



## MAXIMIZE BUSINESS VALUE PODCAST - EPISODE 7 Transcript

Announcer: 0:05

Welcome to the Maximize Business Value Podcast. This podcast is brought to you by Mastery Partners where our mission is to equip business owners maximize business value so they can transition their business on their terms. Our mission was born from the lessons we've learned from over a hundred business transactions, which fuels our desire to share our experiences and wisdom so you can succeed. Now, here's your host, CEO of Mastery Partners, Tom Bronson.

Tom Bronson: 0:37

Hi, this is Tom Bronson and welcome to maximize business value, a podcast for business leaders who are passionate about building long-term sustainable value in their business. In this episode, I'd like to welcome our guest, Susan Steinbrecher, president of Steinbrecher and associates. She has written three great books on leadership. I first met Susan when she was a speaker at business navigators, a servant leadership organization based in Dallas. And later was reintroduced to Susan by our mutual good friend Beth Denton. Uh, when we talked recently, I was so excited to learn more about how Steinbrecher and associates really helps businesses develop great leaders. And I thought, what a great topic for this podcast, which is all of course about learning how to maximize business value. And sometimes that starts with leadership. So welcome to maximize business value. Susan, tell us a little bit about Steinbrecher and associates.

Susan Steinbrecher: 1:42

Well, thank you Tom. It's my pleasure to be with you. I'm excited to spend some time with you today. Um, so Steinbrecher and Associates was formed, believe it or not, it'll be 28 years this Friday, which I'm very proud of because we've gone through the best and the worst of times obviously. Um, but we are a leadership development company, so we specialize in custom design, leadership training, we provide executive coaching services, we facilitate offsite meetings, whether that be a new leader, a simulation team

intervention, strategic planning. Um, and then also, as you mentioned, we do is consulting and I've written several books. So that's, that's what we do.

Tom Bronson: 2:22

So what, what did you do before you used 28 years ago? That's almost as long as my marriage. So, which is awesome. Uh, what, what was your background and, and uh, what did you, you know, why did you start Steinbrecher and associates?

Susan Steinbrecher: 2:36

So my background was the hospitality industry, which I have my heart to these days because during this time, of course they'd been probably the most significantly hit. Um, but I spent 14 years in hospitality. I was one of those 25 year old general managers of a hotel and learned everything to do and not do at a very young age. And from there I was promoted and asked to train general managers on behalf of the organization. And so I led the strategic training and development function and then they moved their headquarters and I was very appreciative of the offer to move, but I made the decision at that point, this is my opportunity to start my own company and that's what I chose to do.

Tom Bronson: 3:16

Wow. So, uh, that's, that is interesting. Um, I didn't actually know that about you. Uh, so they gave you an offer to actually leave the area and go somewhere else, but you chose to do this.

Susan Steinbrecher: 3:29

I figured this was the good time to pivot and start my own. And I of course had no idea what I was doing, but I just, I decided I'd figure it out.

Tom Bronson: 3:37

No doubt. So, uh, so when I really kinda think about what is the core of Steinbrecher and Associates, um, a lot of it is about coaching people, coaching executives you are coaching before then, before coaching became, you know, popular buzzword. Tell us a little bit about what executive coaching is and how coaching can help improve businesses.

Susan Steinbrecher: 4:04

That great question. So coaching at one time maybe before like when I got started was about 25 years of my 28 years being in business for about 25 years ago. I've got a real interest in wanting to really see the light bulbs go off in individuals. And although we did wonderful training and people told us the classes were great and they learned all these things, I really wanted to do a one-on-one approach so that I could see this individual get it, so to speak. And at that time I started exploring the field and it was relatively new. And at that time I also discovered that most coaching was kind of hush hush, like reserved for the C suite and they didn't really quite want to disclose that they were working with a coach. I guess for fear of what, you don't have it all together, you don't know where everything you're supposed to know or whatever that is.

Susan Steinbrecher: 4:55

And so it was kind of a quiet behind the scenes profession. And then when I started looking at this, I thought, I'm seeing the wave change a little bit with that. I'm seeing an uptick in the buzz around it. I'm seeing coaching kind of spread down the organization beyond the C suite level and always use that analogy that even the absolute most talented best athletes still have coaches. So why would we invest or not invest, I should say, and a leader of an organization who is ultimately responsible for the P and L of that organization and for the sustainability of that organization and not think that they might actually have some benefit working with a coach. So I started talking to individuals about that and that sort of made sense to a lot of people. And then I started my own training and putting pieces together that I just had learned along the way and formulated my own sort of coaching methodology.

Susan Steinbrecher: 5:56

And, um, it's called an ROI approach because it's very much we hold people accountable and we want to make sure they get a return on the investment. And so we crafted our particular approach that way. And I also found at that time that there was a lot of life coaching out there, which is great and needed. Um, but I didn't see a lot of business coaching that was really designed with that ROI in mind. And so I felt like there's a, there's a missing piece here and I'm going to fill it. So I created our methodology and we now certified people all over the world and our coaching process.

