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MENTORS VS. COACHES VS. FRIENDS … WHERE TO GO FOR SUPPORT

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Hey there, friends. Welcome back to The Career Reset podcast. It's so great to have you here. I'm Mel Savage, your host.

Today we are talking about getting help. We all need help. I don't care if you are the president of the company, the owner, or you're anywhere in the organization, we all need help. And sometimes what happens is, if we've been around for a long time, we think *I don't want to ask for help. I should know this. I am embarrassed to ask for help because people will judge me. Why don't I know this? How come I don't know how to do this? How come I can't handle this? How come I can't fix this?*

It's interesting because when you're more junior and you're working your way up through the ranks, you think it's normal to ask for help. But as you get more senior, a lot of the time what happens is, we don't ask for help or we go to the wrong people for help and advice versus going where we need to go to get the help that we need. The reason I wanted to do this podcast today was to give permission or allow yourself to give yourself permission, one–to get the help you need. We're all super busy. We all need advice so it's important that we take the time to do that.

But because we're super busy, I also wanted to maybe add a bit of texture to the idea of asking for help by saying, who should you go to for the right kind of help? This isn't to say you must go here, you must go there. It's just really clarifying the intentions of the different areas that you can go to for help to help you clarify where to go for the right thing. Because I mean, how many times have you gone to a friend, let's say, to get advice about a relationship at work or an issue you're having with your boss?

Let's say, you're like, *Oh, my boss is this way and I feel like this. It's really hard and they're treating me badly. I don't know what to do and I hate going to work.* Your friends are amazing for a lot of things but they may not be the best go-to for how to deal with your boss. Sometimes we go to mentors. We have a mentor. If you have a mentor for validation or a lot of the time, people don't even use coaches. They don't know how to use a coach. They don't know whether it's worth investing in a coach. I have to tell you, I wish that I had known what a coach does 15 years ago because it would have saved me so much grief.

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This is really what it's about for this podcast. We're really going to talk about one–making it okay to ask for help and just letting yourself be that person. Then knowing where to go to really get the best return on the time that you're getting for the help that you're seeking and how to set up that support network for yourself. That's really what we're talking about today so that you stop being a person who doesn't think that they need help because we all do. I don't care how many blocks you've been around. We've all been around a lot of blocks.

The more we ask for help and the more we go to the right resource for that help, the faster we grow, the easier our lives are, and the more we enjoy our jobs, which is really the intent of all of this. My mission in life is to help you enjoy the job you have. It's not always about what I really believe.

I was just talking to someone, a friend of mine about this, too. We often think that our jobs suck for whatever reason. We have a bad boss, the culture sucks, some of the things on our to-do list suck, or we don't like some of these things. A lot of the time we think a clean slate is going to help us get over all of this; either a brand new job maybe in the same industry or a brand new career. Maybe we don't connect with the people that we're working with. We think all of this is something that if we just left this job, it would go away. But I promise you when you go find that new job when you go find that new career, a lot of the same bullshit is going to follow you.

The reason for that is because you are creating a lot of your own bullshit. That's just the way it is, my friends. I create my own bullshit, you create your own bullshit. What I really want to help people do and why we're talking about what we're talking about today, is to help you realize that you can enjoy the job you have. You can love the job you have and be the success that you want to be doing what you're doing right now, even if you don't feel connected to it, even if you think that there are some reasons why it's impossible for you to love what you're doing

That's my mission because life is so much better when you love what you're doing. You don't have to turn your world upside down. You don't have to start over. You don't have to do all of that to be able to love what you're doing. I want to help you remove the bullshit first. So that you can make a decision from a place of clarity, strength, and empowerment versus making a decision from avoidance, fear, and running away, which is what a lot of us do and I have totally done in my life. So I want to be clear about that.

That's what we're talking about where to go for help today because we all need it and we don't have time for it. We tell ourselves don't have time for it. So let's talk about how we can set up our minds to remind us that we all need it and make it okay for us to need help. Then let's figure out where to go for it to make it the best use of our time to get some really good thoughtful advice from the people who are trained to give it to you, or have the benefits that you need, like providing you what you need in that moment. That's what we're going to talk about today, my friends.

First, let's talk about giving yourself permission to go for help. I know that on the surface, we're like, *Of course, I know. I'm smart. I've been around all the blocks. I know that asking for help is totally cool. I get that, intellectually. I totally understand that. I'm not afraid of it.* How often do you do it? Just ask yourself, how often do you do it?

