal branding, and leadership development, Kristin combines strategic insight with creative execution to position leaders for success. She has been featured in Forbes, Rolling Stone, Inc.com, Vanity Fair Germany, and WSJ.com, and is widely recognized for her expertise in public relations, digital branding, and growth leadership strategies.



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Mary Sahagun's career didn't begin in PR. She started in aviation engineering, where precision and structure ruled every decision. But when she transitioned into public relations and communications, she realized success wasn't just about calculations—it was about telling the right story at the right time. Now, as the founder of TargetLink, she helps businesses and industry leaders secure impactful media placements, craft compelling narratives, and position themselves where they need to be. Her strategic, results-driven approach helps clients turn complex ideas into compelling, media-worthy stories.



**FAILURE IS YOUR GREATEST ALLY: WHY LEADERS NEED TO
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Angilie Kapoor, a highly acclaimed leader with over 20 years of experience in healthcare, is dedicated to helping managers unlock their full potential and become impactful leaders. Through her extensive background in management and leadership, she offers invaluable knowledge and insights gained from her own journey. Angilie is the founder of Oversight Global, an organization dedicated to addressing the consciousness crisis in the world one leader at a time. Her mission is to educate and empower aspiring leaders, enabling them to make a significant impact on the world.

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Angela Ficken, LICSW, is a licensed psychotherapist, mental health entrepreneur, and the founder of Worried to Well-Balanced, an innovative platform dedicated to making stress management and emotional resilience accessible for busy female professionals and high-achievers. Her work has been recognized for impacting mental wellness accessibility and innovation, earning her the prestigious 2025 Global Recognition Award for pioneering digital mental health resources.

With nearly two decades of experience, Angela specializes in helping individuals navigate anxiety, burnout, and emotional overwhelm. Through Worried to Well-Balanced, she has developed a suite of therapist-backed, practical tools, including digital courses, mindfulness calendars, and stress-relief strategies designed for modern, fast-paced lifestyles.



DECLUTTERING FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP: WHY
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Ramiro Saborio is an entrepreneur who also coaches entrepreneurs on how to scale with clarity and discipline. He runs DeLalsla, a seafood supply chain company based in Nicaragua, and leads Stoic Mind, a coaching firm that works with leadership teams across the U.S. and Latin America. His approach combines real-world experience with Stoic principles to help companies grow without burning out their teams or themselves.




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PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION: THE BEST EXECUTIVE ADVICE I
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Adriana L. Cowdin is a four-time entrepreneur, former corporate CEO, and one of the most sought-after executive coaches and keynote speakers in the business world. Founder of Dekaf Digital, she led the company to over 400% growth, resulting in its acquisition in 2023, placing her in the top 1% of women-owned small businesses. With over 20 years of experience, she has successfully coached more than thousands of executives, leveraging her background as a former Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Customer Officer, and CEO in PE, Privately-Held, and Fortune 500 companies. Cowdin's expertise in personal branding has been featured in Forbes, Inc. 500, NY Times, Reuters, ABC News, CBS News, and many other top-tier outlets. Known for her direct and results-oriented coaching style, she empowers executives to navigate change with clarity and confidence. Cowdin holds a Bachelor's Degree in business management, has completed leadership and coaching courses through Harvard Business School, and has been recognized with awards such as the Trailblazer Award and the Multicultural Leadership Award.

PROGRESS
- NOT -
Perfection

Behind the Scenes



Fawzya Khosti, Editor-in-Chief

Fawzya Khosti is the owner of *Fawzya Khosti, Executive Function Coach*, owner of 54 Media Group, publisher of *Executive Function Magazine*, host of *Focus on Success with Fawzya Khosti*, and the owner of the SAIL Podcasting platform.

Fawzya enjoys helping others succeed and reach their highest potential. *Executive Function Magazine* and podcasters on the SAIL Podcasting platform provides an opportunity for experts and professionals to share their valuable knowledge and expertise with the intention of helping others live their most successful lives.

When Fawzya is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends.

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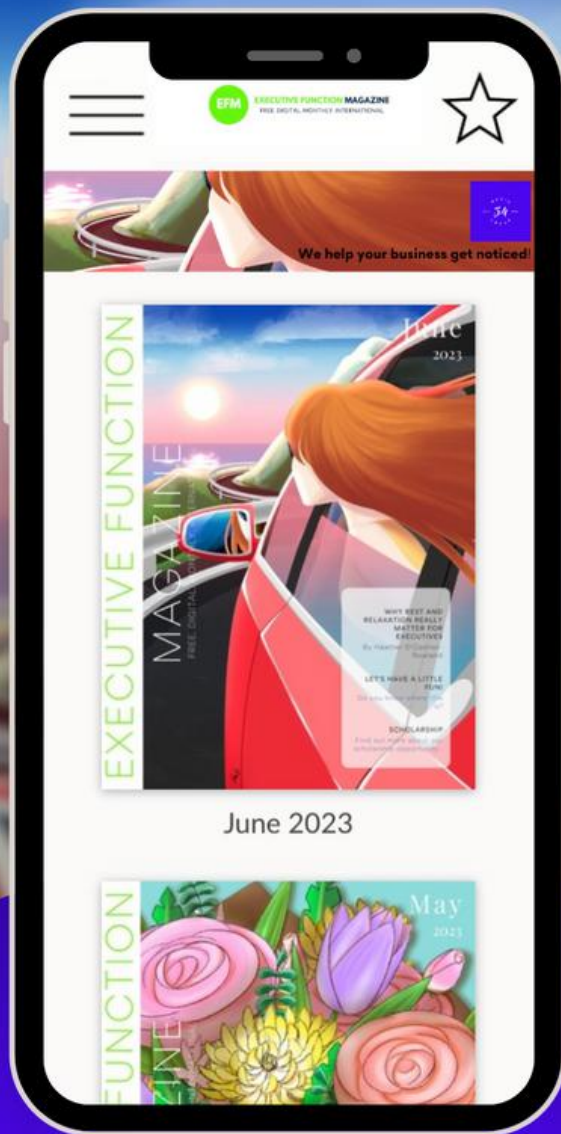
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Behind the Scenes

Alice Kanaka, Associate Editor

Alice Kanaka is the Associate Editor of Fawzya Khosti, Executive Function Coach, LLC, Executive Function Magazine, and Focus on Success with Fawzya Khosti, a talk radio show that airs live every Wednesday morning at 9:00 am Pacific.

Mother of two, cat mom, and prolific reader, Alice Kanaka is the author of nine traditional mysteries, numerous short stories, and a twelve-episode collaboration with Black Knight, author of the Starshatter space opera series.

Alice holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Human Resources. She spent twelve years working at a state psychiatric hospital, speaks three languages, and has lived in seven countries.

A life-long fan of the mystery genre, Alice's books combine traditional tropes with contemporary characters to create whodunits that are simultaneously familiar and unique. Her aspiration is to write books that she would enjoy reading; stories that are both entertaining and uplifting, perfect with a cup of Earl Grey and a roaring fire on a gloomy day.

[Https:AliceKanaka.com](https://AliceKanaka.com)





FEATURE ARTICLE

Spring Cleaning

By Jill Yesko Diana

<https://alicekanaka.com>



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Samantha Olivares seems to have it all but after her beloved father's sudden death, she's devastated. When an unknown cousin comes to town Sam strives to trust again.