Tom Bronson: 6:37

Oh no. You know, that is an excellent point. Yeah. Two of the things that you mentioned there, number one, you know, CEOs are supposed to be Superman, right? They are

there. There is no kryptonite. Right? Uh, they, they got to where they are by being who they are. Uh, but, but what a great analogy that I can't, as you said, uh, the point about, uh, you know, professional sports figures. I can't think of one that doesn't have a coach. I mean, you think about, yeah, these, these professional golfers, they all have multiple coaches. The basket, Michael Jordan famously had, you know, coaches that were, that were helping him to improve his game. Um, and so even people at the very top, uh, can benefit from being coached and learning new things. So you, you touched on your methodology. Can you tell us maybe a little bit more about your methodology and how you coach executives?

Susan Steinbrecher: 7:37

Yeah, sure. And I think this goes back to my business experience at the ripe age of 25 years old running a P and L in a hotel, a \$40 million asset with a hundred employees. Right? Wow. And I remember I learned the hard way. Trust me, I made lots of lots of mistakes, which I also use and teach people today cause I learned firsthand what to do and what not to do as as a young leader. Um, that being said, it's, it's one of those things where I always fell as an operator, you have to get a return on your investment. Training is good, coaching is good, all that stuff is good. But if I don't see the ROI on that, then it's been a nice experience. But what am I really left with here? So what I created is what we call an ROI approach.

Susan Steinbrecher: 8:26

We measure from the very first conversation we have with the client to the very last conversation we have with a client and client's boss, by the way. Um, did we or did we not move the needle here? So we've identified a couple of core issues. This person needs to develop even the best of the best, right? Have areas of opportunity for growth. And so we want to leverage the strengths that they have. And we focus on that because if you have someone who has a major strength, let's say strategic planning, if you kick that up, just two more percent or three more percent, what's the result of that? It's pretty significant. So we focus on leveraging the strengths, but we also take a look at where the development opportunity is. And so we measure from the very beginning and along the way have we or have we not moved at how do we know that we have in fact moved the needle on that particular competency?

Susan Steinbrecher: 9:18

What's the evidence of that? So that's where sometimes surveys come in. Um, so there's a lots of processes in our sort of toolkit, if you will around that that we use. But we felt

measurement was really important. Another very key pieces in the beginning, we have what we call our diagnostic phase. So we always do with three 60 which for those that are not familiar with that process, Stan, you interview an ours is interview only. I mean, I'm certified in five instruments. It's not that there's not good instruments out there. There are, but I get more data from a conversation than I will ever get someone checking off a box on a form. So that's a key data point we collect. We also do a very unique proprietary process call understanding one's mental models. Mental models are those core beliefs that we just take on due to life experiences. It's sort of the iceberg effect, if you will. If you think about what's underneath the maths is underneath that iceberg, you only see the tip. But what really is holding that iceberg up is this mass underneath. Well that's our belief, systems, value systems, et cetera. So we identify what that is because it's a very high correlation, about a 95% correlation between the leader's behavior that we're able to capture through the three 60 and those mental models. And then we also do emotional intelligence assessments and other things that are really custom crafted to that individual.

Tom Bronson: 10:46

I love the ROI approach. Um, my clients hear that, um, uh, ad nauseum, uh, the companies, as you know, I've, I've, uh, either, uh, bought or sold a hundred businesses and of course in the interim, I was running those businesses and, and all of my employees would tell you that that ROI, ROI, ROI was always preaching return investment. We never spent \$1, not \$1 of expenses, always dollars of investment and understanding that ROI, I think that is a brilliant approach and something that, uh, that business owners can get behind to understand then what value it's bringing. That is, that is a brilliant approach. I love that. So, so as business owners start thinking about selecting a great coach, how should they go about doing that?

Susan Steinbrecher: 11:43

Yeah, that's a great question because fast forward, right? 25 years later, everybody's a coach today or so, they hang their shingle to say they are. So there's a lot of, there's a lot of confusion in the marketplace about what a coach actually is. That's the first place to start is when you say you want a coach. Let's be clear on what you're asking for here. Um, when I teach my ROI coach certification process, one of the first things I open with is let's get clear on what coaching is, what consulting is, what therapy is, and what mentorship is. And the four are different. So our coaching process is you have a fundamental belief system that the person has the answers you need to help them

uncover and clear the fog and the cobwebs, if you will, to access where those answers are. So is the powerful question holding them accountable.

Susan Steinbrecher: 12:40

That is primarily the process you use when you're doing a coaching consulting. You're hiring an expert to come in and tell you what to do. If you want someone to do that, you hire a consultant. If you want to coach you, you're not asking someone to come in and tell you what to do. It's a different process. So, and then of course I won't get into mentorship and therapy. That's a whole nother thing. But the biggest confusion typically comes between coaching and consulting. Right? Now that being said, full disclosure, as an executive coach, I have noticed the higher up I've gone, the more that I have found myself doing some coaching and a little bit of consulting because they want you to throw them on a bone now and then like don't just ask me questions, give me some things I should be pondering or thinking about.

