



# Visionary Series: Tips to Creatively Solve Problems in Your Business

THRIVE BY DESIGN WITH TRACY MATTHEWS

*"If you're getting interrupted all day, people are talking to you and you're checking your email all the time, checking your notifications you're going to be very unproductive and your creativity will be zapped. The point being is that we need to be fueling that creativity that we are gifted with."*

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Tracy: Welcome to the Thrive by Design podcast, we got episode 187 coming up and it is called The Visionary Series. Actually I'm bringing back the Visionary Series is what I should say. I started this series of podcasts for people who are leading companies, especially in the product fashion, jewelry space about a year and a half ago and I realized last year I didn't record any because I had this idea, I wanted to launch a new platform called the Visionary Circle last year I couldn't get it off the ground because we just had a lot going on with launching a new coaching program and all that stuff. A Visionary Circle is really dedicated, it's a mastermind for leaders that I'm going to be bringing in to 2019, this year. If you want to get on the wait list I'm going to tell you how you can do that in a moment. Anyway, the Visionary Series was really dedicated to helping you think like a leader in your company, think like a visionary. And for those of you who already identify yourself as a visionary, if you've read the book Rocket Fuel or you know what I'm talking about or you've taken our multiplier profits course and you call yourself the chief visionary officer of your company, then you might have a little inkling about what I'm talking about.

Anyway, the Visionary Series was launched and started because I was thinking about doing another podcast called Creatives Rule the World, which would tie into my new business and I realized producing two podcasts would be very hard, but and maybe it's something I will do eventually, but it would be helpful to all business, especially small and mighty companies who are trying to build A player teams and trying to expand their messaging their brand and really get their designs out into



the world, and this is where it starts because creative people, by nature have a lot of ideas and many of those creative people are actually identify themselves as visionaries because their vision of what they're trying to create really changes people's lives, changes the world, you're creating jobs for people and this is what it's all about. So I'm here, I'm going to be bringing at least one of these every single month, if not more, and then eventually we'll see how it goes. I'd love your feedback on this if you're liking the Visionary Series podcast episodes that I'm doing, I'd love to hear from you soon you can shoot me a message on Instagram over at Tracy Matthews New York, @TracyMatthewsNY or you can head on over to @CreativesRuleTheWorld on Instagram and just comment and tell me what you think because I want to know a little bit more about how you're responding to these Visionary Series podcast because I think it's stuff that we can all use as we're growing our business.

Anyway, today I wanted to talk about tips to creatively solve problems in your business, because as visionaries and creative people we have the gifts to think outside of the box and to come up with solutions to problems that a lot of people wouldn't think about if we allow ourselves and we give the space, and we hone in the skill. I've noticed this, I can't say that I was always this way, but I am someone who is really good at solving problems. Let me sit with something for a few minutes I can think of a few ideas, those ideas aren't necessarily the right answer, but those ideas lead to other ideas that can become a collaborative effort that I lean on with my team to actually solve problems here at Flourish and Thrive Academy, make a better experience for our customers, handle tech issues or roadblocks that we're facing because all those things are exactly what we're meant to be doing as creative beings.

Once one person, you know I really encourage creativity on my team, we are going to be implementing creative days in Flourish and Thrive Academy so each team member will have a day that they get paid their full day rate to be creative and come back to us and present us with an idea that they had that will improve the company or customer experience and so on and so forth. And the reason why I want to do this is because I have some really smart people on my team. Abby and Jess have been with me for the longest now besides Robin, because she's my cofounder, she has great ideas all the time, she's always bringing them to the table. Abby and Jess, they've been with me for a long time and they're really invested in Flourish and Thrive Academy. Abby is in very much lessened role now, but they are always coming to me with new ideas, things that they can do



to improve and grow our programs. In fact Jess is so creative, she's also a jewelry designer and has her own jewelry brand as well, but she's really come up with some amazing ideas for the Diamond Insiders. In fact she is one, like she pitched me on so many ideas and she's so smart when it comes to this stuff that I ended up making her in charge of the whole community because she's just so good at really understanding and solving problems for our members. That's like her zone of genius, she's a really, really good at it. So I highly encourage that for everyone on our teams come back to me with ideas about how they can solve problems on their own, and when they can't figure it out they come to me and I help, we brainstorm or I come up with some great solutions to problems as well.

