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Multiplication By Subtraction ... In Real Life, With Ben Laws

Shannon Waller: In this conversation with Ben Laws, he continually drops incredible words of wisdom. For example, “You can’t expect your team to care about the company unless you first care about them.” How good is that? Stay tuned for an amazing conversation about upgrading your team and Multiplication By Subtraction.

Hi. Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. Today, I am beyond thrilled to talk to my good friend, client, colleague, peer, all the things, Ben Laws, with whom I’ve had the deep pleasure of working with him as team on the Self-Managing Company on-site series through Strategic Coach. And what we’re here to talk about today, because, Ben, you’ve grown so much in terms of your company, is really all about upgrading your team, some of that includes Multiplication By Subtraction, and I thought, “Oh my gosh.” What I was so excited to hear about your progress, and I thought, “Ooh, can I interview you?” Because I think your story and the difference is made for you, and what you now have freedom to do, and some of the hard subtraction that you’ve had to do would be really useful for other people to hear and to understand how this actually plays out. It’s all good to read it, try to be as practical as possible, but when someone is actually lived it, it’s incredibly instructive. So Ben, thank you, thank you, thank you so much for being on my Team Success podcast and welcome to the show.

Ben Laws: Well, you’re welcome, and thank you for having me. I’m really excited. Anytime you ask me to have a conversation about the impact your program has had, I’m always really excited to share.

Shannon Waller: Fantastic. So let’s do a brief introduction, because you’ll do a much better job than I ever will. So tell me a little bit about you, a little bit about your company, your team, actually, you now have *companies*, which wasn’t the case when we started working together in 2017, 2018. So let us know a little bit about you.

Ben Laws: Yeah. Well, my name is Ben Laws. I am the CEO of a couple different, what I could consider “experience companies”. One of them is an experience company that specializes in wealth coaching and wealth management or investment management. I’m also CEO of an experience company that specializes in accounting and tax coaching. And then I am also the CEO of a value-telling company, which is a company that does custom video storytelling on the digital media platforms.

Shannon Waller: Wow. Now, tell me why you call them “experience companies” as opposed to just something else.

Ben Laws: I think it goes back to Simon Sinek, his very famous TED podcast, which was “What’s Your Why.” To me, I feel that a competition-free zone is in the world of experience. It’s one thing that can’t be commoditized, but it also starts with how you actually treat your team,



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like it all starts with how we treat each other. I remember going back about maybe 10, 11 years ago on a Delta flight where somehow they monetize safety instructions. There's a JW Marriott commercial and it's this beautiful imagery and it says, "Experience starts with how we treat each other." That's really stuck with me, and so everything that we do, it's actually part of one of our core values, is "Curating insanely awesome experience." And we believe that experience happens for our check-writers, i.e. the clients that we work with. It happens long before it ever reaches someone because it's in terms of how we're actually treating each other and we feel that the natural outcome is going to be incredible experience externally.

Shannon Waller: Wow, that's amazing. Thank you. And in addition to being CEO of all these companies, you've also got a beautiful family. Tell us about them.

Ben Laws: I do. I have a 14-year-old daughter and I also have a 20-month-old daughter. Been married to my life-partner, my business partner, Jenna, who is the CEO of our organizations. We've been married now coming up here this ninth year, but we've been together about 11 years.

Shannon Waller: Nice.

Ben Laws: Yeah. We live in Central Wisconsin, so we're up here in right now currently the nice cold north, which you understand, living in Toronto.

Shannon Waller: Yeah. You're farther north and colder than we are at the moment, I think. Do you have a snow on the ground right now?

Ben Laws: Actually, we had almost two-and-a-half feet of snow on the ground, and since shortly after Christmas the majority of it has melted.

Shannon Waller: Yes, ours has melted too. I was just up north to my vacation property and it was melting there too, but still a little bit in the ground. I love that.

