

*Episode 20*

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## Lisa Bloom



*Lisa Bloom is a highly professional and accomplished Storyteller, Professional Certified Coach (ICF) and Training & Development Expert with more than 20 years' experience working in public and private sectors, high-tech and financial services environments. Lisa trains Story Coaches and helps entrepreneurs de-stress the marketing, build their business with confidence and inspiration by finding their success story.*

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### Voiceover

*This is Business Reimagined. Every week we talk with thought leaders and revolutionaries who are bringing innovation to their industries, like today's guest, Lisa Bloom.*

*When people understand the power of connecting their own personal story to the project they're on, to the service they're providing, to the product that they're putting out to the market, and they can talk about it in that way, the client engages in an entirely different way.*

*This is Business Reimagined with Danny.*



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## **Danny**

*Lisa Bloom is a story coach who helps individuals, small businesses, and large corporations to uncover the stories that will connect with potential customers and engage with them in a deep and powerful way. Like most storytellers, Lisa was doing it long before she even knew what it was.*

## **Lisa**

*I was incredibly curious, and would ask the people around me, my parents and grandparents and all kinds of people in my life, I would ask them things like, "What was it like when this happened," or, "What was it like when you moved from 1 town to another?" I always seemed to be looking for a story, although I wasn't necessarily aware of it at the time.*

## **Danny**

*Lisa's childhood love of stories was nurtured by the rich variety of authors she read while growing up, but as much as she loved stories, she didn't consider herself a storyteller, to the point that when a friend suggested she take a storytelling course, Lisa was quick to decline. As a sort of compromise though, she agreed to go to the conference, and it's a good thing that she did.*

## **Lisa**

*We went into this performance, and I walked into the room. It was one of those amazing occasions where as she began to tell stories, I felt like ... It was almost like the walls shook, and I had this incredible sense of, "This is what I've been doing my whole life, and this is what it's called. It's called storytelling." I didn't know that that's what it was, but it resonated so powerfully for me that during the break I went up to her and I said, "I want to sign up for your program."*

*All of the resistance I'd had before just fell away. It didn't matter. I knew I had to learn more about this. That's when I began to recognize all those parts of my life that fell into place. I remember speaking to friends and even my brother, and telling*



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him, "I just signed up for this storytelling course." He said, "Of course you did." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you've been telling stories since before you could walk." It's my older brother.

## **Danny**

*Lisa had found herself, discovering what her family seemed to have known all along. Soon this focus on story began to permeate her corporate training career, but the full potential of her work as a storyteller had not yet been realized, because the story coach had yet to be born.*

## **Lisa**

*Initially when people said, "Oh, you should be a coach," I was like, "No, I want a real profession." I was very reluctant, and then began to explore, realized it actually is a real profession, and began to study coaching, retrain, because I had worked in coaching in my HR and learning and development roles. What was interesting then was that, as I learned, as I studied coaching and storytelling, alongside I began to see these wonderful connections and mirroring of what we do in both. That's when this whole concept of story coaching arose for me.*

## **Danny**

*When it all finally clicked, Lisa rushed online and Googled the term story coaching, and was thrilled to see that not much came up in the results. She did what any entrepreneur would do, bought several domain names and made it her mission to coach people through story.*

## **Lisa**

*What I began to notice was that if you bring people's attention to the story they tell about any given experience, if it serves them, great. That's how we have great relationships. It's how we have a great business. It's how we have great success in our lives. If it's not serving them, it tends to be the story that keeps us back, the story*



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*that keeps us small, the story that keeps us in fear. That's the place where you can inquire into the story, and see that it can be told from a perspective that serves us.*

*That's the work of story coaching, to go in, to inquire into the story, and to see that it's all opinion and we can actually shift it and begin to tell the story in a much more empowered version. Now that doesn't necessarily mean that we ... It's not like we paint a rosy-colored sheen over everything, and make it a happily ever after story. What it means is that we can take experiences that may not have been positive, they may have been painful or difficult experiences, but tell them from the perspective that empowers us, rather than disempowers us or disturbs us.*