Susan Steinbrecher: 13:26

So in true reality and once you get this kind of experience down, you find yourself being able to blend that a little bit more. Um, and finding the best one. I always say re referrals are your best source. Um, there is a professional governing source called international coach Federation that is a governing source for the profession to keep it legitimate and keep it professional. And you can always go to ICF, international coach Federation for resources as well. Um, but often I find the best comes from referral from folks talking to HR executives and asking, Hey, I'm looking for an executive coach. You have people you work with. And then when you talk to that individual or individuals, the first question you need to ask is, please describe to me your process. If you have somebody that says, well, you know, I start with what do you want to talk about today?

Susan Steinbrecher: 14:21

Run. Because that that's, you need a structure. The coach needs to know, listen, I've got, I know where we're going. That doesn't mean that I don't have my just-in-time coaching sessions where I put aside what was sort of the agenda for that day and my process. You always want to do the just-in-time when really needed. Um, but if I don't know where we're going, that client, Shirley doesn't know where they're going. So I have to guide that. So asking for processes, really important. If you like what you hear, if you feel it's robust, do you feel like they are going to hold the client accountable and be held accountable as a coach where one can, and of course there's always, you know, questions around that the person's got a want to do the work. Um, then I would say use

your intuition to say, I like what I'm hearing here or I'm not feeling comfortable that it's really a fit.

Tom Bronson: 15:16

So, you know, one of the approaches that I take when I, when I recommend folks such as yourself, I would, I would tell a client, Hey, I know two or three great coaches, why don't you interview them all? Does that make sense? Does that make sense? Is that a decent yeah,

Susan Steinbrecher: 15:32

definitely interview and feel the best fit. So there's many, many times that I've been up against two or three other people. I will tell you honestly, 99% of the time I'll get that selection. And primarily because I have a process and I can walk them through what that process is and then I can show how we're going to measure. I show how the boss gets involved, where they need to get involved. Um, and I'm really coaching an individual, but I know that individuals sitting at a system, I E boss and culture and I have to set back and kind of say, how can I help actually the boss help my client, which is tricky sometimes as you might imagine, but it's worth doing. And so I approach it that way and not all coaches are going to approach it that way. Some coaches won't even take what we call an at risk client.

Susan Steinbrecher: 16:24

So the person who's derailing in their career who's at risk. So let's say Johnny's been an amazing leader, he's hit a wall and um, he no longer either has the skills, attitude, motivation, knowledge to take the next level or to actually sustain in the job. Now is when the organization says, Hey, you know what, he spent her 10 years as a valuable asset. We want to give him some help, which is always the best scenario when or obviously the organization has faith in this individual, um, and those cases, then the person has to want to do the work needlessly. Um, and then I handle that very delicately because there's a self esteem involved and a lot of stuff there that can be a difficult situation for the person. But all that being said, some coaches only take what they call the high performer. Um, that is a lot easier. There's no question that I have a personal motivation and helping that person really transform. So I will actually specialize in the derailer. Although I do enjoy very much the high performer dove a lot easier.

Tom Bronson: 17:35

You know, it's interesting. I'm reading a, as you, you already know and I think our listeners already know. I am a voracious reader, love to read, um, and big fan of audible, uh, so that I can, uh, do what Tony Robbins and that time, no extra time to read. So when I'm running in the morning or, or if and when I can actually get back in my car and drive somewhere, I can listen to books. Uh, but um, I'm currently reading Jack, uh, Jack Welch's autobiography. And interestingly enough on the weekend, uh, it was, I was reading, he was talking about just that very thing, you know, how do you take somebody who's been a great, uh, uh, performer in the business but kind of lost their mojo, right? And, and they spent a great amount of effort to try and coach those people back up. And so, uh, now and he was first to admit that it didn't always work cause you gotta have somebody that is coachable. Uh, and so that leads me to my, my question, uh, before we break here, is everybody coachable?

Susan Steinbrecher: 18:42

Um, okay. So I'm an eternal optimist. So with that being said, um, I would like to think so, but there are going to be a few people and it's really, it's from, from my experience and I can only speak from my experience. It's only a few. Um, and that is the person really needs to see the light and I do all that I can to make sure that that's done in the safest, most sustaining way. And 99% of the time I'll pull it and they'll get it and they'll realize I am their advocate and I'm there to support them and help them. And I use some kind of interesting processes to get there. But they, they will get that, they will feel that from me and then they'll realize, okay listen, she's really just trying to help me here. I need to put my ego aside.

Susan Steinbrecher: 19:36

I need to, I need to admit that that is not a strength of mine or we really get to what is really going on here. And I'm always assessing, do I have a skill gap? Do I have a motivation gap? Do I have an experience gap? I mean I'm assessing through questioning where am I sort of in a pipeline so that I know where to go deeper. And if it's motivation, then that's something that person has to have in order to do the work. Cause nothing I can do is going to change that unless I can help that person become motivated all of a sudden, which of course I give my best shot at. That's probably the best way I'd answer.