So one of the things that I have really been impressed by, Ben is, first of all, you're one of the most conscious and aware entrepreneurs I know, especially with regard to teamwork, which is why I think we connect so strongly, and you have really worked at upgrading your team. And when you and I were chatting about this at a particular Coach event, I was just fascinated. I just was leaning in going, "Tell me more about that. I'm super-curious." So from where you were in 2017, 2018 to now, tell me about the experience of upgrading your team. What's that been like, what changed, what motivated you to do that, kind of all the things.



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Ben Laws: Yeah. I would actually say that I think the first major upgrade I needed to do was me, and your program really helped me understand, “Hey, what does it actually mean to have team success?” Right? Because at the end of the day, the organization is not done. I don’t actually do every single thing in the organization. At the end of the day, we have these incredible teammates, and so I need to upgrade my thinking about what that thinking to be. But I would say that since 2018, where we went to about—in the financial services industry, I think you’re going to find most practices have usually four to maybe seven in terms of people working in the organization. And I think at the time when we started with Self-Managing Company Program is that we had five, maybe six people on the team.

And since then, we have, in essence, close to 4X in the size of our team. Not only that, but not just hiring any sort of body that is willing to come in, is that we are able to get really clear about what is the recipe card that we need to make our incredible dish again and again and again on a daily basis. And the program that we went through with you really helped us get clear about that. So we’ve basically grown by four to 5X, we are getting more and more referrals. We actually don’t do any marketing as a result of it, and I actually directly attribute that back to our teammates, our teamwork that’s happening. About maybe two years ago, we sent out a survey to our clients and said, “Why us versus somebody else?”

By the way, if you haven’t done that, it’s a 4C’s moment. If you’re a Coach client, you know what that means. There’s some commitment and some courage to hear some truths. And some of the biggest feedback that we got is they said, “Number one, it’s not just you.” I was like, “Well, okay. Well, that’s really great.” And they said, “Second is it’s clear that you are hiring incredibly talented people and that you continue to surround us and notice ownership in that they surround us with all of these potential resources that help us get what we want.”

Notice it wasn’t because of returns, it wasn’t because of any of those other different factors, it was literally because of the fact that we continue to hire incredible people and we continue to actually provide them opportunities for developments. That was literally the number one or two major reasons why people said, “Why do we do business with you?”

Shannon Waller: That’s incredible. And first of all, not to have to do any marketing, that’s a big game-changer. And you were telling me earlier that you’ve been growing, what, 30% a year? That’s a huge growth rate.

Ben Laws: Yeah. I mean, obviously 2022 was a tough year from a market standpoint, as the market being down about negative-15 to negative-20%. But when you actually look at growth of new clients, new wealth-coaching clients, new assets in is that we’ve been growing on the clip of about 20% to 30%.



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Shannon Waller: Wow.

Ben Laws: I would say the last three, four years on the tune of closer to maybe more that like 30% on ongoing basis—no marketing. We've also then four, 5X-ed in terms of team. And I actually think the correlation, it wasn't growth that happened first, it was actually team growth, not to sound all "Field of Dreams," but it's like "If you build it, they will come."

The leap into the Self-Managing Company really gave me a roadmap and some structure to understand, "Hey, how does this true success, the success I'm wanting to see happen?" And I'll just tell you, everything that, when you and I originally talked about, "Hey, what would this look like if we actually worked together in the Self-Managing Program," is now only had true, it's exceeded two, 3X, what I think what we thought.

Shannon Waller: Of course, I love that story. How can I not? But I still have more questions, so thank you. I'm very gratified and thrilled that it's had that impact, and you also are very, very gifted at keeping it going, because we were together for roughly two years and that was a few years ago, but you have anchored it and championed it and coached it. And so your team, whoever new comes in, is they have you just to coach Strategic Coach to your team, which is, we love.

So now my question is how many of the original people are still there?

Ben Laws: Outside of Jenna and I, one.