## **Danny**

*Can you give a for example? Hearing this, on one level, it's resonating a lot and it's agreeing with a lot of things that I ... I agree with it completely. On another level, it sounds like another word for therapy.*

## **Lisa**

*Yeah. It's definitely not therapy, because it's about intentionally crafting a story that works for us and looks to achieve a future goal, looks to achieve who we want to be in the present. It's not about going back and resolving issues from the past necessarily. There's definitely a differentiation. An example I can give you, not at all business-related, very personal actually, an example was that many years ago, just a few weeks before I was due to get married, my father passed away very, very suddenly. It was a really difficult time, and for a very long time, I couldn't even talk about it. My immediate reaction was I didn't want to get married. He was in his mid-60s. It was very unexpected, and it was incredibly painful.*

*For a long time after he passed away, I told a lot of the stories that somehow made sense at that time that were completely, I saw later as I began to work through these*



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*stories, they were a complete creation of my mind and of my heart. I'd tell the story about how much he'd suffered, and I told the story about how much he was going to miss, and I'd tell the story about how he was all alone. I told these terrible, terrible stories that kept me in a place of absolute pain and suffering. Sometime later when I began to explore story and I began to realize the power of story, I looked at these stories and I realized that none of them were true.*

*They may have been true, but there was no absolute clarity. There was no absolute sense of truth in them, because I could never know. The only thing telling those stories did was they made me incredibly sad, and at times emotionally very, very caught up. When I began to tell the stories that I knew served me and actually served his memory better, I didn't stop missing my father. I don't think you ever stop missing the person you love who passes on, but I realized that I could talk about him freely and I could actually almost bring him alive again through my stories.*

*Now, if we take it a place that's less life trauma, personal, and take it to a place of a business experience, so I've had experiences where I have offered a service or launched a program, and it hasn't gone as well as I have anticipated.*

**Danny**

*As we all have.*

**Lisa**

*As we all have, absolutely. I've been in the situation where I've willed out of this experience just thinking, "Oh, God, I've just got to go get a job. This is just not working. This is just awful. I hate this industry. I hate what I'm doing. None of it works." I get embroiled in this story of whether it's my failure or my lack or what I don't know or making these vast judgments about a whole industry or a whole subject. When I look at the actual story I'm telling in that moment, again, none of it*



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*is true. It certainly doesn't serve me. Instead, I can go back and I can look at the experience, which was not a pleasant experience. It was quite a painful experience. You put all your effort and your resources into something that doesn't work. I can begin to tell the story and explore the story of the learning and the growth and what's happened as a result of being able to fail in that way, and to take it to a place that drives me forward rather than pulls me back.*

*I think that's the difference in the transformation of the story is that you're being pulled forward to a place of possibility and a place of really implementing that vision, versus being dragged back into this very small place of, "I just can't do this and it just doesn't work." In a sense, by transforming the story, again, you're not denying the failure. You're not saying that it worked beautifully and hiding the figures. You're saying, "You know what, this spurs me on to do better next time. This helps me learn so that I can grow, so that I can avoid the mistakes I've made before. You know what, you get closer to success the more you fail." That's a very different story than the one I was telling initially, which was, "I just can't do this. I've just got to go get a job. I got to give it up." Very different story.*

## **Danny**

*I have a question about how this plays out when you're actually trying to do it, because we're good at telling stories that make sense to us, like they have an internal cohesion. We don't tell stories that are just a rambling chain of events. There is a narrative arc. One thing is leading to another, is leading to another. There's a directionality to it. When we're telling a story, we have our story, and we had our arc, and it ended with the altercation that resulted in failure, so it was a big disaster. We feel terrible and we're frustrated and all that. We have that story.*



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*Even if it's not serving us, it has this internal cohesion, right? It is a cohesive story that you can tell, whereas you can't make up a new ending. What happened, happened. You have to reframe the whole story. How do you do that, because I could see taking a step back and reviewing and thinking and processing, and eventually arriving at a new interpretation, but if I'm in dialogue with people about this experience, then I'm going to tell them what makes sense. I feel like that would make it very hard to step away and find that. How does that work?*