I wanted to talk a little bit about ways that I've done this and also share with you a little bit more about why I'm so passionate about this. So today sponsor is my new brand, Creatives Rule The World, I would love for you to come visit me over at [CreativesRuleTheWorld.com](https://CreativesRuleTheWorld.com), it's spelled out just like it sounds in American English and I say that because I don't think any word here would be spelled differently in England or Canada but just in case, we're going to put it out there. Anyway, I'm really passionate about supporting the visionaries out there, especially visionaries who are running product-based companies, jewelry companies, fashion businesses, accessories brands, any sort of physical product because it's a unique situation, it's different an info product or education company or something like that, and not that anything that I support people with wouldn't be relevant across all fields, there's just something so different about product-based businesses that makes it very unique. And one thing that I know is that a lot of times the leaders of those companies, the visionaries of those companies, the founders get themselves in a lot of pickles, they don't allow themselves enough space to think and be creative, they're often putting out fires.

Because of that, they have a, number one, a hard time growing their company, they work really late all the time, they feel like they don't have time for themselves and even though they love their business it's almost like they have a love and hate relationship with their business because they haven't found the right balance. I'm not going to call it work life balance, I'm going to call it work work balance because maybe it's visionary leadership balance because it really has to do with you being able to set boundaries and step away and be able to set guidelines for your team and to help them support them in becoming independent



creative thinkers of their own. One of the things that I do over here all the time is I set these boundaries like I'm unavailable, you can't reach out to me, and if you want something step back. I encourage my team to do that too, because it's not that they're not working, it's just that if you're getting interrupted all day, people are talking to you and you're getting Slack messages or emails all day and you're checking your email all the time, checking your notifications, you're never going to get any work, done you're going to feel frustrated all the time and you're going to be very unproductive and your creativity will be zapped. The point being is that as creative entrepreneurs, as visionaries we need to be fueling that creativity that we are gifted with, and the more we practice this, while exercising both left and right sides of our brains, the more powerful and more amazing companies we will be able to create.

Because let's face it, 10, 15, 20 years computers are going to be able to do a lot of the left brain side of businesses. You don't need a human being to necessarily create a spreadsheet. In fact, a computer can probably create a better spreadsheet than a human, but you know, if you think of accounting programs and automations and all the things that are doing, like you don't need human beings always for that. Pretty soon going AI is going to be so intelligent that it can do a lot of the left brain thinking. So even left brain thinkers need to start being more creative if they want to stay relevant, and so I'm really, really passionate about this.

In fact I read a book a couple of times actually, I bought it, I gave the book away and then I bought it again on Audible and just recently listened to it called *A Whole New Mind* by Daniel Pink, and it's all about how left brain thinkers are becoming more obsolete because the jobs can oftentimes be outsourced to countries where they can find cheaper labor, and especially here in places where it's expensive to live we get almost like outsourced out of our jobs to other countries or computer out of our jobs and with the rise of AI and computer technology even being able to do like stock trades and stuff like that, we don't even need humans to trade our finances anymore because the AI will become so powerful that it will run it for us and eventually level things out. Now, I'm no finance expert, I'm no huge left brain expert or anything like that, but what I do know is that the one thing that's helped me grow my business is my ability to creatively problem solve and to instead of be paralyzed by issues that come up in my business is to attack them full on and maybe "attack" is the wrong word, but to face them full on and start thinking how can we make this a



win win, how can I change the outcome of this. Instead of be afraid of it and just feel devastated and doomed like I have no choice.

And so that's what Creatives Rule The World is all about, it's my passion to help visionary thinkers, visionaries of companies support themselves with the right people, think creatively and be inspired so you'll be hearing more about that. If you're interested in learning more, I will have links on the show notes of how you can grab the visionary code download. It's a great download on my new website and also get on the wait list for the Visionary Circle if you are interested in joining a mastermind of like-minded individuals who are doing at least \$300,000 or more in revenue in their business and are trying to cross the seven figure mark and beyond. The focus of the mastermind is going to be leadership, hiring, managing people, delegating, getting things off your plate so that you can actually grow your business and do the things that you're meant to be doing in business instead of the things that you have to do in business to keep it running. We're going to get those things off your plate.