I'll give you my own example. I'm a coach. My whole business is centered around helping people see their brains and how they're getting in their own way and helping them figure out how to get out of their own way so that they can achieve the success that they want. That's what coaches do. They show you your messy brain so that you

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can make decisions about what you want to do, like how you're going to handle your situation, why you're behaving the way you are, and all that kind of stuff. So I do that for my clients and I do that for myself all the time.

I really believe that you need to be a student of your craft so I spend a good half an hour every day journaling or doing self-coaching. And I have my own coach. So you might be like, *What, why does a coach need a coach?* I will tell you why. Because even though I am fairly self-aware and I practice what I preach, it doesn't mean that I still don't get in my way, because I have a human brain, just like the rest of you.

For instance, I'll give you an example of something that happened to me this week. It's a very common thing that happens in all organizations, for everyone, whether it's at work or not at work, where someone judges you, or someone says something about you behind your back that you don't think is true. And that happened to me this week. It was this really weird, great, fine thing where I was talking to one person who, in my mind totally misconstrued what I was saying and then sent it off to another person who ultimately, came back to me and it was one of these things that was like, *holy smokes.*

Of course, in the transition of I said one thing, the person took it one way, they said it to someone else, someone came back to me and said, *so and so's mad*; all of this happens all the time. At work, all the time. It's such a small thing. It feels like playground stuff, like high school stuff, but it happens at work all the time. And you have to decide what to do with it. At that moment, it was like when you do something like you're talking to your parents, and they're giving you crap for something. They're over there and all of a sudden, you feel 12 years old again, like you've done something wrong and your parents are so disappointed in you.

I had that feeling in that moment. And it took me a few seconds to be able to go, *Did I say that?* I started doubting myself. *Did I do something wrong? Oh my god.* I started going through it and creating all this worry and drama for myself until I worked myself around to *I don't care.* It took me a few seconds to work myself around to *I don't care*. But even once I got to *I don't care*, the doubt kept coming back. We've talked about this before in the podcast. Just because you deal with a doubt in a moment, it doesn't mean your brain is not going to serve it to you constantly. It's like impostor syndrome sometimes. You don't constantly feel like an imposter at work. But your brain will serve it up to you on occasion and you just have to learn how to deal with it.

So after I dealt with it and got to *I don't care*, my brain still kind of served up. I had this dream about these people. It was weird so I thought, I've done some journaling on this. I'm going to bring it to my coach. So I brought it to her. And what I had worked out with her was that my brain served me up some doubt. And I made that doubt mean that I've done something wrong just like when you doubt yourself, you think, *If I'm doubting myself, it must mean that I can't do it.*

Just like with impostor syndrome. *If I'm doubting myself, there must be a reason I'm doubting myself. My brain is telling me to doubt myself. So it probably knows something I don't know. It probably is just reinforcing that I can't do this.* That was kind of what I was going through in this situation where I was like, *I'm doubting myself. That must mean that I did something wrong.* And I believe that, and when I think I did something wrong, I start to worry. I started to ruminate and replay all the conversations I'd had. Then I thought, do I want to fix this or not? I was worried when people are judging me and what is this going to mean for my business. And I was just in my head about it.

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Of course, when you act that way, when you're thinking *I've done something wrong*, then you show up not at your best. You show up like you did something wrong. And really, that all came from my own brain. That all came from me saying to myself, *Oh, well. I'm doubting myself. I must be doing something wrong*, where I can still doubt myself and think, *I acted with integrity. I didn't say anything bad about anybody. And it's not up to me to control how other people misinterpret.* That instead, gave me a sense of peace. I didn't do anything and other people like drama, and I don't have to get sucked into it if I don't want to. But it took me some time to work that through in my brain, and I even got coached on it.

I'm a coach who knows how to deal with this stuff, who knows how to work through this stuff, who recognizes the signs. So I want you to know that even if you're the president of a company, even if you've been through this before, even if you're super confident, and you know what it means to commit yourself to something and show up and push yourself, that doesn't mean that you don't need someone to talk to sometimes. It doesn't mean that you don't need help. Intellectually, asking for help is a sign of strength. I don't have to convince you of that.

But even though a lot of us know asking for help is a sign of strength, we still don't do it. We don't get the help we need. We think *I'm just going to play this out. I'm going to see how this goes. I'm going to wait till I have more time. I'm going to see what I come up with right now.* Just asking for help and getting the perspective that you need is going to help you move forward so much faster. If you're feeling uncomfortable in getting the help, ask yourself why. What is it? What excuse are you using? Then ask yourself if that excuse needs to be true.