## **Lisa**

*My first question is the telling of what makes sense, because that's incredibly subjective. What makes sense to you may not be what makes sense to the person you're telling the story to. What I tend to focus on is really looking at what's going on, in terms of the emotional shift that happens as you tell the story. I also think we have a huge responsibility in the stories we tell, because they affect us and they affect others. I look at things like what's your intention around the telling of the story, and then bringing it in to the narrative, what was the intention around the subject of the story, and where was the mismatch in terms of the outcome, and where does it serve you.*

*If we're looking to shift from a story that essentially feels awful because it's a failure and it feels terrible, and we're looking to shift into something that serves us, so it motivates us and it transforms something in our experience, then I would always look at, what was the pivotal moment that felt a failure? What didn't work? Oftentimes you'll find, when you dig deep into that failure story, that those so-called pivotal moments of failure, when you take them and look at them, they're actually not quite as bad.*



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*In a context of the overall story, they're not as bad as maybe the person has felt them to be initially. It's like examining these moments within the story, examining the emotional shift that's happening, both in the telling and within the narrative, and then beginning to look at, how can you see that from a different perspective, in the moment, in the specific moment?*

**Danny**

*How easy is this to do? When you've told a story over and over and over, there's ... I'm not a neuroscientist by any means, but I know a little bit about when you go through a certain mental process, the neural pathways are ... Myelin is secreted. It becomes better insulated, and it becomes more and more the path of least resistance, like the groove in the brain deeper.*

**Lisa**

*It's true, and story, neuroscience has shown that story is one of the things that creates new grooves. It's interesting.*

**Danny**

*How fast though? How easily does this happen?*

**Lisa**

*I've experienced it with people pretty fast, when I've taken people through the process they begin to become aware of ... The first step is even just the awareness and the responsibility around the story you're telling. When you become aware that firstly this isn't true, if it's your story, there is no absolute truth around what we tell, so firstly just the awareness that this is a story that I'm telling and I'm telling it for a reason, and that reason may serve others and it may not, and it may not serve me either. When you become aware that it's a story, that it's being told in a certain way, and you become more intentional about what you tell and how you tell it, that already begins the shift in those neural paths that are giving you that experience.*



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*What I'm seeing again and again is that, when you begin to look as specifically as possible at those moments in the narrative, at those moments where primarily you see it as you felt something, there was an emotional shift, there was a shift in your awareness and a shift in the way you responded, there's a shift in the way you felt, you look at those moments, and you see what was in play at the time. Now, failure is only in context of an assumption of success. It's only in the context of an expectation of certain metrics, let's say, or certain experiences.*

*When you look at those experiences, and you look at what that expectation was, and the mismatch, you begin to realize that failure is completely subjective. It's beginning to just examine and inquire into it. What I've experienced with the people I work with is that the more you become aware of story and of how the story works and how we respond to, and are actually incredibly committed to our story, whether they serve us or not, and we begin to loosen that commitment and just be really open to examine and inquire into the story, then the shift can happen pretty fast.*

## **Danny**

*Is your work primarily about helping people reinterpret their stories in a way that serves them better, or helping them tell better stories in a way that serves their businesses better? Is this an entrepreneurial personal development kind of thing, or is this a marketing thing?*

## **Lisa**

*I think it's actually both. Here's my belief. I believe that we have external stories, that the external stories become our brand and our image and our so-called persona. Then we have our internal stories, which are the stories we tell ourselves. What I found again and again is if the internal and the external stories do not*



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*integrate, then what suffers is our authenticity. We don't come across as being authentic if there's a misalignment of the inner and outer story.*

*Oftentimes people will hire me to help them discover their story that they can use to market their business, and what we find along the way is that the outer story they want to tell is not aligned with the inner story. When they can get the alignment, then the story they tell out, the story that presents their brand and their image, not only does it sound more authentic, it's easier for them to tell, and they become much more present to their business and to what they're doing in the world.*