Jack is at the pinnacle of his career as a medical examiner. Scarred by his loveless childhood, however, he doesn't do relationships. Thanks to Sam, he experiences a sense of family and community for the first time but their family reunion is interrupted by murder.

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Murder in Sin City!

Samantha Olivares feels the need to get away. She's looking for adventure but finds more than she bargains for when she joins a motorcycle club in Las Vegas.

Her dreams of sightseeing and idyllic days by the pool are soon cut short by a shocking murder. Finding herself alone in the city that never sleeps, Sam must keep a cool head and quickly get beyond the facades of her quirky clubmates.

Ah...spring!

It's the time of year when we can finally enjoy outdoor activities without wearing layers of coats, jackets, and sweaters. Speaking of layers, your house may have its own strata of various items to sift through to determine if they are still items you use, love, or both.

In the winter, we often think of spring as the time to tackle areas of our home that need improvement and organization. Many homeowners also see spring as the ideal season to sell their homes. Realtors strongly encourage sellers to create more open space in their homes to stage them effectively. Ultimately, it's a time for us to find our floors, walls (yep, even behind the oven), banisters, and baseboards for a deep cleaning so that grime and dirt do not build up. (Grime is bad; mold is worse.)

That's where I come in. As a professional organizer, I see more best intentions than actual task completion, which is why we have been helping bring simplicity and order into homes for more than 22 years. If this resonates with you, you are not alone. Getting started on decluttering and organizing is daunting!

Here are some helpful ideas to gain control over the most challenging spaces in a home.

Closets:

Unlike Marie Kondo, I do not recommend emptying your entire closet at once. Instead, I prefer to work in sections, pulling out small groups of items.

“

make steady progress by working from left to right and top to bottom

I typically bring a rolling clothes rack to hold 10–12 hanging pieces and ask my clients to "shop" for the clothing they would choose to buy and wear immediately as if we were in a store. We place unwanted items in bags for donation and sort consignment pieces into boxes or bins, making it easy to know where each item belongs when it's time for them to leave the house or apartment.

We usually make steady progress by working from left to right and top to bottom. Once the closet is decluttered, we clean the floors with Murphy's Oil Soap and wipe down the shelves with an all-purpose, non-toxic cleaner like Mrs. Meyers Clean Day. Finally, we set up a structured storage and access system that my clients can easily maintain long after the project is completed.

Basement:

If your basement has a storage room or shelves included in its layout, you have a head start to creating (or recreating) a system of organization. If you have one large open space with stacked bins and boxes, there are ways to make this a functional space for storage.

Using a folding table, place one bin on the surface and remove the lid. Focus only on that bin despite the surrounding items. Place a cardboard box on one side for donating items and a garbage can on the other side for trash, such as old and stained clothing and costumes, outdated décor, expired and unsafe baby equipment, and linens you have not touched in years. Only place things back into the bin that you truly will use again.

Stores sell heavy-duty shelving on wheels, which are fantastic for rolling your stored items away from a wall to sweep and mop the floor. The more access you have to the walls to check for cracks, mold, and water, the more proactive you will be to protect your home from damage.

Garage:

The garage is often one of a home's most common dumping grounds. It's understandable - items that don't quite belong inside but shouldn't be left outside often end up here. Even if a car can't fit, the garage becomes a holding space for miscellaneous belongings. Once a pile starts, it's easy to keep adding to it. Since guests rarely see the garage, it's a convenient place to stash things out of sight.

When I step in to help, I ask: **What do you actually want to store here for your future self to use?** The answers are usually the same - shoes, sports equipment, lawn care tools, shop vacs, and car accessories. We make a plan to create zones, keeping in mind the path that one might travel from the car to the door of the house.

No one likes to go out of their way to put something away, so placing shelves, baskets, and bins on the way to the house makes it easier to keep things organized for next time. Garage systems, such as Premiere Garage, create an even more structured and attractive process for storing and accessing items.

During organizing sessions, I usually sort items in the driveway into four quadrants: keep, toss, sell, and donate. I use a folding table and call it a 'decision table.' Having an elevated, designated space to determine what is necessary for home activities and outdoor tasks helps keep my clients focused. A small surface at waist height is ideal to avoid feeling overwhelmed when looking at a driveway full of stuff. Once the garage floor is cleared, it can be swept and mopped, the walls wiped down and, if necessary, coated with moisture-locking paint.

After donating, consigning, or discarding unnecessary items, it's important to organize what remains in a way that best suits you and your family. Store frequently used items between waist and eye level for easy access. Place less frequently used items - such as holiday décor or shop vac parts - on higher shelves and keep a step stool nearby for convenience.

The workflow is simple in each of the spaces above, but do not underestimate the time it will take to make decisions and properly clean and reset the items in their new or revised places. Time estimates to clean out each space will vary with the number of items, but generally, expect to spend 4-6 hours in a small clothing closet, 8-10 hours in a basement, and 10-12 hours in a garage. Recruit help and bring all your cleaning supplies to the space. Running into the kitchen or laundry room to get a cloth 'real quick' can distract from your goal.

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DO EXPERIENCES BRING MORE FULFILLMENT THAN MATERIAL POSSESSIONS?

By Betsy Fein

As a professional organizer with 23 years of experience, I've seen firsthand how material possessions can accumulate, creating clutter that often leads to stress rather than happiness. While buying new things may provide temporary satisfaction, experiences tend to bring deeper, long-lasting fulfillment.

One key reason experiences are more rewarding is their ability to create meaningful memories. A new gadget, trendy decor, or the latest fashion piece may feel exciting at first, but over time, these items often lose their appeal, break, or get replaced. In contrast, experiences—such as travel, concerts, or special events—become part of our personal story. These moments are often revisited through conversations, photos, and personal reflections, reinforcing their emotional value.

Experiences also contribute to personal growth in ways that material goods cannot. Traveling exposes us to different cultures and perspectives, learning a new skill challenges our minds, and stepping outside our comfort zones builds resilience. These experiences shape who we are and how we see the world, offering a sense of accomplishment and self-improvement that material possessions rarely provide.

Another important factor is the social connection that experiences foster. Sharing a trip, attending an event, or engaging in activities with loved ones strengthens relationships. People rarely reminisce about the things they bought, but they do cherish the memories made with others. Stronger connections lead to greater happiness and emotional well-being, making experiences even more valuable.

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Angela Ficken,
LICSW

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That said, material possessions aren't inherently bad. The key is intentionality—choosing items that enhance our lives rather than overwhelm them. A thoughtfully organized home filled with meaningful possessions can support an experience-rich lifestyle. For example, a high-quality camera captures travel memories, while a well-designed space fosters relaxation and creativity.

Ultimately, prioritizing experiences over excess possessions leads to greater happiness, less clutter, and a more fulfilling life. By shifting focus from accumulating things to making memories, we create a life filled with joy, connection, and personal growth.

“

The key is intentionality—choosing items that enhance our lives rather than overwhelm them.



STRATEGIC PATIENCE: THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS IN BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

By Kristin Marquet

The Power of Long-Term Thinking in Business

Success in business and leadership is rarely defined by a single moment. Instead, it culminates in strategic decisions, lessons learned, and wisdom gained over time. One of the most impactful pieces of advice I have received is this: "Play the long game. Every strategic move you make today should build toward a greater vision." This advice fundamentally reshaped my approach to business growth, decision-making, and leadership in a climate that often prioritizes rapid results and instant gratification.