Tom Bronson: 20:17

Yeah. As I've said for years when making hiring decisions, I would take attitude over ability all day long. Uh, and, and that really goes to if somebody is in a, in a, uh, potential, um, how did you describe it? The um, uh, they're, they're a danger, uh, at risk do railing

at risk, right? If somebody is in that category, um, you know, they've really got to have a great attitude I think for, for something like that to work. I've seen it work. I've seen it fail, uh, in companies. So we are talking with Susan Steinbrecher and having a great time. When we come back,

Tom Bronson: 20:55

we're going to talk about her latest book. I will, let's take a quick break back in 30 seconds.

Announcer: 21:02

Mastery partners equips business owners to maximize business value so they can transition on their own terms. Using our four step process, we start with a snapshot of what are your businesses today. Then we help you understand where you want to be and design a custom strategy to get you there. Next you execute that strategy with the help of our amazing resource network. And ultimately we help you transition your business on your terms. What are you waiting for? More time, more revenue. If you want to maximize your business value, it takes time. Now is the time. Get started today by checking us out at [Mastery partners dot com](http://Masterypartners.com) or email us at [info at masterypartners.com](mailto:info@masterypartners.com)

Tom Bronson: 21:52

we're back with Susan Steinbrecker and we're talking about leadership and coaching. Susan has

Tom Bronson: 21:59

authored or coauthored three books, heart-centered leadership lead well live, well can show a modern awakening, uh, instigating change in an era of global renewal and the meaningful, did I, did I pronounce that right?

Susan Steinbrecher: 22:17

Yeah. Yeah.

Tom Bronson: 22:18

So you know, you gotta read those, uh, those sub heads as well. Uh, and, and meaningful alignment, mastering emotional, emotionally intelligent interactions at work and in life.

You can find all three of these books on her website, on Amazon, or we're going to include a link to them in our blog post this week. So on Wednesday, if you're following both the podcast and the blog post, we will provide a link to get those books in our blog post this week. Let's talk about your most recent book though. Meaningful alignment. What is meaningful alignment and what inspired you to write this book?

Susan Steinbrecher: 22:59

So meaningful alignment is really about how do you have the tough conversation. Sometimes it's challenging, sometimes it's emotional, but it's a conversation you know you need to have, um, while you preserve, if not best case, even enhance the relationship. Cause often people will have the conversation, but unfortunately what then happens is there's a lot of damage in the relationship while they're having that conversation. So that's what meaningful alignment is all about. And it's for the purpose of the goal of achieving something together. Like I need to align with a business partner or a peer or my wife or my husband or whatever that might be. Right? So this is where it applies both at home and at work. And we wrote it because I was really noticing a trend where people lack the confidence and the competence and comfort level, frankly, to have these kinds of conversations.

Susan Steinbrecher: 23:55

So they either avoid them at all costs, which of course makes everything worse or they kind of plowed through and did a really poor job of it typically. And then again, lots of collateral damage along the way. So we really felt like the skill was needed. Um, if you kind of back up on a macro level, I started noticing what the trends were in society and sort of saying, gosh, what are all the, what's all the evidence that people are not connected or aligned? And you could look at divorce rate, you could look at cyber bullying, you can look at, you know, a million different things. And that's kind of where we started with the concept. It's like what's actually going on in our world and what's missing. And that's kind of where we started with all of that. And um, created a one day workshop, um, an online workshop, a two day workshop, we coached through it, et cetera. So really excited about it.

Tom Bronson: 24:50

It's a, it's so important for teams to have that kind of alignment. Right? Uh, and as I've always said, the greatest books apply everywhere in life, right? Both business and personal life. And, and this one is so important because communication is kind of that, uh, as it was described when, when Karen and I went through, uh, pre-marriage

counseling communication, that's kind of the thermostat, right? If things get a little high, you go and adjust the thermostat, things get a little cold, you adjust the thermostat and yeah, and, and communication is so very important and being able to, to communicate sometimes really hard things that you could be breaking down the relationship. What a, what a great topic for both a business and life. In the book you talk about the inside game and the outside game. Can you tell us a little more about that?

Susan Steinbrecher: 25:48

Yeah, sure. So the inside game is what is going on within us. So we're in this conversation with this individual, what is our emotional composure and resilience look like? And so we are actually teaching skills of kind of in two ways. One I think of as the prevention, which means how do I actually build the emotional intelligence muscle and composure muscle so that if I have to be in a dialogue with someone, I can hang in there and kind of sit in that tension without, uh, losing my composure basically. So I like to use the analogy of let's say I decided I'm going to lift weights because I want to have, you know, more arm strength. So I pick up a couple of dumbbells and I might start with a pound dumbbells or something like that. And then I get that gets easier. I go to 10 that gets easier.

Susan Steinbrecher: 26:45

I go to 12 et cetera. I'm now building the strengths. And so if I have to go lift a heavy box, it's not a big deal. It's not a lot of effort because I've got this strength and reserve and the way we build that strength, that reserve is through what we call mind, body and spirit. And so what are we doing to take care of ourselves? So physically taking care of diet, exercise, sleep, those kinds of things. Meditation is one that we actually find hits all three quadrants. Statistically. We know that if we have a daily meditation practice, even if you start with five minutes, it crosses all three areas. It builds emotional strength, it builds spiritual strength and it builds physical strain. And then we also have part of the inside game is what do I do in the moment? So I am in this conversation with my husband, with my friend, with my daughter, with my son, whatever that is, or a peer or a boss or a direct report.