*Part of this awareness came ... I do a lot of corporate work. I work with large organizations. I remember coaching some CEOs, senior executives, around stage presence. How do you get up on stage and tell a story? How do you get up on stage and be that leader who tells a great story? Great leaders always tell great stories. I noticed that the people who were struggling with stage presence, they also struggled with leadership presence. When I looked at the small business owners and entrepreneurs that I was working with, I realized that the less they could feel comfortable telling their story, the less present they were to their business.*

*At the end of the day, most organizations, in my view, tend not to want to work with an organization. They want to work with a sense of whether it's a vision or whether it's a certain person, a sense of what does this organization, what does this product, what does this service actually stand for? Who are the people behind this? They connect with that in a much different level than if you just go buy a service from some anonymous company. When people show up in their business with more of their own presence as leaders and as business owners and as entrepreneurs or*



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*whatever their business is, then what presents on the external story, the image, the brand, and so on, just aligns completely differently and resonates so much deeper for their potential clients.*

## **Danny**

*It sounds like what you're really saying here is that, and this is, I suppose, your reimagination of what success in business comes down to, it sounds like you're describing it as basically an array of concentric circles of stories.*

## **Lisa**

*Yeah. In the last, I don't know whether it's a decade or more, I think that the buyer out there for whatever the service is, whether you're buying a car or you're buying a financial service or you're buying a coach or you're buying a learning product, the buyer is having a more and more difficult time trusting. One of the things that's fallen down along with all of the structures, whether they're the financial organizations, the church, the economy, personal safety, all these things that have crumbled over the last decade, has worn down trust for people. I think that when you can show up authentically with a story that people feel resonates for them and moves them and connects for them, then they can build trust much more easily.*

*Yes, I think there are these series of stories that draw people in. I'm not talking about the old style sales story where you design a product, you figure out what the best story is to sell it to a target audience, and you go out and tell the story. I'm talking about actually showing up for real in the business you're in, and telling the authentic story that has people understand what you're doing, why you're doing it, and who you are as a person.*

*Obviously the bigger the organization, the more difficult it is to get that personal touch, but I see it even in the corporate organizations I work with, that when people*



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*understand the power of connecting their own personal story to the project they're on, to the service they're providing, to the product that they're putting out to the market, and they can talk about it in that way, the client engages in an entirely different way. It only adds to the collateral of that organization is if the people are really turned on and present to the jobs they're doing and the products they're selling.*

## **Danny**

*Let's dig into the nuts and bolts of story coaching. How does it actually work? What do you do?*

## **Lisa**

*One of the things I love to do when I go into groups and workshops and webinars, whatever I'm doing, is I ask them, if you have a story to tell, whether you're doing a presentation, or whether you're talking to a team, or whether you're getting up in front of an audience, or even just telling a story to, again in a business context, to a potential client, where do you start? Most people go straight to, "Well, I figure out what I want to say, and then I say it." That's where I say, "No, no, no, let's just wind it all back, and then let's look at what is most important about where you start with a story."*

*Then we look at the place to start with a story is to understand the person you're telling the story to, and really get a sense of what it is that they are interested in hearing, what they already know, what would be [00:20:00] relevant, because at the end of the day, a story will only be compelling if it's relevant to the audience. I could tell you a story that I've told to somebody else, and they just loved every bit of it and were moved by it, and it made all the difference in the world. It would mean*



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*nothing to you, because it's a different audience. There is this path that I love to guide people down, in terms of what are the step by step that you take.*

*Of course, what comes after audience is intention. What is it that you want to create for this person? For me, storytelling is about ... It's about a gift. It's about being able to tell somebody something that's going to either help them, serve them, do some kind of transformation for them, so you need to figure out what your intention is as you begin to tell, and so on. This is part of the path that I take to help people develop stories, but the 1 piece that's really, really critical, and I'd love for people to just take this in, anybody who's listening, take this into the place of where has this occurred for me in my life, is to look at the moment that something happened that moved you, something happened that made a difference in your life, that whatever it was that happened, you weren't quite the same person before as you were after.*