Anyway, this is going to be a super fun episode today. I want to share with you some examples of how I've recently creatively problem solved situations that I didn't have an answer to real quickly. A couple years ago, I was working with a customer and he asked me to design some cuff links with his brown logo on it. What he wanted just wasn't possible, he wanted this Florentine finish on these cuff links that were recessed and Florentine finish's best on a raised surface, I'm not a professional finisher but I can tell you that. He is really adamant, he wanted a certain thing so we had to kind of think outside of the box, how can we do this, how can we achieve the look he's going for without figuring it out. I left no stone unturned, and if you listen to last week's episode you heard me talk about that.

No stone unturned in episode 186 about the qualities of A players, about how we can kind of achieve this look. We decided to go with a hand engraver. Hand engravers take in a long time to get work done, especially in this day and age because if you know any hand engravers that you work with, they're old school and they do things to a T, totally different than what we've got now. So long story short, figured out the solution, he agreed and made the customer happy, made thousands of dollars on these cuff link orders. I no longer I'm working with that customer to these days because I couldn't problem solve the other problem which was the delivery time because he was impatient and never gave me enough lead time to have these high touch beautiful cuff links made. So we decided to



part ways, but over the course of that period of time I sold probably, I don't know \$12000 worth of cuff links, he ordered several pair from me. I'm trying to think, do the math in my head. Pretty awesome. I think each pair... Maybe even more than that, maybe like \$15000 worth of cuff links. Pretty awesome, he was having them done in gold which was cool.

In the summer our social media manager left here from Flourish and Thrive, she'd been with us for a very long time and it was time to move on, she was kind of going on to greener pastures, Sharon had been with us for a long time, she was really interested in doing more social work, she bought a house and was Air BnB-ing it, and that was like her main focus. So we were fine, we hired a new social media person, and after training her and getting on board we realized she had like amazing ideas. She was like actually really good creative problem solver. She came up with brilliant ideas. But she wasn't ever implementing things and so we had to kind of make a tough call that this wasn't really a right fit, we had to move on, she agreed it wasn't like the right fit for her either. We didn't have time because of the situation that we were going through to hire someone else. So as a team we figured out what we could do. Jess would take on a part, certain part of the role, Abby would take on another sort part of the role and Clay would take on another part of the role. So we divided that role up into three members of our team temporarily until we could find a new content person. We do have a new team member that's going to be joining us, we're going to be doing her test project starting out in I think next week which is exciting, really is this week as this podcast goes live. Anyway, Andrea will be joining our team and it's going to be fun, we're going to have a blast with the content.

So anyway, we thought outside of the box about how we could tag team to fill in the gap of a role that was really pivotal in this company that we didn't really have in place for over six months. We realized that trying to train someone to do something that they were never going to be able to do was taking up more time than just like absorbing the time into our individual roles. So anyway, those are just a couple of examples of things that I've done recently or over the last couple years to creatively problem solver, but I'm literally creatively problem solving every day and I'm sure that you, if you think about it probably are too. So I wanted to give you some ideas on how you can kind of tap into this. I think the most important thing is that you need space to be creative, and I talked about this, I've talked about this several times on the podcast about my creative days. I take creative days every single Wednesday, it's my day to either



catch up on content, I'm not online, I'm not necessarily working on Flourish and Thrive that I have to do, although if it's my choice to do that, I will. I'm thinking of ideas to actually grow the business and thinking of solutions to some of the things that we face in the company. That Wednesday day has been very important to me, and it's going to be interesting to see what happens because I shifted something with my cleaning lady because they started doing these 5 AM mornings where I'm using that as creative space as well. My cleaning lady is now coming on my creative day, so it'll be interesting to see like how that pans out, but maybe I'll just use that time to go to a museum or meet a friend for a late lunch or something instead, because that's what the time is actually for. So I'm excited to see how it pans out, but those creative days have actually changed my life and my sanity and my business because they have time to do the things that I actually want to do in business.