Susan Steinbrecher: 27:46

And I'm feeling myself get really upset. So what do I do right now? Exactly that the heat is rising. I can exactly. And so what do I do right now? Because I can't go meditate in this moment, which would be wonderful, but I can't do it. I'm on the call or I'm in this meeting. So we actually teach them skills around what to do in that moment so that you

can begin to calm yourself down. Um, and so all of that is part of the inside game. In addition to that is we have a predominant style that we are likely to deploy and use and these high tense conversations and we have an assessment that helps people figure out where they are with that and how it does.

Susan Steinbrecher: 28:36

And you took it. I'm so glad you did.

Tom Bronson: 28:41

That's the inside game and trying to manage that. What's the outside game?

Susan Steinbrecher: 28:46

So the outside is how do I actually have the conversation? So where do I start, what do I, how do I finish? And while you're at it, how do you handle the emotion the other person is displaying? So they're getting upset and what if anything can you do to mitigate the risk of that or prevent that from happening? Handle it in the moment. And so we teach some skills around that and it's really two primary things. One is we navigate the actual roadmap from start to finish. But along the way, we are making sure that that person's, what we call ego personal needs are being met cause that neutralizes negative emotion. And you do things like through empathy or through esteeming, that individual so that you don't lower their self esteem, raise it where you can but at least maintain it. Um, and do all of those kinds of things have a way of at least neutralizing negative emotion. You're not going to go from anger to happiness. Right? But if you can, if you can neutralize that enough, then you can actually get things done. If you're not doing that, you're really not going to get through this conversation very well.

Tom Bronson: 29:58

So your, your book describes a six step process for kind of managing the outside game and it's, it's not about, I guess it's partly about managing the other person's emotions and, and, and how you can do that. So tell us a little bit more about the six step process to managing the outside game.

Susan Steinbrecher: 30:16

Yeah. So the sixth step is we start with identifying and sharing with this individual the purpose for the conversation. And I know that sounds well, that's common sense, but honestly, we all have been in conversations where two or three minutes goes by and we

still have no idea what that person's talking to us. I mean, we've all experienced that. It's crazy. It's like, what is this? All of that. So this is where you literally say, thank you so much for meeting with me today. I really appreciate it. I know that you're crazy busy. I value your time. The reason I wanted to meet with you today is a, B, and C. Um, now notice I started with this, what we call expressing gratitude. And that's all about esteeming the individual, thanking them, treating them with respect. Because if you start a conversation, especially, and this is one of the things I always point out, is especially if you've had previous conversations with this individual and they did not go well, wow, you're bringing all that history into this one.

Susan Steinbrecher: 31:23

We think this conversation's about X. Well guess what? It's about X. But it's also about the history you've had with this individual and how those conversations went because you're walking into this conversation with that in mind. And so are they, by the way. So if it's something that has been potentially not handled very well in the past, they're walking in with all kinds of anxiety and stress. The defensiveness is already up. You've got to calm all that stuff down right off the bat. So that's our first step. We blend this, neutralizing the negative emotion at the same time that we are actually getting the job done, right? Our sixth step of six step, second step, sorry, is all about how then what is the cause of this behavior? So can you share with me what's happening from your viewpoint? And then I'll share with you what's happening from my viewpoint.

Susan Steinbrecher: 32:19

Notice again, and you're going to see a pattern here. We're always asking their viewpoint first. Why would we do that? Well, we do that because it's esteeming. It shows respect. And guess what? It also buys you some time because if you ask them something, you're now be being put in a position. If you will, being able to say, Oh wow, they are so off track. It's not even funny or they got part of it but they clearly don't see the whole picture here and now you have an opportunity to take some deep breaths, sort of think about what you're going to say because you've asked them first. So that buys you some critical time. Um, which is part of the skill by the way of um, um, calming yourself down in the moment is breathing and deflecting where you need to by asking questions and things like that.

Susan Steinbrecher: 33:09

Share more about that. Would you be willing to tell me more about that? That's interesting. I wouldn't have thought of it from that perspective. I wasn't aware of that.

All that buys you time to take the deep breath and calm down. Take notes also shows, okay this person's, you've been taking notes on what I say to me is, really be interested. Anyway. The third one is all about the impact. What impact might this have if we cannot get aligned again, what impact do you think there is? Here's the impact that I think there is. Then you get into the step that we call the one off most often miss, which is really the summarizing and checking for understanding that you have actually communicated effectively. Don't assume because you just did all this you know, conversation and you've talked about causes and you've talked about impact that you've really solved anything. So you are asking for their solutions, you are summarizing those solutions and then you're ending with a followup. And the followup is to be sure everybody understands there is accountability built into whatever these next steps are. We said we're going to do. So that's a really quick snapshot of it.