Shannon Waller: Interesting, interesting. Now, let's talk about that for a moment because I think that's one of the fear factors for a lot of people is their teams changing over. We work with EOS a lot, Entrepreneurial Operating System, and one of the things that they talk about is how normal it is, especially for the leadership team to change over, and you've experienced that. And some of the people that are there we're very closely connected to you—AKA related to you and Jenna.

So let's talk about some of those transitions and were they easy, were they hard, did people go to better opportunities? How did that process work?

Ben Laws: Yeah, I think that there's two types of Multiplication By Subtraction, the Multiplication By Subtraction for you as a company, and sometimes it's the recognition of the Multiplication By Subtraction for the person who's potentially leaving. I think there's a country song like saying, "Goodbye is hard to say" or "It's hard to say goodbye," or something along that lines. I've noticed that especially, as you alluded to, the related pieces, I think there was this level of "We have to stay because it's, like, we're related." And I think what ended up happening is we



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started looking at we have to start thinking about bigger futures for everybody, company and that person.

As Dan says, "All progress starts by telling the truth," is that allowing this person to actually get in a position to do what he felt was his purpose and Unique Ability®. Quite frankly, it's going to allow him to be able to head towards his purpose. And quite frankly, as we start looking at growing, I think it allowed us to look at, "Okay, what's our bigger future and what does this look like?" And I think that ended up being a win-win after we got past the, "Oh, okay, how's this going to affect the relationship? Is this going to be awkward and weird at Christmases? Is this going to be weird for clients or team members?" And I think the big thing that we came away with, when we got on the other side of this, was a healthy dose of gratitude and respect.

Shannon Waller: Nice. I really appreciate hearing that, Ben, because I think that your context of bigger future for the individual and your focus on Unique Ability, which is if anyone is not familiar, is really for anyone, it's what you are or they are. Those things in which they have superior skill and passion, they love doing it. They bring their heart, not just their head to that particular endeavor as well as their will. That has a big future for everyone and it may or may not be within your company. So when you have that lens, that focus on Unique Ability and developing that for people, sometimes their futures are in your company and sometimes they're not. But that is such a wonderful relationship approach as opposed to a transactional approach to working with team members. So I love that. I mean, the subtitle of *Multiplication By Subtraction* is "How to gracefully exit wrong-fit team members." It's not that they're bad humans, it's just that their future isn't with your company and they can make a go, make a bigger better contribution elsewhere.

Ben Laws: And it's interesting is that I just want to be really clear. To learn to be grateful means that you have to actually take action and try it. And I will tell you that there's been some blooper reel, *Multiplication By Subtraction*, sort of like your hand was forced and then you realize, "Oh my God, Shannon's book is not only right, it's a multiplication factor not of, like, two, it's a multiplication factor of like 10X." But we also had a team member who approached us and said, "Hey, I wasn't looking, but one of my friends from a graduate program gave me this opportunity." And it was great because we had the context of your book, *Multiplication By Subtraction*, that human element of it. And Jenna and I actually got together and we said, "This would be a detriment to this person if they don't do this." We think that we can create something along the lines that might be compelling to say here, but it's probably better for them.

So as sad as it was for us to actually see that go, it was sort of like, we've kind of felt really good about doing it.



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I will tell you that along the lines, we've had some hard lessons of hanging on, I call the "Not wanting to have a difficult conversation syndrome." And we started to see some of that effect, some of what was happening in the company, but we actually had, after the fact, one of our team members actually approached us after we had had the subtraction moment, we'd had that hard conversation to say, "Hey, you know what, this isn't working. I don't think it's working for you and it's not working for us, and, you know, what do we need to do to make this transition happen?" We had the transition happen, it went really well. They came to Jenna and I and said, "I want to let you know that had you not let that person transition out, I was looking for other jobs."