If the excuse is *I don't have time*, we know that's bullshit because you can always find the time for things that are important to you. Ask yourself why you're making that excuse. If you're saying to yourself, *I should be able to figure this out myself. I've done this before,* it takes a lot of courage. Actually, it doesn't because as a coach, you realize that. Everyone needs to be coached but when you're going through the drama on your own, like I've done this so many times where I beat myself up going, *Oh my god. I'm a coach, why is this happening to me? I'm a coach, why haven't I figured this out yet?*

In those moments, rather than beating myself up, what I've learned to do is ask for help. Because beating myself up is such a fucking waste of time. And it does no good for anybody, especially me, and the people around me suffer as well. So don't beat yourself up. Just ask for help. But where you go for help is also so important. I wanted to call it three groups of people–friends, mentors, coaches. I put workmates in the friend zone because they're almost as dangerous as friends because they're like really informed friends. But where you go to for help in these cases is so important.

I want to just to take each one as an individual thing. I thought we'd start with mentors because mentors are not something everyone has, but everyone talks about having. And it's good to have one. There all different kinds of mentors for all different kinds of purposes. Sometimes it's a formal relationship, sometimes it's an informal relationship, and sometimes, it's in a group. I consider masterminds with like-minded people also a form of mentorship.

For instance, I belong to a couple of different masterminds of solopreneurs who have online businesses in all different stages of growth. For me, that's a form of mentorship because I can share what I'm struggling with, and they can talk to me about what they've done in those situations. I think that's a really good example of what mentors do. They give sage advice and they talk about actions. *You should do this. Don't do that. I've seen this*

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work. When you choose your mentor, whether it's formal or informal, I won't really get into the huge differences in those, but you want to have a purpose for going through that person.

For instance, I go to these mastermind groups because I want to grow my business. That's my purpose for that. But there might be mentors in your life where you've got just a general mentor for your career, in general, or maybe you have someone that you've had in your life for a long time that you trust. Maybe there's a mentor specifically on a skill set that you're trying to develop. That's all good. But these mentors, give sage advice. They don't fix your brain. They don't tell you what's going on. They may give you their point of view on why you're getting in your own way but they're not going to tell you what they would do or what they would recommend doing in those situations.

I find having mentors is great because as we talked about it in coach language, they stay on the A-line, the action line. They're all about what you should do. It's more like a howl kind of thing in many ways. Mentors are great for wanting to know how you should do something from someone who's done it before. That's where you go for mentors. So if you're looking to learn how to manage a project, you're not going to go to a friend. And maybe you don't even go to a coach for that because really good coaches are not about the how, they're about the why. I'll come back to that in a second.

But if you just want to talk about how, don't invest in a coach, necessarily. It depends on the coach. A lot of coaches still also coach on the A-line, focus on actions, and that sort of thing. But really, you don't have to if you can find either a really great mentor or you can find an informal group of people who are working on the same thing. You can do like a free mastermind, or there are paid masterminds out there as well, where people who don't necessarily have someone who they would consider a mentor. That's where you want to go for that.

Now, friends. Friends are the tricky ones, especially work friends which a lot of us had relied a lot on before the pandemic because most of our friends were work friends. We didn't really make time for a lot of other things. But now in this pandemic, we're moving towards a post-pandemic. One of the things I learned after I left corporate was I really needed to get purposeful about friendships. They weren't as easy as walking down the hall and saying, *Hey, how are you? Do you want to have coffee or do you want to go for a drink after work?* That doesn't work anymore.

I had to get really purposeful about reaching out to friends. I have way more friends that do not have anything to do with what I do for a living, which is interesting in a work-from-home type of environment, which a lot of people are in right now. It's the reason we're feeling isolated because we don't know how to go out and get friends. We had never had to do that before. Even if we want to reach out to our friends, we have to do it differently than we did before. That's definitely a sidebar, getting really purposeful about friendships is important.

But a lot of us either have a couple of best friends or a lot of workmates and we go to these people for advice about our careers. Let me tell you about friends. Friends love you. They're all about you. And they're biased in many ways because they want the best for you and they want you to feel better. Your mentor is slightly biased, too but they're less worried about how you feel. Your friends just want you to feel better. They're always on your side. They want to pat you on the back. Having a good friend is like a big hug and they want you to be safe.