Tom Bronson: 34:16

Oh, that's great. Yeah. I will tell you from, from my own experience, you shared a little bit of this with me and when we talked on the phone a few weeks ago, I had a very difficult conversation coming up and I mentioned it to you. You gave me just a couple of quick tools and I will tell you it improved the outcome of that conversation immeasurably. So this is really kind of important stuff, uh, folks that, uh, that we're talking about. I know that many times I'll walk into a conversation with a preconceived notion of how that conversation is going to go. And then it becomes almost a self fulfilling prophecy. Right. Uh, and, and so, uh, just having these steps kind of to follow, to manage that is, is amazing. I wish that we'd had this conversation, you know, before we, before I had other difficult conversations,

Susan Steinbrecher: 35:10

we've all had of course.

Tom Bronson: 35:11

I've mellowed with age.

Tom Bronson: 35:16

I will tell you, you mentioned the, uh, the Interpersonal dialogue profile, but on my glasses to read this, um, I went to your website and I took the assessment for fun, but also, uh, for research right. To, to get ready for this, um, for this call. And I think that a, you might not be surprised that I was 97% courageous, 94% directive and uh, and 67%

interdependent. Some of those things that, uh, that may or may not be in perfect alignment because I'm not a perfectly aligned soul. Right. Um, tell us a little bit about this assessment and what it can do for folks. Uh, and, and then I'm just going to suggest that, you know, they can go just like I did write to the website, take the assessment for free and learn some things about themselves. You know, for example, I learned that, uh, that, um, uh, sometimes I'm willing to stand alone if necessary. What a surprise to me. And sometimes I have strained relationships. What a, what a surprise to me. But tell us a little bit about this assessment and, uh, and what it can do for folks.

Susan Steinbrecher: 36:34

Well, when you asked me earlier about our kind of coaching process and methodology, I mentioned one of the things that we take a look out is what we call people's mental models. So that is that, again, core beliefs, values underneath the surface of the iceberg, if you will, that really runs the show. So after coaching for over 25 years, I went through and looked at all the mental models that each of my clients had and started picking up patterns. What we found is that when I say we, my coauthor, dr Schaefer and I, what we really found is that almost every client, almost every one of those mental models really fell within four primary areas. They were either based in what we would call affiliation persons high need to please other people and be in relationship or achievement. We want to get the job done or control, which was very much about I need to have structure and boundaries.

Susan Steinbrecher: 37:31

I need to control what the outcome of this is. I need to have predictability, risk mitigation, all of that kind of thing or security, which is safety and I'm going to be safe. If I step up and say something, there's not going to be too much repercussion. Do I dare say something or not? So they know that I'm over simplifying this a bit, but this is to answer your question, is that when we saw those four motivations, if you will, we said, okay, we need to build an assessment that helps us tap into style. Um, how one shows up if you will, based on those motivations. And so we created the names of the six styles. We created the assessment. Tons of research went into this. As you might imagine, dr Shaffer's PhD is an emotional intelligence, um, in organizational psychology. So you put all of that together.

Susan Steinbrecher: 38:24

So I had more of the practical knowledge of working with clients. He had the academic knowledge as well as working with clients. We pulled all that together, created this, and

then we really want to this away for free. We're not doing it forever, of course, but when we launched the book, we want people to actually take it, um, because we want them to begin to understand how they're showing up in this sort of high tension type of conversation. I want to clarify that it's not a personality profile. There are all kinds of other personality profiles out there and some people will get confused with that. This is how you're likely to be driven emotionally motivated emotionally, how you would show up in the high stakes conversation. What's your kind of go to strategy? More likely will be, not that we can't do all things, but one of the things that we do teach on our training is that what an ideal scenario is to be able to flex amongst all six styles when given the opportunity, depending on who you're in dialogue with.

Susan Steinbrecher: 39:30

So if you're a high directive, for example, and you've got a high for harmonious, how would it behoove you, and you can probably tell what that means just by the names, right? How would it behoove you, if you were in let's say a negotiation for business, how would it behoove you to assess what's happening with that individual where they're more likely coming from by their language patterns? And then you begin to realize what's important to that person. Now you start to craft the negotiation, keeping that in mind, which means you're going to build stronger rapport, you're going to connect more, you're going to gain alignment much faster, versus you stay grounded in your style and you stay there. And that doesn't work for the other individual. It's going to be a lot harder negotiation. So the ideal scenario here is to raise awareness of where you're likely to be and how do I begin to flex that so that I can actually work with a number of different people in a number of different styles.

Susan Steinbrecher: 40:35

Um, we call the core circle of this equanimity and that really is this just standard neutral space that allows me to flex and flow wherever I need to. And I'll share with you, sorry Tom. But the higher your percentages, the harder it will be to get to equanimity. But that doesn't mean you can't, but you need to be mindful, right? This is all about raising awareness and recognizing who you are, how you show up, and then therefore strategizing how might that conversation need to go. And we're a big pro bono proponent and planning ahead of a conversation, especially a high risk one. Um, we teach all kinds of tools around preparation, all the things you should be considering, et cetera..