Early in my career, I focused on immediate gains—securing clients, landing media placements, and rapidly expanding my business. While this strategy led to initial momentum and revenue, I quickly realized that growth without a solid foundation is unsustainable. Scaling too quickly without an underlying strategy led to operational inefficiencies, brand inconsistencies, and decision fatigue. At that juncture, I fully grasped the importance of long-term thinking and its role in building a sustainable and impactful business.

Strategic Patience: Why Playing the Long Game Matters

Great leaders and entrepreneurs recognize that success is not about pursuing immediate rewards but making decisions that will continue to yield benefits years into the future. Shifting my mindset away from reactive decision-making allowed me to build a business and a brand positioned for longevity. I began asking myself: Will this decision benefit my company in five or ten years, or is it merely a short-term solution? This simple question became a guiding principle for all aspects of my business, from hiring and partnerships to branding and client strategy.

For business leaders, entrepreneurs, and executives, embracing long-term thinking requires prioritizing sustainable growth over immediate wins. It demands discipline, patience, and the ability to resist the temptation to chase rapid results at the expense of longevity.

Building a Business with Long-Term Vision

One of the first ways I implemented this principle was by rethinking how I built Marquet Media, my PR and branding agency. Instead of focusing solely on acquiring as many clients as possible, I refined our services to attract long-term, high-value partnerships. This shift meant developing proprietary PR frameworks, positioning clients for sustained media visibility, and implementing multi-phase storytelling strategies rather than securing short-lived press placements.

Another crucial area where this advice proved invaluable was scaling my business operations. Rather than making hasty hiring decisions to accommodate short-term spikes in demand, I built a strong, adaptable team aligned with the company's long-term vision. I established scalable processes that ensured growth would not come at the expense of quality. This strategic approach enhanced operational resilience and mitigated the risks associated with reactive decision-making.

Long-Term Thinking in Executive Branding

For executives and entrepreneurs alike, personal branding is not just about visibility—it is about establishing long-term credibility and authority.

Many professionals assume credibility is achieved through a single viral moment or high-profile media feature, but lasting influence is cultivated through consistent and strategic efforts.



*personal branding is
not just about
visibility*

Instead of chasing media attention for fleeting recognition, I invested in thought leadership, speaking engagements, and high-value content creation that positioned me as an authority in my field over time. As a result, I did not merely gain exposure—I built trust, credibility, and a reputation that continues to open doors and create opportunities.

A strong personal brand enhances career opportunities, builds stakeholder trust, and positions leaders as industry visionaries. This approach requires continuous investment in publishing insightful content, participating in meaningful discussions, and consistently delivering value to one's audience. Those who focus solely on short-term recognition often struggle to maintain relevance in the long run.

Viable Leadership: A Sustainable Approach to Growth

Leadership, much like business, must be built for growth. One of the most significant challenges executives face is ensuring that their leadership style evolves in alignment with business growth. As organizations scale, the skills that worked in the early stages may no longer be sufficient.



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Growth and sustainable leadership require shifting from hands-on execution to high-level strategy and team empowerment. I learned that to sustain long-term success, I needed to develop systems, delegate effectively, and cultivate leadership within my team. Instead of trying to manage every detail myself, I focused on empowering team members, creating transparent processes, and creating a culture of innovation. This helped my business scale and allowed me to focus on high-impact strategic decisions rather than getting caught up in daily operational tasks.



sustainable success requires intention, discipline, and a willingness to invest in the future

Leaders who struggle to adapt often bottleneck their company's growth. To avoid this, I emphasize the importance of mentorship, leadership development programs, and structured delegation strategies. The most effective leaders can shift from day-to-day operations and focus on long-term vision, growth, and sustainability.

Applying Long-Term Strategy to Decision-Making

For business leaders looking to incorporate long-term thinking into their strategy, I recommend evaluating every major decision through sustainability.

Ask yourself:

1. Does this align with where I want my business or career to be in five years?
2. Will this decision create lasting value, or is it simply a short-term fix?
3. Am I building for consistency and long-term impact, or am I prioritizing temporary success?

The most successful leaders and organizations distinguish themselves by understanding that success is not solely a product of effort—it results from strategic foresight. Instead of reacting impulsively to every opportunity, they adopt a proactive approach to growth, ensuring that every decision they make compounds in value over time. This philosophy differentiates businesses that experience short-lived success from those that remain influential for decades.

The Benefits of a Long-Term Approach

Reflecting on my journey, I can affirm that embracing this long-term approach was my career's most significant turning point. It allowed me to build Marquet Media as a high-value PR and branding firm and establish myself as an industry thought leader. None of these accomplishments happened overnight, but that is precisely the point—sustainable success requires intention, discipline, and a willingness to invest in the future rather than just the present.

By adopting a long-term mindset, leaders can build businesses that withstand industry shifts, economic downturns, and changing consumer behaviors. Focusing on sustainable growth creates a foundation that allows pivoting when necessary while still maintaining brand authority and relevance.

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The Legacy of Strategic Patience

If there is one piece of advice I would offer to professionals seeking long-term success, it is this: Play the long game. Make strategic decisions today that will continue to yield dividends in the future. Prioritize sustainability, intentional growth, and the development of enduring value.

True success follows when you shift your focus away from temporary wins and commit to building something with lasting impact. By consistently making choices reinforcing a larger vision, you ensure that your legacy is not defined by short-term gains but by long-term influence and sustainable achievement.



THE BEST ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED: COURAGE OVER CONFIDENCE & THE POWER OF TIMING

By Mary Sahagun

I started my career in aviation engineering, where every decision had a right or wrong answer. Success was built on precision, structure, and calculations; there was no room for uncertainty. But when I transitioned into public relations and communications, everything changed. It wasn't just about knowing the right answer anymore; it was about convincing others to believe in it. I quickly realized that confidence wasn't something I could calculate or engineer but rather, it was something I had to project, even when I didn't feel it.

Now, as the founder of TargetLink, I help businesses and industry leaders craft narratives that put them in front of the right people. My approach is a mix of structure and strategy, blending the discipline of my engineering background with the adaptability PR demands. I know how to take complex ideas and turn them into compelling stories, but what I've learned along the way is that the best strategy in the world means nothing if you don't have the courage to execute it.

Because the truth is, confidence wasn't what helped me break into this space. It wasn't what got me in the room, built relationships, or secured opportunities for my clients. What made the real difference was something far more uncomfortable—and far more powerful.

Lesson 1: Be Courageous Not Confident

I first heard this advice at a networking event from Julie Campbell, a speaker whose words cut through all my doubts like a lightning bolt. She said:

"Stop trying to be confident and just be courageous."

It was a simple sentence, but it stayed with me. At the time, I thought confidence was the missing piece—the thing standing between me and the success I wanted.

I believed that if I could just feel more confident, I'd finally be able to walk into rooms with ease, pitch without second-guessing myself, and take the kind of bold steps that seemed effortless for others.

But I was wrong. Confidence wasn't what I needed. Waiting for it was the very thing holding me back.

I realized that confidence isn't something you gather before taking action but it's something you build through taking action. And while confidence is passive, courage is a decision. It's what makes you speak up in a room full of people who intimidate you. It's what makes you send that email, step onto that stage, put yourself in situations where failure is a possibility—but so is growth.