Here are some ways to make space to problem solve and actually be creative to sort of think about this. Creativity, as I said, takes space. Block out your mornings or evenings for quiet time and so take like an hour or two just for yourself with no distractions to write in your journal, to write, to draw, whatever it is, and when I draw and I'm not necessarily meaning drawing jewelry or your products, whatever you have. I'm more talking about drawing, I draw diagrams and frameworks and things that need to actually get done in your business. I mention my one day a week for creativity, but the thing that really you have, is required from you when you're creating the space for your creativity and making time is that you're disciplined about it, so don't cheat. Don't get on Slack or your email or getting on your Bumble app or your Instagram. Most of you probably aren't single, but for those of you who are single, you know what Bumble means. If you are married or you have kids you probably have no idea what that means. It's easy to get distracted, and if you have a team it's really easy to get distracted or allow people to distract you and ask you questions. You have to set boundaries for these things.

The second step is to really take a zoom out of what's going on. So the more you can kind of look at the big picture and spend time thinking about the bigger goals and objectives of what you're trying to create for your business, the more success you will have. Especially because when you're stuck in those granular details you're looking at things like too closely and you can't see other opportunities and other options. So zoom out, think of the bigger picture of what you're trying to do, come up with ideas for how you want that to roll out and then start working on the



details of that later. Come up with ideas, when you have your creative time in your creative space, ideate. Sit with ideas, document those ideas and think about all the different possibilities. You can do this in a couple of different ways. If you know anything about mind mapping you can mind map, I'm not an expert in mind mapping, I have done it before but you can try it, it's a great way and it's also a visual exercise where you draw and write things down. One of my favorite things to do is to brain dump. I mean I get ideas in the craziest places like I'll be in the shower and I'm like, "Shoot, my hands are wet, I can't like type it into my phone." or something. My phone has my biggest list. I sometimes never look at the stuff again, but it makes me feel a sense of calm and confidence that I have it documented somewhere. You know what I mean? So that brainstorming opportunity or brain dumping opportunity I should say is awesome.

Another great thing to do is to brainstorm with others. Brainstorming, brain dumping or different... Brain dump is more I feel like individual practice, brainstorm is oftentimes, it can be done alone but it's oftentimes with other people where you're feeding off of each other's energy and sometimes someone person's idea might not be the right idea but inspires another idea that actually works really, really well. So this is a great way to start thinking, like solving your problems creatively. One of my favorite things to do is to ask for help, and that comes through meditation. We've talked a little bit about creating space for the problem solving, we talked a little bit about looking at the big picture and zooming out a little bit, we talked about ideating and coming up with ideas, but what do you do when you're still not getting an answer? Answer to that is to quiet your mind. And so meditation practice is really good. I started, I got out of my meditation practice for a year, it's probably why I felt crazy half the time last year and I started really committing to it over these last couple of weeks starting in December actually of 2018, and it's been an amazing resource. The meditation doesn't always look the same, but I ask for help, I'm like, "Show me what I need to see, show me what I need to see. Tell me the answer." If you believe in a higher power or spirits or angels and saints or guides or Jesus or God or whatever you can ask those people for help, all those people, your team of angels and spirit guides up in the heavens, but you can also ask for help, and a lot of times that guidance comes from ourselves, because we have everything that we need within us. Sometimes we just can't hear because our mind gets in the way, and when you can quite your mind through meditation it's really helpful.



There's this philosophy in the Buddhist tradition called, I don't know if it's a philosophy, it's a concept I guess, is a better way to put it, called Beginner's Mind. And this is one of the first things that you're taught when you're learning meditation practice. As we get older there's many songs written about this, there's a great Travis song written about this too. They talk about when your child everything, because you're coming at things with a beginner's mind or an open mind. And as you get older you have concepts and constructs and beliefs about your situation in and what you believe to be true about yourself and all that stuff, and that can sometimes get in the way of your idea of actually, your ability maybe is a better way to put it, to think outside of the box, and so it starts to block you from letting good ideas and good things come in.