Tom Bronson: 40:54

I think that's, that's the key. And that was the key to my successful conversation that I had after we talked was careful planning and fifth thoughtful about first hearing what the other person had to say.

Susan Steinbrecher: 41:34

Right. And then, uh, and then, um, and then dealing with it from there, you know, that's, yeah, I get it. Uh, I probably for the rest of my life, you know, I'm going to be a 97 tile for, for the, uh, for the courageous. I'm going to be in the high nineties for directive. Uh, but, but being at least, uh, intellectually aware of that helps me deal with those things a little bit better. So it was, it was fun to take the test. And so folks, I don't know how long they're going to keep it open for free, but it is worth it. I took it yesterday while I was distracted by another meeting that was going on that I just had to kind of listen to. And so I took it in 15 minutes. If you're not distracted, you can probably, yeah, very, you know, short amount of time to do that. So finally, let's talk about when you bring new leaders into an organization. So what are some tips that you would provide to our listeners to get new leaders up to speed as quickly as possible in their new role?

Susan Steinbrecher: 42:43

Yeah, we all know that. Um, there's a, there's a lot of missteps that can happen when a new leader becomes joins an organization or two things can happen. It could be someone promoted from within and now my peer, right? All my peers, I'm the boss of my peers. That's an adjustment. That's a major adjustment. And then we also, we also walk through and bring teams together when it's a brand new person coming into the organization. So one of the things that we recommend is that you immediately get to understand what is going on with this team. Before you make any changes. Please do not go into an organization without talking to the team one on one and potentially in a group setting as well with tell me what's working. Tell me what's not working, what are you struggling with? What can, what assistance are you looking for when this team is operating at its best?

Susan Steinbrecher: 43:38

What is, what are they doing? What advice would you have for me? I mean these are questions that you ask. Then it shows the team, Oh my gosh, this leader is coming in. They actually care that I've worked here 10 years and my actually have something to say. Or we're in the middle of some projects that are sacred cows from our opinion. Please don't change that. Are you open to at least hearing what that's about? So you merely gain rapport with those team members because you care enough to listen first.

Then you can formulate your opinion. So what we do is we facilitate a whole process where we bring the team together. We work with a team by themselves first individually. We put them through a series of questions. What do you want to know about this leader? What do you know that you think you know about this leader?

Susan Steinbrecher: 44:29

What don't you know you'd like to know about this leader? And all kinds of other sort of custom design based on the pre-interviews we do to find out where the team is and how they're feeling about this person coming in. And then we also of course work with the leader first and then after the teams have answered all those questions, we bring the, we coach the leader that afternoon or evening and say, you need to be prepared to answer all these questions. Here's what happened today without disclosing who said what for confidentiality purposes. And then we're going to bring you guys all together. So what ends up happening is an extremely powerful open, safe dialogue. And then it helps with having a facilitator there to make sure things move along and the rabbit holes don't happen. And we actually get some things done and we have assessed ahead of time from talking with a leader if what is really important that this team accomplished in the first 30 days, 90 days, 120 days, et cetera.

Susan Steinbrecher: 45:26

Um, so we get an idea of what that leader is hoping to do because often there's pressure coming from above or from the CEO of that organization. And so we need to have the sensitivity to that, but we have to make sure we're bringing that team along and that they buy in and commit with their heart, not just comply with their head in order to get that team integrated very quickly. It's just an extremely powerful process. Um, so whether you bring a facilitator like, like ourselves in for something like that or not, I've given you some really good questions. You should, you can do on your own.

Tom Bronson: 45:59

Oh yeah. Those are, those are great tips. I mean, it's difficult to bring in a new leader or to promote a leader from within. That creates a whole different dynamic. Right. So, uh, what, uh, we've talked about a lot of things kinda that uh, Steinbrecher and associates, uh, does, uh, apart from kind of leadership consulting, uh, what, what, what sets Steinbrecher apart from other firms that we might find in this space?

Susan Steinbrecher: 46:30

Yeah, I think one of our key, I think assets is that we are a boutique firm. We are adjusting time learning solution firm. And what I mean by that is we have a handful of employees, but we have 30 independent contractors that we use. So what that gives us is this unbelievable talent that we tap into for the right person to match the right client to assess whether that be a coach, a certified coach of ours, whether that be someone who's facilitating one of those team new leader of simulations or team intervention. We've been doing more than ever, um, kind of a situation, but you've got this amazing talent that I don't have to cover the overhead costs for that allows our pricing to be substantially better. And the client sees the value of that because they get the talent for price. It's typically more affordable than, than let's say a top four or five a coaching or consulting firm. So, and we love it because we're hands on with that client and we are fully engaged with them and committed. We've even guaranteed work before because we just know we're going to do it. We know we're going to make it happen. And they love that also. Right? So I think for all of those reasons.

Tom Bronson: 47:47

That's awesome. That is awesome. That's, that's a rarity certainly in, uh, in consulting work. So one last question. Of course. This podcast is all about maximizing business value. So what is the one most important thing that you recommend business owners do to build long-term sustainable value in their businesses?