So, I stopped waiting. I sent the pitches even when my hands hovered over the keyboard. I introduced myself to people I once thought were out of my league. I walked into rooms that made me feel small, reminding myself: I don't need confidence to be here; I just need the courage to stay.

“

The confidence I had been chasing finally showed up, but only after I stopped waiting for it.

And here's what no one tells you: The confidence I had been chasing finally showed up, but only after I stopped waiting for it.

That's the lesson I now pass on to others; don't wait to feel ready. Don't wait to feel confident. Move forward anyway. The confidence will follow.

Lesson 2: Sometimes It's Just Not Your Turn

This lesson didn't just change the way I handle setbacks, it changed the way I see myself in the face of rejection.

I remember standing in a crowded networking event, still replaying the details of a pitch that had just fallen flat. I had done everything right: the research, the proposal, the delivery. I had given it my best. Yet the answer was still no.

I must have let my frustration show because Rosemary Ostmann, one of the speakers, noticed. She listened as I vented about how unfair it felt to work so hard for something and still walk away empty-handed. Then she said something that stopped me cold:

"I am reassuring you that we all feel this way. Some pitches go well, some don't, and sometimes it just wasn't your turn—and that's okay."

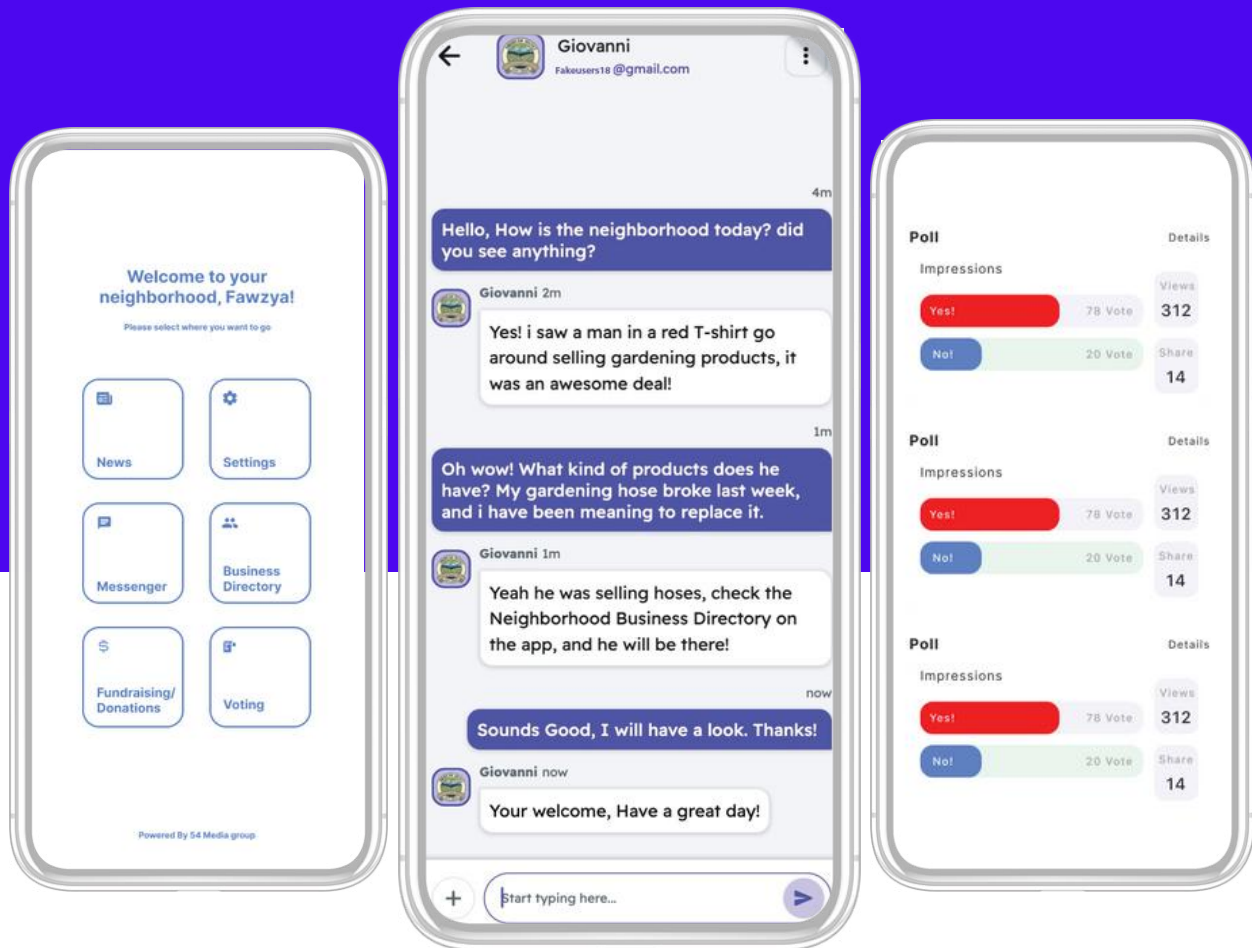
I didn't respond right away. I let those words settle.

I had spent so much time internalizing rejection, dissecting every no as if it was proof of some personal shortcoming. But what if rejection wasn't a reflection of my abilities at all?

What if the timing just wasn't right?

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Polls



Polls, So you and your community can vote on what truly matters around the neighborhood

Easy Interface



Easy interface for all ages, so everyone can easily access all the same content.

Maybe the client wasn't ready. Maybe they had other priorities. Maybe I had done everything right, and the outcome still wouldn't have changed—because it simply wasn't my turn yet.

That shift in perspective freed me. Instead of letting rejection shrink me, I started to see it as part of the process. A no didn't mean never; it just meant not now. And that realization alone has kept me moving forward in moments where I otherwise might have stopped trying.

How These Lessons Have Shaped My Career

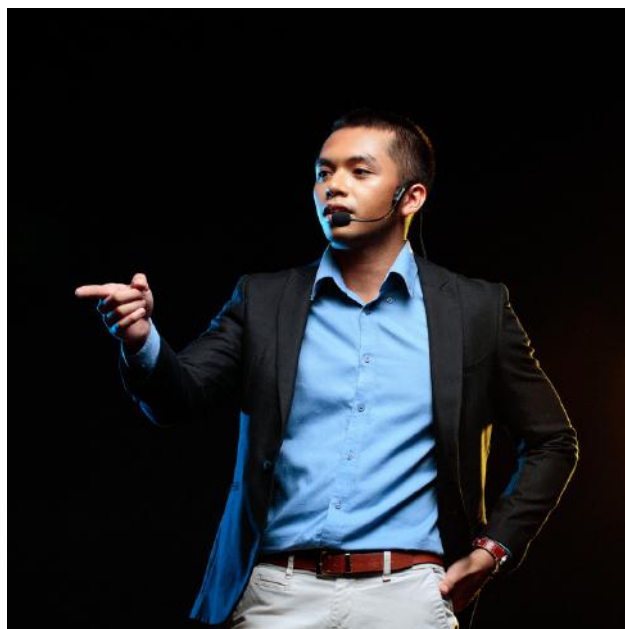
Redefining Rejection: The Shift That Changed Everything

Rejection used to paralyze me. I would sit there, re-reading emails, dissecting every word in my proposals, trying to figure out what I did wrong. Every unanswered pitch felt like proof that I wasn't good enough, that I wasn't cut out for this industry.