So the more that you can kind of tap into like "I know nothing, show me what I don't know instead" of "I already know that", you will, like so much greatness will happen. In fact when we enroll people into our SOS coaching program, one of the things that I say to them and that happens on our intake calls is you know, you must agree to these terms. And one of them is that you're coachable, because a lot of times people will come in and they don't want to take the advice. We had a student join our program maybe last year or a couple years ago, I guess it was last year because we only had the SOS coaching program for a year, we're in year two now. Designers are killing it, which I love to see. Anyway, every time she would get on a call with someone she would say "that won't work for me, I don't know, I've already tried." If you're always approaching every situation like you're a know-it-all instead of a beginner, you're never going to get value or understand what the possibilities are. It's hard because sometimes we try things and we're like, "That's not going to work for me, I already tried that before, it didn't work." but you know, maybe there's just a different perspective or you need to look at it in a new way, and sometimes a small tweak could make all the difference. That's what I mean by beginner's mind, people. You've got to get this going and get this right because that's how we get fresh and right.

So my fifth tip for you is to ask for advice, feedback or collaborate. So this can come from a variety of different ways. I like to do like brainstorming sessions, feedback session, asking for advice with my friends. I have a close group of friends that I would ask for help who are also entrepreneurs, who are great strategic thinkers as well, great creative thinkers. And sometimes leaning on them for advice is great. It's not that I'm asking them to tell me what to do, there's a difference, but if you can say like, "I'm



thinking about this, what do you think about these scenarios?" and they can give you feedback, "I think this is a good one to follow but not this one." can really help you decipher like which ideas are the good ones. One thing that we do on my team all the time, and I spoke about this briefly earlier is that we're collaborating on ideas. So we have these brainstorming sessions where we can collaborate and come up with the best creative problem solving idea possible. So asking for advice, asking for feedback or collaborating with other people is brilliant. I think sometimes with the biggest problems you have it's best to have a small group of trusted advisers or people that you talk to you that can actually help with this. Like a small mastermind group, an accountability group. You know, depending on the parameters, like no more than like maybe 20 people. It's fine if you're in a bigger community, but you're going to get a lot of like confusing advice or conflicting advice, and sometimes that becomes harder to do. Or if you want to do really small group like a group of four is typically really good. Three to four.

The next thing, my sixth piece of advice is to think about the other side of the problem. So a lot of times when you're problem solving it's to fix something that's going wrong in your business, and there's typically another person or another scenario on the other side of that, so if you can kind of look at it from their point of view, like how are they looking in and how do we make this a win win situation for both sides. Is there something that we can do as a company to make this a win win. So for instance, we've worked with people in the past who had had trouble like making a payment for a course or something that they've done. So we're like, we have to lock... A part of our policy is that we lock them on the course until they're paid in full, but sometimes they need the actual like resources to actually do this, so we can work out like a scenario with them in order to get them like in the good or in the green I guess is the way to put it.

You know, on several occasions we really are trying to work with people to help make it a win win for both sides and creatively problem solve their problems. We've had... I don't even want to say this on the show, we've had people doing some shady things with Flourish and Thrive content, and so we've thought about maybe sharing unethically or illegally and we've had to do some things to actually lock out our member, track IP, so that we can go after people who are illegally sharing the Flourish and Thrive IP. So we've got to think like strategically like how can we make this like a win win for both sides where the members aren't punished for



doing the right thing, but that the shady people who are hijacking intellectual property and doing unethical things with this can be locked out in a way that is not going to harm the business or something else. If you want to think about... That's like uncomfortable thing for me to really talk about on this podcast, but if you want to think about this from a business perspective, like what about a customer who says that you know you counted all the items in the box that you ship to them, they open it up and they're saying an item's missing. Like how do you make that a win win for both sides. Is it worth it to make the person pay again or is it something that maybe if it didn't really cost you that much you can replace it or is it something that you take up with the insurance company because you are smart cookie and you insured your package for delivery. All these things, you know these are just kind of random scenarios but there's a lot of things that you can do to creatively problem solve to make you not only the customer happy or the other person on the other side happy, or the other person of the scenario happy and to make it a win win. So take a look at both sides of the problem is my point so that you can really think through like how is this going to work for both of us and get us the same or better outcome.

My tip number seven is to get inspired by your peers. So one thing I think it's a really amazing and has been like so beneficial to me about being involved in coaching programs, being involved in mastermind programs and groups and also starting our own coaching program over here to at Flourish and Thrive Academy is to get inspired by what the other things that people are doing. Because we can come up with ideas all day, but sometimes like a little tinge of inspiration from someone else can lead to something so much bigger all in all in our business that is incredible. I'm part of a coaching group that helps us with our coaching program and I get so much inspiration on how we can really connect with our audience, how we can improve the deliverables that we give to our coaching students. how we can filter and connect with the right people who are good potential candidates for the program. There's so many ways that I get inspired by basically like filling our group up with the right kind of people just by being involved in a coaching program like that\ Same goes true for every mastermind program I've ever been involved in, and so that's what we are also creating and inspiring in our SOS coaching program as well. Think outside the box.