*The awareness of this pivotal moment, I call it a pivotal moment, is not always in the moment. It may be as you look back and you say, "Oh, that's where it all started." It was like when I described before going into this room with the storyteller and feeling like the walls shook because I suddenly recognized myself. I was not quite the same person after as I was before. Where in your life have you experienced this pivotal moment, because the pivotal moment is really the core of great story. That's the place that you can begin to pull out the details and begin to craft something that's going to be relevant for people, whether it's your audience, your clients, or anybody else in the business context.*

*Those moments, and this is the piece that sometimes I might find resistance to, why do I have to look at emotional moments in order to apply it to my business, and I say,*



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*"Because the emotional moments are where things really, really happen, things that matter." Where we experience something that matters, and we can tell that story, we invite people in to the most important moments, and that's about sharing, and that's about really serving others.*

## **Danny**

*Very cool. I really like where you started this, the exercise of it's not about what you want to say, it's about what would be impactful to share to them. Whenever I'm working with students and teaching them copywriting, I use the example of, to take it out of a business context, imagine you're writing a birthday card or a toast for a wedding or stuff like that. Where do you start? I'll look for an inspiring quote or I'll look for something. No, you want to start with, what would be meaningful for these people to hear?*

## **Lisa**

*Mm-hmm (affirmative).*

## **Danny**

*What do you know about them and what matters to them? I really like that.*

## **Lisa**

*Yeah. When you're pitching an idea, or where you're selling an idea of some sort, you need to be able to understand what that audience already knows, what they desire, what they feel, and what you actually want them to do, what you want them to say, what you want them to understand. Analyzing that whole piece is the very first step to creating powerful stories in business, and most people don't have a sense that that's where you start. That's really enlightening for people. Then there's 1 other thing that's incredibly interesting in that, to me, it seems so obvious.*

*When I began to talk about it with business owners, I realized that it was not obvious to others, is that if you think about any idea that you're trying to... whether you're*



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*trying to sell, you're trying to introduce an idea, generally there's ... well, there's always actually going to be some resistance. Most people's attitude to resistance is don't focus on it, because if you focus on a resistance, it will grow. Let's just make small of the resistance, and talk about the benefits. What I say, for powerful story, the resistance has to build into the story. It's almost like the conflict, if you look at other narrative. I always say Romeo and Juliet wouldn't have been an interesting story if the family were the greatest of friends.*

*You've got to look at where the resistance lies, because that's oftentimes the core interesting and pivotal piece of the story. If you implant the resistance into the story as you build it and craft it, then what happens is that people feel heard. They feel the resistance. They don't even have to voice it, because you've already voiced it for them. You're already bringing people in to the story by voicing the very resistance that they haven't had a chance or the nerve or the courage to actually step forward and voice. Resistance is always a core piece of story, and in a lot of work that I do, people are surprised when I say that, but as we explore it, they realize that it's absolutely the case.*

## **Danny**

*What's your vision for what you want to do with this? How far do you want this to go, and what are the implications?*

## **Lisa**

*I've been training story coaches across the world for the last few years. I have the belief that all coaches are story coaches, because we are just really blessed to be able to hear people's stories all the time, and to create this beautiful space where people can explore their stories, and yet, like me way back when, I didn't call it storytelling. I didn't call it story coaching.*



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*Part of my vision is to be able to have people wake up to the power of story, and the power of story both internally and externally, so externally in terms of growing their business, in terms of creating the right, whether it's a brand or whether it's messaging or whether it's the aligned services to their story, because a story to me is the core. I want people to become aware of story as being the core piece of how they show up in the world, and how they do everything they do, how they do their relationships, how they do their business, how they do their parenting. It's all about the story.*

*For me, firstly, and at this point in my life, it's the business context, I want people to become aware of the power of story, and not just as a concept, but actually learn the tools for creating story, powerful story, and crafting good stories, because you mentioned before that we all have this narrative and we don't just tell events haphazardly. The truth is some of us do. Not everybody has this very strong sense of narrative and the ability to craft a really compelling story, so a lot of my work is to help people learn how to do that. There is a way to learn that. There is a process to follow. It is step by step. When people understand the power of story, I find that they can grow a stronger business. They can get more connections, deeper connections, with people, whether it's their clients, whether it's their followers, or whether it's the people in their personal life.*