But rejection isn't personal; it's part of the process. Some pitches land, some don't. And that doesn't mean I stop pitching. Once I embraced this, I stopped letting rejection define me. Instead, I learned to focus on the next opportunity, the next conversation, the next person who might say yes. Because in PR, like in life, the only real failure is giving up too soon.

Building TargetLink Before I Felt Ready

I didn't wake up one day with a perfect business plan and a surge of confidence to start my own PR consultancy. I launched TargetLink when I still had doubts, when I still felt like an outsider in the industry, when I had no proof that it would work.

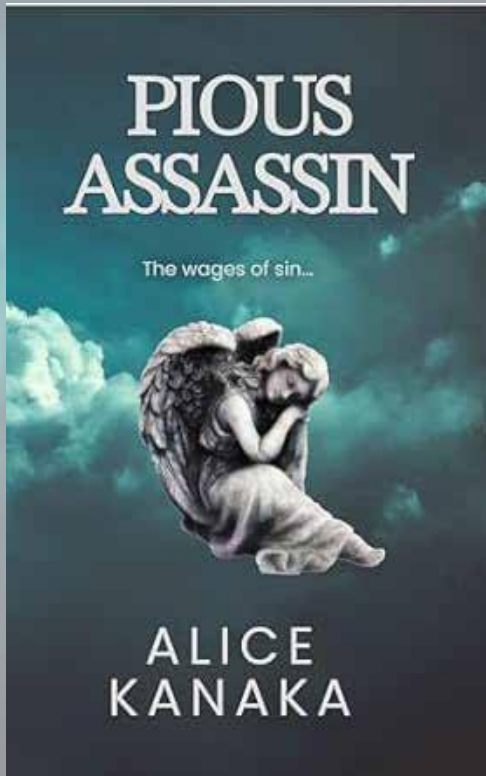


If I had waited to feel ready, I'd still be waiting. But I built it anyway; one bold step at a time, not because I had confidence, but because I had courage. I put my name on something before I fully believed I deserved to. And that act of courage? It shaped my entire career. Now, I help others do the same by positioning their brands, crafting their narratives, and stepping into spaces they once felt weren't meant for them.

Speaking Up When My Voice Shook

There was a time when I would avoid public speaking at all costs. I convinced myself that great speakers were just born that way—commanding, effortless, fearless. I wasn't like that.

But I realized the best speakers aren't the ones who never get nervous. They're the ones who speak anyway. So I made a choice: I would show up, even when my voice wavered. I would take the microphone, even when I felt small. I would push through the discomfort, knowing that courage comes first, confidence comes later.



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Dr. Julius Gemutlich, a profiler specializing in theological psychology, is drawn into a complex investigation involving serial murders in Sarterville, Georgia.

Four lives have been lost. The clock is ticking. Julius navigates through layers of deceit, personal demons, and complex relationships to uncover the truth behind the murders.

Now, speaking engagements are part of what I do. Not because I became fearless, but because I stopped waiting to be.

The Mindset Shift That Changes Everything

These two lessons—choosing courage over confidence and trusting that timing plays a role in success—have redefined the way I navigate opportunities, setbacks, and personal growth. I no longer see hesitation as a sign that I’m not capable. I no longer take rejection as proof that I wasn’t good enough. Instead, I’ve learned to move forward even when the outcome is uncertain. Why? Because every experience, every ‘almost,’ and every closed door is paving the way for what’s next.

So if you find yourself holding back, waiting for confidence to catch up, or feeling like every setback is a sign to stop, let me tell you this: You don’t need confidence to take the first step—you just need courage. And when your turn does come, you’ll step into it fully prepared—because you kept going.

“

You don’t need confidence to take the first step—you just need courage.

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Downward dog in the park, falling out of trees, poisoned chili. Eccentric, retired seniors, Marge Bumfuzzle and Joey Cattywampus have a penchant for stumbling into trouble.

Though largely misunderstood and dismissed as a couple of old kooks, the unlikely pair unravel the mysteries around them in a hilarious and often touching way.

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Hilarity ensues when Bumfuzzle and Cattywampus are on the case. Retirees and best friends, Marge and Joey are investigating mysterious events at Rutherford Mansion.

Is the mansion cursed? Is it haunted? Secret passages, a cryptic journal, and missing paintings lead to murder. The stakes rise with the body count. Will the two friends, antics land them in the hospital, or worse, on the growing list of victims? Only time will tell...



FAILURE IS YOUR GREATEST ALLY: WHY LEADERS NEED TO STOP FEARING IT

By Angilie Kapoor

For many of us, failure has long been a dirty word. It's a term that seems to overshadow effort, harbor shame, and stifle possibility. But what if I told you that failure, instead of being the end of the road, could actually be your greatest ally in leadership and life? Shifting how you perceive and respond to failure could be the key to unlocking growth, innovation, and resilience.

Redefining Failure

At its core, failure means falling short of an intended goal or outcome. But does it signify incompetence or lack of worth? Absolutely not. Failure is a reflection of effort, exploration, and ambition. It tells us that we aimed high and took risks, which are fundamental to progress in any arena.

Rather than branding failure as a personal flaw, we need to recognize its role as a steppingstone to success. Failure is not the opposite of achievement; it's an inevitable part of the process that leads us there.

Society's Misguided Lens on Failure

From a young age, we're conditioned to fear failure. Think back to school, where mistakes on a test felt like a personal defeat. Or to workplaces where perfection was prized above innovation. Society often teaches us that failure equals inadequacy, and as a result, many of us start to avoid risk altogether.

This mindset doesn't just limit creativity and performance; it also breeds fear. It holds us back from trying, growing, and leading with courage because of the looming "what if I fail?" question.

But here's the truth: most breakthroughs—from daring business strategies to scientific inventions and even personal growth stories—are born from failure.

Why Leaders Need a New Relationship with Failure

Changing your relationship with failure starts with one fundamental shift: viewing it not as something to fear, but as something to learn from. Leaders, in particular, need this mindset more than anyone else. Why? Because leaders set the tone for their teams. When you model confidence in failure, you empower those around you to take bold steps.

Failure can be reframed as feedback. Instead of a permanent stop sign, it becomes a road marker showing where adjustments are needed. It challenges you to adapt, pivot, and innovate. And in doing so, it strengthens your ability to lead through uncertainty and inspire others to persevere.

By shifting your perspective, you're giving yourself permission to take risks. You start to see setbacks not as roadblocks, but as valuable detours on the path to improvement.

Turning Fear into Motivation

Many of us avoid failure because we're afraid of it. But what if fear could work in your favor instead? Imagine using it as fuel to push forward. Fear can heighten our focus and drive. It can remind us of the importance of our goals and inspire us to show up with more determination and creativity.

The key is to not allow fear to freeze you. When faced with the prospect of failure, ask yourself this: "What will I learn from this experience, and how can I grow because of it?" These questions transform fear into curiosity and doubt into opportunity.



By shifting your perspective, you're giving yourself permission to take risks.

Recognizing Failure as a Growth Strategy

Growth doesn't happen in a comfort zone. Failure forces you to stretch beyond what you already know, creating the space for real progress. It's through these moments of discomfort that we discover new strengths, develop sharper strategies, and build resilience.

