

# EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

## EPISODE 114: CHALLENGE VS THREAT MINDSET

Welcome to Explore Your Enthusiasm!

This is a lesson I recorded first for [Month of Biz Love](#), but I've found it so practical in my own life that I wanted to share it here!

Let's be honest: there are obstacles to every business. There are things standing in your way. When I asked participants what their obstacles were, they said things like "getting traffic to my website", "making more sales", "a marketing plan". But those aren't obstacles - those aren't things standing in your way, they are challenges you need to take on. An obstacle might be how much time or energy you have. How much money you have. But more sales or better marketing, that is a process of learning and testing that EVERY new business has to go through.

In fact, learning how to operate within your limits, of money, time, energy, space and support, that's also a challenge that everyone has to work on, to varying degrees.

### **THE MAIN ISSUE IS: DO YOU SEE THESE AS CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME OR THREATS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF YOUR BUSINESS?**

Psychologists refer to this question as the difference between a challenge mindset and a threat mindset. They have been studying challenge vs threat mindset for over 30 years, and they've found that in a challenge mindset, you experience less anxiety, depression, and are much more likely to solve a problem or come up with a positive outcome. It also changes how your body reacts to stress!

A challenge is anything that provokes our desire to test our strength and abilities and that gives us the opportunity to improve them.

A threat is something scary, that you haven't chosen.

And the difference between the two is your own perception of them: in a threat reaction, your main concern is to avoid danger and protect yourself.

A *threat mindset* focuses on the potential for risk, danger, harm. In it, you focus on avoiding a negative outcome, instead of creating a positive outcome.

A challenge reaction is about engaging the problem in front of you and coming up with a solution.

In a *challenge mindset*, you focus on the opportunity for growth and positive outcomes. Even though you acknowledge that the bad stuff might happen, you feel realistically optimistic that you can learn or grow and create the best possible outcome.

Now you can see that a threat reaction makes a lot of sense if you're being attacked by a bear. But it doesn't make any sense when you come across something you don't know or understand in your business, such as marketing. If you approach business problems as a threat, you're going to avoid dealing with them, and not learn anything that moves you forward. If you approach them from a challenge mindset, you're going to problem-solve, think creatively, and find resources.

The good news is, you can change how you perceive any challenge in front of you. Whether you asked for it not, you can move from a threat mindset to a challenge mindset, and that simple cognitive reappraisal will unlock some of your innate skills and enthusiasm for defeating the challenge!

This doesn't mean that it doesn't suck, or that you're not sad, or that you don't experience loss. It simply means that you look for the possible positive outcomes, and thus feel like you have CHOICES. And that allows you to see some opportunities, gather resources, or tap into your internal strengths.

It doesn't require thinking "positively" all the time - just investigating your own strengths and abilities and trying to increase them. So it's not that you LIKE the challenge, it's that you recognize how you can grow THROUGH it.

A challenge mindset makes it more likely you're going to find the resources you need and end up with a positive outcome.

Our goal is to move your feelings about your business (and obstacles) from a threat mindset to a challenge mindset.

One easy way to start the shift is to ask yourself, "What's the best that could happen?" This shifts your focus from all that could go wrong, to all that could result if you do your best.

So that's what I want you to do now - picture the challenge (or threat) that is overwhelming you in your business and ask "What is the BEST that could happen?" Write down your answers and any ideas you have for how that best case scenario might happen. What could you do to make it more likely? Then share the best possible outcome with us on Instagram! Use the hashtag #exploreyoureenthusiasm.

Thanks so much for listening and I wish you an enthusiastic day!