*It's almost like a showing up and being more present to everything they do. On one end, I go into organizations and I teach leaders how to ... We demystify this idea of leadership presence, where people see the leader walks in, and everybody feels her presence. They think it's charisma, but it's not. I've demystified that with a model that teaches what stories do you need to master in order to build leadership*



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*presence. Then when I take it to businesses and to coaches, it's like what stories do you need to master in order to be fully present in your life and fully present in your business. That's my vision is that that will spread ahead into the world.*

**Danny**

*If that were to happen, what would the ramifications be?*

**Lisa**

*I think there'd be a lot less war in the world actually. I think people would be more connected and showing up more engaged in just having stronger relationships. When you see yourself and you connect to your real story, you actually see others better too. Let me explain that for a moment. When I tell you a story that's well-crafted, and it's specific, and that is a little bit vulnerable, enough to have you connect emotionally to me, but more importantly to yourself, what happens is that my story opens up an exploration for you, for your own story and yourself. There's a beautiful connection.*

*When you can see and hear somebody else's story, and tell your story in that same kind of open listening environment, what happens is that you realize that you're much more alike than you are different. In a business context, that means that somebody can relate to your story, connect with you, build trust, and hire you, or buy your services, your products, your programs. In a relationship situation, it means that there's just much more honest and open communication, that people are moving from a place of presence rather than a place of fear, and of desires and wants, and trying to bring in something by force.*

*For me, it's really about ... I think when people are more aware of story, they're more connected to themselves, and therefore, more able to be open and to be more generous and more contributing and more able to hear and see others. That, to me,*



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*feels like peace. When I say peace, I don't mean necessarily just peace between warring factors in certain countries. I'm talking about a sense that there's enough. There's enough business to go around, there's enough clients to go around, there's enough money, there's enough resources that we don't have to be fearful of scarcity at all times, but just be really present to who we are and what we have and what we're doing in the world and what we're supposed to do in the world.*

## **Danny**

*That was Lisa, changing the business world and the lives of the people who are part of it through story. Her core idea is a powerful one, that there are many ways to tell the story of your experiences, and you have the power to choose the narrative that is both true and helpful. To learn more about Lisa's work, visit [story-coach.com](http://story-coach.com).*

### *Voiceover*

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## **Danny**

*Today's reviewer is none other than my good friend and our very first guest on this show, Sean Platt, who says, "Danny does a fantastic job connecting with successful business people, and distilling their whims into smart takeaways for his audience, but his new podcast takes it to the next level. Connect, Engage, Inspire," which is referring to our old podcast, "was good. Business Reimagined is great." Thank you very much, Sean, for the sentiment, for coming on the show, and for kind of affirming that we're on the right track raising the bar in what we're doing, which was the whole point.*

### *Voiceover*

*This has been Business Reimagined with Danny. Join us next time as we talk with Dr. Nicolas Lucas.*

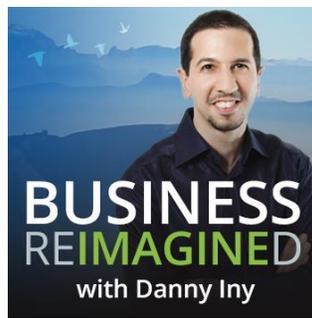


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### *Episode 20*

## Nic

*One of my clients is a great friend as well. He was doing a project and he was really stuck on it, months and months of procrastination. It really boiled down to the fact he ... It was so close to his heart that he felt incredibly vulnerable. He felt like he wasn't good enough. He felt like, when he launched his project, that it could really risk his reputation. You could logically put down on paper everything about why it would be a success and why he had nothing to worry about, but logic can't fix a problem that wasn't formed in logic. This is an emotional problem.*

### *Voiceover*

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