By reframing failure as an integral part of growth, you gain the ability to see the bigger picture. It's no longer about one lost deal, one missed opportunity, or one mistake. Instead, it's about the accumulated lessons that inch you closer to success. History is filled with stories of leaders and innovators—from Thomas Edison to Oprah Winfrey and beyond—who transformed failure into steppingstones toward greatness.

Learning and Leading Forward

Finally, failure is a teacher, and leaders must be its most attentive students. What did this setback reveal to you? What can you do differently next time? And how can you use that wisdom to inspire others? Each experience builds your knowledge, confidence, and ability to tackle the next challenge.



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When you begin to accept failure as a natural part of the leadership equation, you stop letting it hold you back. Instead, you leverage it to strengthen your purpose and fuel your impact. Growth comes not from avoiding failure but from courageously facing it, learning from it, and trying again.

Failure Is Not the End

If there's one takeaway from this, it's this: Failure is not your enemy. It's not a scar on your record or proof of your inadequacy. It's your ally, your guide, and your most powerful catalyst for growth.

The next time you're faced with a challenge or risk, instead of fixating on the possibility of failure, ask yourself to lean in. What might you learn if you try? What might you gain if you step into the unknown? With every failure, you're closer to fulfilling your leadership potential.

Because true leaders don't avoid failure. They transform it.





SITTING AT THE FEET OF GIANTS: HOW SUCCESSFUL LEADERS LEARN FROM THOSE BEFORE THEM

By Angela Ficken

Success leaves clues, and the most accomplished leaders in business, entrepreneurship, and innovation all have one thing in common—they study those who came before them. In business leadership, success is rarely a solo journey. The most successful executives and entrepreneurs understand a fundamental truth: wisdom is cumulative, and learning from those who have already blazed the trail is the fastest path to excellence.

Using Strategy for Personal Growth

Sitting at the feet of giants is more than a metaphor for learning—it's a strategic methodology for professional growth. This approach isn't about imitation but about understanding the underlying principles of success, dissecting decision-making frameworks, and adapting proven strategies to one's unique context. Effective learning from industry leaders involves intensely studying their decision-making processes, analyzing their leadership philosophies, understanding their problem-solving techniques, and extracting universal principles that transcend specific industries.

The concept of mentorship has evolved dramatically in the digital era. Today's executives have unprecedented access to global business leaders' thoughts, strategies, and insights through biographies, podcast interviews, TED Talks, industry conferences, online masterclasses, and social media. This democratization of knowledge allows ambitious leaders to create their own mentorship experiences, even without direct personal contact.

A Personal Journey of Professional Growth

My professional journey exemplifies the impact of learning from industry giants. Early in my career, I recognized the value of seeking wisdom from those who had mastered their craft.

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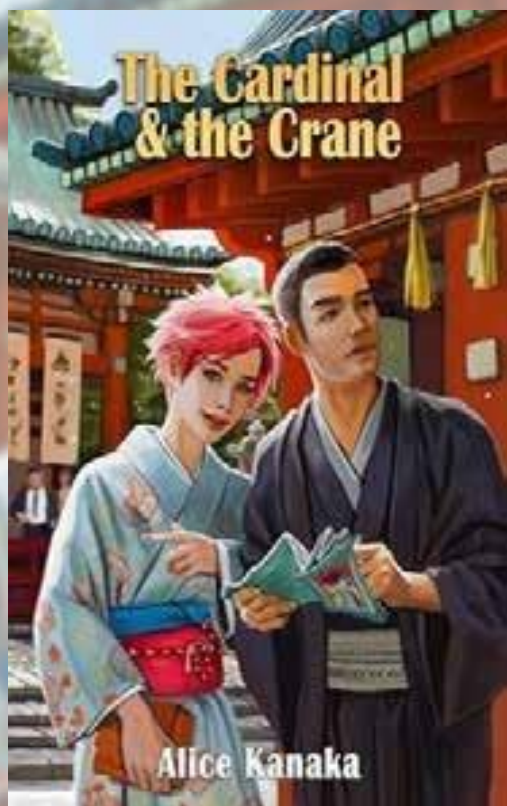
IT BEGAN AS SABOTAGE

Sam Olivares, newly certified survival instructor, carefully planned her first winter survival camp. Delicious food, comfortable hot tents with wood stoves, and excellent courses provided by local experts.

IN THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS OF NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

When sabotage didn't work, the villain decided arrows might be more

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Samantha Olivares, spunky rancher and inadvertent murder magnet, made a promise to her cousin Jack, and she always keeps her promises. Chief Medical Examiner, Jack Olivares has worked up the courage to meet his mother's family in Japan and needs Sam by his side. Used to leading the show, he suddenly finds himself on the outside looking in when a family member is arrested for murder.

As a psychotherapist who has worked at prestigious institutions like McLean Hospital and Harvard University—where I served as a primary therapist for students—I deliberately sought mentorship and ongoing supervision to develop my expertise. This commitment to learning has been the cornerstone of building my clinical practice and business ventures. By engaging in ongoing therapy and supervision, I've not only enhanced my well-being but also significantly elevated my clinical skills. This dual approach to personal growth and professional development has allowed me to expand beyond traditional practice into multiple business projects.

One of my most exciting projects is Worried to Well-Balanced (worriedtowellbalanced.com), a platform dedicated to making mental health and wellness accessible and aspirational. We aim to provide practical insights on stress management, maternal mental health, parenting challenges, and relationships, specifically for driven, high-performing women. We're reimagining mental wellness with a touch of glam—breaking down stigma by presenting these crucial topics in a way that feels inviting rather than clinical. This approach reflects how my learning journey has shaped my vision for making mental health support more appealing and accessible to those who might otherwise hesitate to seek it out.

Implementing Wisdom Through Frameworks

The wisdom gained from mentorship relationships has provided me with frameworks to adapt to my challenges.



The most successful path in business isn't about reinventing the wheel

By studying established leaders' decision-making processes, therapeutic approaches, and business acumen, I've navigated my growth with greater confidence and strategic clarity. Ambitious executives can implement a structured approach to learning from industry giants:

1. Curate your learning ecosystem – Identify three to five leaders in your industry (and adjacent fields), read their books, study their interviews and public speaking engagements, and analyze their career trajectories.
2. Build intentional connections – Attend industry conferences, participate in executive networking groups, leverage LinkedIn and professional platforms, and consider executive coaching or mastermind groups.
3. Create a personal knowledge management system – Take structured notes, develop frameworks from extracted insights, regularly reflect on learned principles, and personalize strategies for your unique goals.

Beyond gaining knowledge, sitting at the feet of giants offers an often-overlooked benefit: network expansion.

By studying and connecting with industry leaders, you create opportunities for mentorship relationships, collaborative partnerships, investment opportunities, and thought leadership platforms. This multiplier effect explains how deliberate learning accelerates career trajectories. Immersing yourself in the wisdom of established leaders gives you access to their insights and networks, creating exponential growth opportunities that aren't available to those operating in isolation.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome

Many executives hesitate to seek mentorship or study industry leaders due to imposter syndrome. However, every giant you admire was once a student, learning from their predecessors. Continuous learning is the hallmark of true leadership. The most successful executives view themselves as perpetual students, embracing the humility required to learn from others. This mindset shift transforms potential vulnerability into a strategic advantage.