So I think one thing that we do is sometimes we get set in our ways as we get older. So tip number eight is think outside the box. Do something



different. I was listening to podcasts a while back by James Wedmore, or maybe it was Amy Porterfield, I can't remember, and her thing was like how do you zig when everyone else's when everyone else is zagging, or how do you zag when everyone else is zigging. Like how can you do something against the grain what everyone else is doing in business to make a difference and stand out, because when you think outside of the box, this can create like, really create you a leader in your niche or industry or field. So I think sometimes like especially I talk about this with my students who have small home grown businesses, especially those that we're coaching in SOS and our Diamond Insiders program about how can you become the best in your area.

You don't need to be the best in the world for something because you know, not all of us are going to be a Jennifer Dawes or a Todd Reed, Todd Pownell, or whoever, you know I mean. Not all of us are going to be these internationally acclaimed brands that have exposure like Alexis Bittar does around the world. He eventually sold his company and now it's owned by a bigger company. Not all of us are going to get to that point, nor we necessarily want to be, but how can we be rock stars in our area. Vivian who's in our SOS coaching program, Vivian Saade, she is, I'm encouraging her to be the number one jeweler in Long Branch. She's been doing such a good job, Long Branch, New Jersey, if anyone's looking for a jeweler in Long Branch, New Jersey reach out to Vivian. She's doing such a great job with this and really promoting herself as that she's consistently getting heirloom redesign projects in her local area. It's a wonderful thing to see because you don't need every single customer, you just need the right customers. If you heard us talking anything about Kevin Kelly's 1000 true fans philosophy, if you had 100 people paying you \$500 a year that's a pretty good business. You know, do the math. Like it's awesome. You had 10 people paying \$5000 to a year, that's a really good business. You know what I'm saying? So there's a lot. Or even a 100 people paying \$5000 to you, that's an excellent business. It's a lot that you can do to scale. Think outside the box, think small to think in, and especially if what you're trying isn't working. Identify these three things as you're thinking outside of the box. What's worked, what hasn't worked, and what haven't you tried yet because that's a really good parameter.

Come up with lots of possible solutions. This is tip number nine. There isn't one answer or one way to solve a problem, so if you can come up with a variety of solutions to the problems, you can really validate which one will work best and try it. So come up with three, five, ten ideas, eliminate the



ones that aren't good and then use that as a platform to actually do something differently. And then finally be selective with these ideas that you come up with, but store them all somewhere. So you can use your phone to jot things down. In our Slack channel and in our office now we have a Tracy idea file, this is where I can store ideas and send them over to you. Asana project... I always call it Asana because I used to teach yoga, but in our project management tool, Asana. It can be stored there so I know that I have a reference point to look back at and I don't feel panicked that I'm going to lose this brilliant idea that's going to change the world and change my life and change my business over and over again.

So these are just some tips to help you creatively problem solve in your business then a fun episode for me to do. I didn't really know how it was going to go, and I have enjoyed being here on my first Visionary Series episode of the year. So I'm going to sign off now, I really want to thank you, if you're interest in learning more about our SOS coaching program I'll have a link in the show notes or you can apply for a strategy session over at [FlourishThriveAcademy.com/strategy](https://FlourishThriveAcademy.com/strategy). I would love to see you over at [CreativesRuleTheWorld.com](https://CreativesRuleTheWorld.com), feel free to download my visionary code audio and get on the wait list for the Visionary Circle if that's something you're interested in, and I'd love to just support you in any way, shape or form that I possibly can. So come say hello to me over at Creatives Rule The World on Instagram and let's party, my friends. Anyway, I am signing off, thank you so much for listening today. If you've enjoyed the show, please rate and review the show on whatever platform that you're looking at and tell us what you think, or that you're listening on I should say and tell us what you think. I'd really, really love to know. Thanks so much for being here today, this is Tracy Matthews signing off.