Because they want you to be safe, sometimes they will transfer their own fears onto you. My mom is if you want to talk about parents in that friend bucket, too. She's like, *Don't do that because this might happen. Are you sure*

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you want to stand up to your boss? Are you sure you want to say that to your boss because what if they don't like it or they get mad at you or they yell at you? Or your friends are like, *Are you sure you want to do that? Maybe you just let it lie. Just forget about it. Don't worry, it's their thing, not your thing.*

They're trying to keep you safe. So they're really focused on doing what they think is the best thing for you from an action standpoint, from a place of love. That's what most friends are like. They're not going to give you totally unbiased advice. They're going to always be on your side, which may not always be what you need to hear, especially when it comes to dealing with work stuff. If you have workmates, they are also biased for a couple of other reasons. They may not love you, first of all. And at work, people get a bit weird sometimes.

There's this sort of balance between, *I have a relationship with you. I trust you as much as I can in a work environment. I like you;* but also, *I need to keep my job because this is how I pay for my life. And this is how I create my own safety.* So they're a little bit biased towards themselves, actually, your workmates. While they may try to help you, they are not going to jeopardize themselves in any way to help you most often. What you share with them could come back and bite you in the ass just like happened to me this week.

It came back to bite me in the ass. I didn't even do what I was *accused of*. I wouldn't want to say that because that sounds so harsh but what was shared with me that I did. So you have to be careful with your friends. When it comes to friends, I use them when I need a hug, basically. When I just need someone to listen to my bullshit, give me a hug, tell me I'm okay that they love me, pat me on the back, or like *You can figure this out. You got this.* That's what friends are for.

Or if I needed a distraction, where we just needed to go out and I needed to drink like a pitcher of margaritas. And we do have a really great time and then it'll be refreshed. And I'll be good for tomorrow. That's what I use my friends for when we could go out and drink a pitcher of margaritas together. I have to tell you, I've tried a pitcher of margaritas on Zoom, not as much fun. I am so looking forward to the warmer months when we can at least get into a driveway or a backyard or something to see my friends again. That's what I use friends for. I use them for little pick-me-ups, not advice around work because their advice is going to be slanted.

So just be really careful whether it's workmates or friends. They may not give you the best advice that you need for what you need to do or what you need to face at work. I have one friend who just gives it to me straight all the time. That's fantastic. She is on my side because she tells me about my own bullshit. She'll say, *You're being perfectionist, stop it. Just stop it. You're getting in your own way.* I still have to do the mental work around that. But at least it's a good kick in the ass if you've got one of those friends. Great. Otherwise, I would say friends are more for hugs and for fun.

Then it comes to coaches, most people don't know what they do. Coaches and mentors do totally different things. Totally different things. I think a lot of people think of coaches and mentors interchangeably, but they're not the same thing at all. Mentors are focused on actions and giving you advice. They're telling you, *Here's what's worked. Here's what I've seen worked. Go do this.* Whether or not you're afraid of doing it, or you can't do it, or you tried it, you're like, *this will never work for me right there.* They don't help you with that. They're like, *No, you should go and do this.* They're all about the *how*.

Coaches are all about the *why*. Why are you doing it like this? If you have something like a block in your career, like *I'm not enjoying my job and I want to make a change,* or *I have this chronic behavior that I can't quite get over*,

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or *I'm really a controlling manager*, or *I feel a lot of anxiety that comes from a lack of self-confidence*, or things like that; when you have these blocks that are getting in the way of your success, that's where you go to a coach because the coach will help you see why.

You'll share with a coach like, *here's all the things that I'm trying, here's what I'm facing*, and a coach is going to be able to listen to you and say, *here's what's getting in your way, here's how you are getting in your way.* They help you see that and create new thoughts and behaviors to help you get out of your way. I look at it as emotional accountability. As people who work in the corporate world, we're all about accountability. At this point in your career when you say you're going to do something, you do it. If you screw it up, you say you screwed it up. There's that kind of accountability.

It's taking that essence and bringing it back to you, your emotional accountability and being accountable for how you think and feel, and learning how to shift those things into thinking and feeling the things that are going to get you the results that you want. If you want to be a really inspirational leader, and you've tried and you tried, but all you do is get stuck being this micromanaging person, non-leader, if you will; and you don't know what to do, you don't know why it's a problem because you keep trying to do all the things that you've read in the books, but you can't make it stick, that's when you go to a coach. Because you actually know the hows. You've read it in the book. The mentor told you all the hows and you've got all this list of hows, but you just can't seem to do it.