The most successful executives view themselves as perpetual students

In my field, I believe it's essential to continue learning. Some professionals establish a practice and stop growing—but I take a different approach. I engage in ongoing learning by meeting with a psychiatrist and a psychoanalyst. Learning from her and discussing cases helps me think from various perspectives and dive deeper into complex topics like shame, trauma, and emotional resilience. I also engage in therapy, recognizing that my emotional growth and well-being directly impact my effectiveness as a therapist. My constant learning fuels my creativity and allows me to develop new ideas and innovative ways to reach people. The goal isn't just knowledge accumulation—it's strategic implementation.

Ask yourself: What universal principles can I extract? How do these insights apply to my specific challenges? What can I innovate based on these learnings? Effective implementation requires both discernment and creativity. Not every strategy will transfer directly to your context, but the underlying principles often remain relevant across industries and situations.

Positioning Yourself as the Next Giant

Success leaves clues only for those willing to look closely, learn deeply, and apply courageously. By sitting at the feet of giants, you're not just learning—you're positioning yourself to become the next giant others will study. The most successful path in business isn't about reinventing the wheel; it's about understanding its most elegant design and creating something extraordinary.

As you continue your journey as a leader, remember that the wisdom you seek is available to those who are humble enough to learn and bold enough to implement it.



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DECLUTTERING FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP: WHY LESS IS MORE

By Ramiro Saborio

Most entrepreneurs don't have a desk problem; they have a decision problem. They aren't drowning in physical clutter; they're buried under an avalanche of decisions, distractions, and meetings that add little value. Their inbox is a battleground, their calendar a warzone, and their mind a tangled mess of obligations pulling them in a hundred directions.

The truth? They don't need more hacks, more tools, or more strategies. They need less.

Less distraction. Less complexity. Less unnecessary noise.

Decluttering isn't about color-coding folders or having a minimalist desk. High-performance leadership demands clearing mental, operational, and strategic clutter so you can focus on what truly drives results.

The hidden cost of clutter in leadership

Clutter doesn't just slow you down; it kills momentum. And momentum is everything.

- Decision overload: Too many choices in a day lead to fatigue and poor judgment.
- Calendar chaos: If your schedule is packed, deep work isn't happening.
- Operational bottlenecks: If you're involved in every process, your business isn't scalable.
- Digital distractions: Endless notifications turn leaders into reactive operators instead of proactive visionaries.

I've seen this firsthand—not just with clients, but in my own journey. Years ago, I thought being busy meant being important. I would juggle multiple businesses, say yes to everything, convinced that more meant better. I was wrong.

One of the biggest lessons I learned was that the enemy of growth isn't failure—it's clutter.

Decluttering decision-making: the stoic approach

Marcus Aurelius once said, *“If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it.”* Simple, right? Yet most leaders don’t apply this level of clarity to decision-making.

Here’s how to cut through the noise:

- Eliminate the trivial: Barack Obama wore only blue or gray suits to reduce decision fatigue. You don’t need to go that extreme, but automating or eliminating small daily decisions frees up mental energy for high-stakes choices.
- Ruthlessly prioritize: If you could only do one thing today that moves the business forward, what would it be? Start with that.
- Use decision frameworks: Eisenhower Matrix, Warren Buffett’s “two-list” strategy—pick a system and stick to it. The goal isn’t just making decisions, but making fewer, better decisions.

Decluttering your time: stop being a firefighter

Most entrepreneurs operate in firefighter mode, running from crisis to crisis. The problem? If everything is urgent, nothing is important. Here’s how to reclaim your time:

- Batch similar tasks: Emails twice a day. Calls in a set block. Stop switching contexts all day—it kills productivity.
- Reduce meetings: Half of them don’t need to happen. The other half should be shorter.



*If everything is urgent,
nothing is important.*

- Time blocking: Deep work doesn’t happen by accident; it happens when you defend your time.
- Say no more often: Every ‘yes’ is a ‘no’ to something more valuable. Guard your time like your company depends on it—because it does.

Years ago, a mentor told me, “Your calendar tells me what you truly value.” If your time is spent in back-to-back meetings instead of strategic thinking, it’s no wonder your business feels stuck.

Decluttering business operations: the power of letting go

Most leaders think they don’t have time for strategy. The real issue? They’re too busy doing what they should have delegated long ago.

- Identify bottlenecks: What tasks are you holding onto that your team could take over? If your business can’t function without you, you don’t have a business—you have a job.

- Follow the 70% rule: If someone can do a task 70% as well as you, let it go. Perfectionism is just an excuse for micromanagement.
- Systematize and automate: If a process is repeated often, it should be documented, automated, or delegated.
- Empower your team: Real leaders don't just offload work; they develop leaders who can own their roles.

I used to believe I had to be involved in every aspect of my business. Then I realized: if I'm the bottleneck, I'm also the problem. Once I genuinely embraced delegation, growth accelerated.



If your leadership feels chaotic, chances are your mind is cluttered too.

Decluttering for mental clarity: make room for what matters

Your external world reflects your internal state. If your leadership feels chaotic, chances are your mind is cluttered too.

- Morning clarity ritual: Before diving into work, identify the three priorities that move the business forward.
- Weekly reflection: Take stock of what's working, what's not, and what needs adjusting.
- Digital detox: Start with an hour. No phone, no screens—just thinking time. You'll be surprised at what happens when notifications don't hijack your brain.
- Mindfulness and presence: Stoicism teaches that we should focus on what we can control. Distractions steal energy—protect your focus like your success depends on it.

Decluttering isn't just about productivity—it's about power

A streamlined business operates with precision.

A decluttered schedule allows for deep work.

A focused leader creates a high-performing team.

Decluttering isn't just about getting more done—it's about getting the right things done and making space for what actually moves the needle.

Less distraction. More clarity.

Less busyness. More impact.

Less chaos. More momentum.

The leaders who master this? They don't just grow their businesses. They become unstoppable.



PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION: THE BEST EXECUTIVE ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED (AND HOW IT CHANGED EVERYTHING)

By Adriana L. Cowdin

If you had told me years ago that “progress, not perfection” would be the single most impactful piece of executive advice I’d ever receive, I probably would have laughed—and then stayed up all night perfecting the response. But that’s exactly what happened.

The advice didn’t come from a self-help book or an inspirational LinkedIn post. It came from a boss who saw me spiraling in an endless cycle of overwork, obsessing over every last detail, and refusing to hit “send” until whatever I was working on was immaculate. The result? I was exhausted, overwhelmed, and ironically, less productive. My relentless pursuit of perfection wasn’t making me better—it was paralyzing me.

So, when my boss dropped this simple but revolutionary phrase—“progress, not perfection”—it landed like a truth bomb I didn’t know I needed. And once I embraced it, it changed the way I led, worked, and lived.

Perfection Is a Lie (And an Expensive One at That)

Let’s talk about the myth of perfection. Somewhere along the way, many of us—especially high-achieving executives—internalized the idea that anything less than perfect isn’t good enough. That unless the strategy, presentation, or email is flawless, we can’t possibly put it out into the world.

The problem? Perfection is an illusion. And chasing it? That’s a recipe for burnout, missed opportunities, and in many cases, lost revenue.