Susan Steinbrecher: 48:09

Uh, honestly it, it's get your bench strength together. It's talent, talent, talent. Um, you are not going to be able to do it alone. You are going to need to have the right players, you know, as they always have said, right? Jim Collins work the right seat. Maybe it wasn't Jim Collins am I screwed that up. Sorry about that. I've heard the statement, right? You know, you have the right people on the bus sitting in the right seats. Right? It's that concept because without that talent, you really cannot grow a business. It will not be sustainable. So get your talent squared away to me is the number one thing. The rest you start to take care of itself in terms of, obviously if you're a decent CEO, you're a business minded, you're looking at building a practice, you're, you know, you're doing all the other things obviously to sustain a business. But the talent take care of a big part of this for you. If you get to the right folks in place,

Tom Bronson: 49:07

you know, one of my long running jokes, I use this when I, when I speak publicly, frequently, uh, is that uh, my job always when I was CEO of any of the businesses that

I've been the CEO of was to wake up in the morning and realize as quickly as I could, uh, that I am the dumbest guy in the room.

Susan Steinbrecher: 49:27

There you go.

Tom Bronson: 49:28

Meaning that you're rounded myself with very, very smart people, uh, to, to help solve problems. It is all about getting the right people on the bus. By the way, my little secret is that, uh, by being the dumbest guy in the room, I am, I am the smartest guy.

Susan Steinbrecher: 49:45

That's exactly where I was just gonna say. And then of course, once you hire these people, you gotta keep them committed, engaged, you gotta take really good care of them because they will come back in spades with the productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness of what they do. If you take good care of them. I mean, that's proven over and over and over again. There's really no shortcuts with that. You know, it's the old service profit chain. If you take care of your people, they'll take care of the customer. The customer would take care of the business. That's really the way this works

Tom Bronson: 50:15

absolutely. Could not agree with you more completely. So, uh, we like to wrap with, uh, with my favorite question that we ask everybody who comes onto our podcast. And that is, what trait has gotten you into the most trouble through all the years?

Susan Steinbrecher: 50:32

Oh, gosh, that's hard. I can be direct. Um, and so I've had to learn, I mean, I'm much, much better today. And they always say, why do you teach what you teach? Because you got to learn it yourself kind of thing. Um, I'm way better than, than what I was, especially that 25 year old general manager. I was terrible. I was not, I was, I did not get people. I was, I was driven to get an end result. I did not factor in the human spirit. So not I E why I'm so motivated to get this workout because I know what works and what doesn't work. That one's got me in trouble. Not so much today, but it certainly did in my past.

Tom Bronson: 51:16

Well, I will tell you that, uh, that, uh, I, as I think about my 25 year old self, please don't judge me by my 25 year old.

Susan Steinbrecher: 51:24

Exactly. Oh my gosh. I think about what my boss has put up with now. I got results. I did and I was, I actually had some amazing, some very, very hard managers that were really tough, but I needed that at that moment to wake up. I really did. Um, it would've been nicer to being done a little bit softer ways, but you know what? I learned the lessons and they stayed with me forever.

Tom Bronson: 51:50

Well as I, as I tell folks, look, I made every mistake there is in the book so I'm a great source of how to, how to not do things and therefore how to do things better. So how, let's tell our listeners and our viewers how they can get in touch with you.

Susan Steinbrecher: 52:09

Thank you. So our website is [steinbrecher.com](http://steinbrecher.com) that's S T E I N B R E C H E R [steinbrecher.com](http://steinbrecher.com). Um, also [meaningfulalignment.com](http://meaningfulalignment.com) if it's specifically interested in the book, [steinbrecher.com](http://steinbrecher.com) obviously has [meaningfulalignment.com](http://meaningfulalignment.com) in there plus hearts that are leadership coaching. Everything else that we do. There's the two websites that you can reach us at.

Tom Bronson: 52:33

I think at the, uh, the second website is where they can find the assessment. Is that right?

Susan Steinbrecher: 52:38

Yes. There's on the [meaningfulalignment.com](http://meaningfulalignment.com) you can, you can w shows up right on the front page. Take the free assessment. We'd love for you to have it contact us back. We always love to hear from folks after they've taken it to say, I'm confused or I love this or you nailed me, or whatever it is. So we love to hear from you

Tom Bronson: 52:57

and fortunately you nailed me. So thank you Susan. What a fun conversation. Thank you for being part of our podcast today. You can find Susan also at our website, [steinbrecher.com](http://steinbrecher.com) or on LinkedIn. She's also there and you can find her or as always you can reach out to us. I'll be happy to put you in contact with Susan. So this is the maximize business

Tom Bronson: 53:25

value podcast where we give practical advice to business owners on how to build longterm sustainable value in your business, even during challenging times like these. Be sure to tune in each week, follow us wherever you found this podcast and be sure to comment. We love comments and I promise that we respond to all the comments. So until next time I'm Tom Bronson reminding you to stay safe while you maximize your business value.

Announcer: 54:00

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Speaker 5: 54:45

[inaudible]

Tom Bronson: 54:45

that was perfect. I wouldn't make any changes on that.