For me, I keep trying to lose weight, and I can't do it. I know the how. I know what I'm supposed to eat. I know about the exercise. I know what I'm not supposed to eat but I can't seem to stick to it. That's where a coach comes in, helps you understand, looks at your brain, and says, *Here's what's getting in your way. And here's how you need to switch your thinking.* And helps you figure out how to switch your thinking to things that you need, that you want to believe, and that you can believe about yourself so that you can start to shift and notice the thoughts that you're allowing, or the beliefs that you have that are getting in your way, and things that you've probably never even noticed before.

A coach is not your bestie. A coach is going to tell to you exactly how it is. They're going to tell you hard truths, obviously, in a gentle way so that you can hear it and you can absorb it. And then they're going to help you through it. A coach is someone who watches how your brain works, and then shares what they see in a very unbiased way but still always on your side. A coach will always believe in you until you can believe in yourself. That's the job of a coach. I have to believe in you. I want to believe in you. I want to show you what it's like to believe in you 100%, while still showing you how you're behaving.

My job as a coach isn't to judge you. My job as a coach is to say, *Hey, here's what's going on with you. Here's why it's happening. Do you want us to keep doing this? No? Okay, how can we change that?* How you think, how you show up, and how you accept yourself or how you think about things or fears that you have that are getting in your way, that's what a coach does.

If you go to a coach, and you say, *Hey, coach. Can you tell me how to run this project?* That's not what a coach does. A coach is all about helping you see how your brain is working. A coach is someone who doesn't buy into your bullshit thoughts. They're always neutral. They help you consider alternatives, but they're not going to tell you what to do.

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Oftentimes, I find myself in my own coaching sessions, where a client is like, *I really just need to know how to fix this.* And I'll say, *Do you want me to switch out of coaching and do you want me to consult with you for a second as a consultant?* And they may say yes or no, but still I always say, *Here's what I've seen that has worked. What do you think about that? How would that work for you?* It's always about bringing it back to the person where are you going to get stuck making this work.

So a coach not only shows you your blind spots but teaches you how to notice them for yourself so that you can have a lasting impact on how you show up. A mentor, which is also really important, will give you a laundry list of things that you need to do and that you should try and be aware of and watch out for and all that kind of stuff. A coach doesn't give you a laundry list. A coach helps you see where you're getting stuck and teaches you how to notice how you're getting stuck in the future. And that helps you figure things out. Those are the key differences there.

My bottom line for you, the most important thing to take away from this is to get the help you need. You are never too seasoned and too experienced to ask for help. Never hold yourself back from getting help for fear of being judged. It's just not worth it. It's way easier just to ask for help and keep going. Even though you know it's the right thing to do, sometimes we don't always do the things that we know that are good for us. So just a little nudge today to say, hey, go get that help you need, and then of course, be thoughtful and strategic about where you're going to get it.

If you've listened to this, and you're like me and like, *oh my gosh, I wish I had a coach or someone to tell me how to manage my brain like 10 years ago*, I totally get it. You should find a coach. You should really investigate a coach. One of the things you can do is you can book a free 45-minute session with me. What we do in that session is you basically tell me what's going on with you and I listen to what you're saying, you tell me what you've tried, and then I tell you why what you're trying isn't working, basically. I listen to your brain, I tell you how you're getting in your way, and I'll tell you how I think you can fix it.

I think this is really valuable for people. If all you want to do is get that 45-minute nudge, then you should do that. Because once you really understand why what you're doing isn't working to get you the results that you want, your brain just decides, *I'm not going to do that anymore. It's not working.* It's really interesting. And it starts to look for other ways, it starts to plug in other ways that might work better, which is great. That's what we're going to talk about on this call as well.

It's so important to also not just recognize why what you're doing isn't working, but also what you should do instead. Those are the two things we're going to talk about on this call. If you've got something that's been plaguing you for a while, and if you're willing to make 45 minutes and invest 45 minutes in your career, then come back and book a session with me. It's free. It's at melsavage.com/chat. And you will leave there with insight about what you need to do next to get the results that you want. I promise you that, my friends. So give yourself permission, ask for help, and go to the right source.

That's what I have for you this week. If you have any questions, you know what to do. Just email me at mel@melsavage.com.

I'll talk to you next week. Bye for now.

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