I learned this the hard way when I was working endless hours, tweaking and refining projects to within an inch of their lives. I thought I was adding value. In reality, I was just delaying progress. My boss saw it and had the wisdom (and probably the exasperation) to step in. That’s when I was introduced to the liberating concept that done is often better than perfect.

How "Progress, Not Perfection" Changed My Leadership

The moment I embraced this mindset shift, I felt a weight lift. Suddenly, I had permission to move forward without obsessing over whether every pixel, word, or decision was flawless. And something remarkable happened—I became a more effective leader. There are three things that happened for me:

1. I Learned to Trust the Process (and My Team)

When I founded my own digital marketing agency in 2016, I found myself repeating the same phrase to my team—over and over. I realized that I wasn't the only one conditioned to chase perfection; my team struggled with it, too. I started encouraging them to move projects forward without fear, knowing that iteration and refinement would always be part of the process.

For myself and my leadership team, I added a financial spin to the phrase: *"Profit before perfection."* Because, let's be real—spending hours refining a campaign to perfection while delaying its launch? That's not just inefficient, it's costly.

2. I Made Faster, Better Decisions

As executives, we're often told that great leaders make decisions based on all the available data. But in reality, we rarely get 100% of the information we want. Waiting for perfection in decision-making leads to missed opportunities.

So, I started applying the 70% rule—if I had roughly 70% of the information needed to make a decision, I moved forward. I learned that most decisions can be adjusted later. The key is momentum.



People don't need perfection. They need clarity, action, and results.

3. I Stopped Letting Perfect Get in the Way of Good Enough

I'll let you in on a little secret: Some of the work I thought was "not quite ready" turned out to be my most successful. Case in point: In my executive coaching practice, I see leaders spend way too much time over-engineering things like Board presentations, business plans, and follow-up emails. Meanwhile, their peers—the ones who focus on clarity and execution over perfection—get ahead.

The biggest lesson? People don't need perfection. They need clarity, action, and results.

How This Advice Still Shapes My Career Today

Fast forward to today, and I still use "progress/profit, not perfection" as my guiding mantra. Right now, I'm in the process of writing a book. And let me tell you, if there was ever a time for perfectionism to creep back in, it's during this process.



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Writing a book is messy. It's frustrating. There are days when I question every word. But I remind myself that getting words onto the page—imperfect as they may be—is better than staring at a blank screen, waiting for inspiration to strike in some flawless, divine form.

So, I write. I make progress. And because of that, this book will exist and be done by Summer 2025.

Why Every Executive Needs to Hear This

If there's one thing I know for sure, it's that high-performing executives struggle with this more than they care to admit. I see it all the time in my coaching work. Some of the most brilliant leaders I've worked with get stuck in perfectionist loops that drain their energy and delay their impact.

Here's the truth, that Board presentation doesn't need to be perfect—it needs to be compelling. That business plan doesn't need every single variable accounted for—it needs a clear direction. That follow-up email doesn't need 12 revisions—it needs to be sent.

What I Wish I Knew Earlier

If I could go back and talk to my younger executive self—the one obsessing over every detail, losing sleep over getting everything just right—I'd tell her three things:

1. Your version of “perfect” is unattainable—and unnecessary.
2. Your ability to execute and iterate will get you further than your ability to polish.
3. You don't get points for how long you agonize over something—only for how well you deliver results.

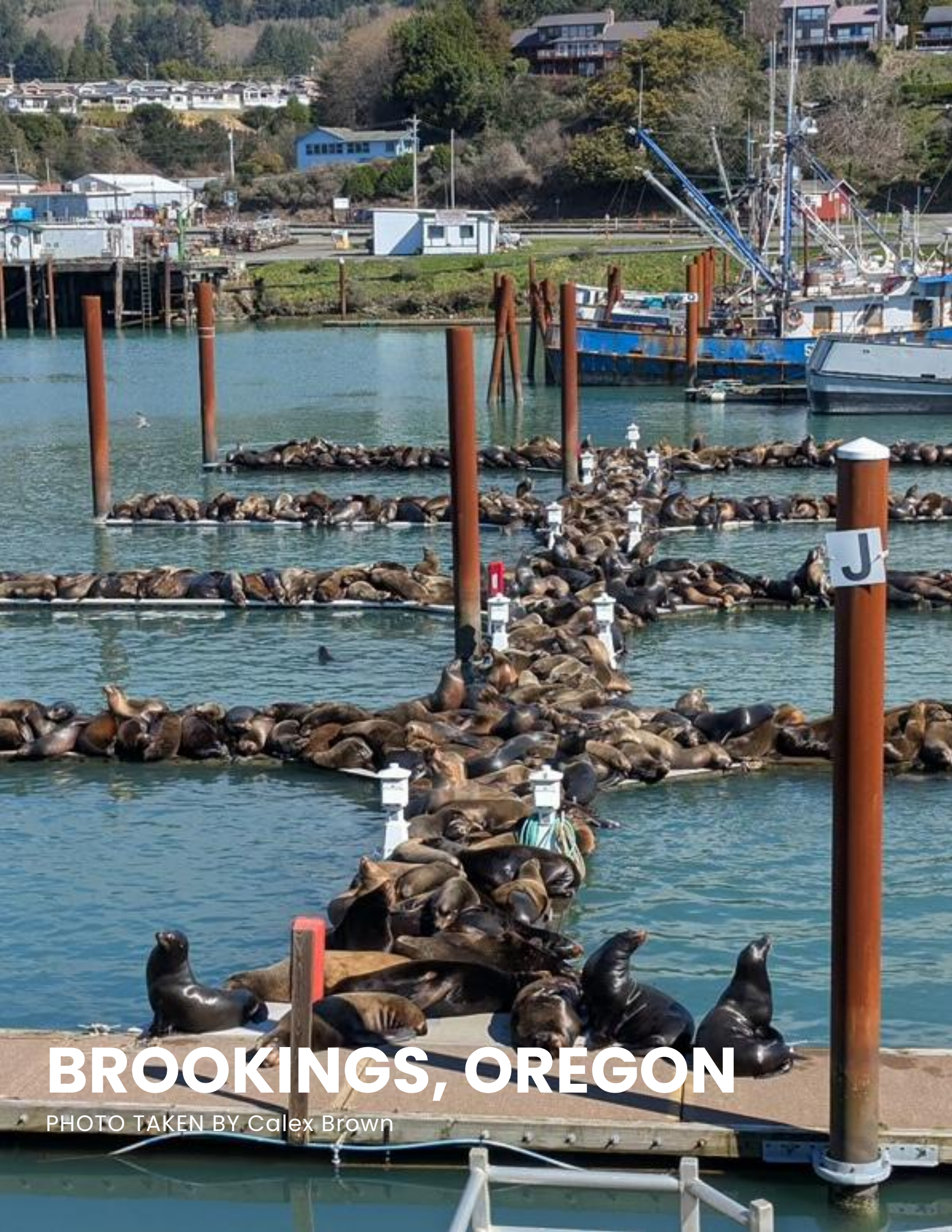
The Final Word: Perfection is Overrated. Progress is Everything.

If you're an executive, a leader, or someone who just wants to move the needle in their career, let me save you years of stress: Progress will take you places that perfection never will. Start before you're ready. Launch before it's flawless. Trust that refinement happens in motion.

Because the leaders who succeed aren't the ones who make things perfect. They're the ones who make things happen.

“

Progress will take you places that perfection never will.



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