I had no idea. I knew it was impacting some of the things that were happening inside the organization, but I didn't realize to that extent. If nothing else, any conversation that I've ever had will solidify Multiplication By Subtraction, it was that conversation where I went, "I feel it's my job as a CEO is to create an immense amount of value for this company so that number one I can provide meaningful employment and help build wealth of the people that decide to say they're going to be part of our wagon, so to speak, but it's also to make sure that we're surrounding our teammates with incredible other teammates." And that, literally, was one of the biggest "Aha!"s, because this person was not a person who was the complainer by any stretch, this is the person who was saying, "Hey, we're going to tackle big challenges together."

And to hear them say that that was affecting them, that changed the game. And so after that, well, we've made the decision. We've had a couple other sort of instances to practice this was the decision to "Hire slow, fire fast," and not because for the company, but because of the impact it's going to have on teammates when a teammate isn't pulling the same weight as everybody else, and all of a sudden it starts to impact culture. And at the end of the day, I think a 100X organization, it's about culture, culture, culture, culture.

Shannon Waller: I love that. Well, let's talk about that for a moment because I think your experience is you're not alone, first of all. And I think one of other things that leadership often doesn't know is that we are the last to know. People don't tell us. They're not going to tattle on someone. That's not cool. You don't want to be the whistleblower. And they think we know. We have no clue by the way. So by the time it's bubbled up to you, it's actually not just a ripple, it's a flipping whirlpool that's sucking other people down. So like there's a storm underneath and we just see the little ripple on the surface. So I think that's something that's really important to know.

And to your person's point, who came up to you and said, "I was looking," which I'm sure scared the bejeevers out of you like, "I had no idea," is A-players want to work with other A-players.



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So this term is Dr. Brad Smart, they're father-son, one of the two. Anyway, Dr. Smart: "A-player is the best person for the role at that pay grade. "An A-player is their productivity is a multiple of a B, which is kind of interesting. But like an all-star wants to be an all-star team. And if we don't know and appreciate that, it's key. A-players will hire other A-players, B-players hire other B- or C-players. So we have to be really conscious and, I think, careful and just be aware that by the time we find out there's a tempest somewhere and we need to take quick action because we could be losing really, really good people. We had the same situation. We brought in three senior team leaders from outside, people who we thought could help us grow. A year and a half later, none of them were there.

They all happened to be male, but that's beside the point. They just did not fit into our culture, to your culture point. And one person was looking and we would've lost her, and now she's a senior person on our team and we would've been devastated to lose her because of the person she was working for, because he was kind of such a jerk in terms of how he treated his team.

A lot of people do that, they're very good on the leadership level, they know how to talk to you, but how they treat their team is actually a really big indicator of whether or not they're a good human being to your organization.

Ben Laws: Yeah. We had one instance, and this was a really hard one, and it was actually really scary, because their productivity was so immense.

Shannon Waller: That's a level of difficulty that's a five out of five.

Ben Laws: Five out of five.

Shannon Waller: High-performer with a crappy attitude.

Ben Laws: High-performer with a crappy attitude, and it was really scary for Jenna and I going, "Honestly, we're losing all the intellectual capital that this person has gained over decades' worth of time, and then there's the relationships with clients and how's that all going to be perceived. And when we made the 4C's commitment, so just for everyone who maybe doesn't know what the 4C's is you make the Commitment and then when you have the commitment, then you have to understand what is the Courage is going to take. At the same time, but when you make that commitment and courage, what are you going to understand your Capabilities on the other side. If you know these capabilities are going to be true, what is the Confidence that you're going to actually experience when all of those are true?"

Shannon Waller: Yeah, this is after the blooper reel.



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Ben Laws: Yeah, this is after the blooper reel. When you started to realize, “Hey, this is having real impacts,” not just on about how’s the company going, but on other people’s lives. Is that when we had that 4C’s moment and we made that commitment, the amount of relief, and I’m going to say this in terms of what was clear PTSD, that was like had had happened, and Jenna and I just made the commitment that we felt the responsibility to the people that chose to join us in this journey in life that we’re going to surround them with, as you said, these A-players, not just in productivity, but in who they are to other people.

Shannon Waller: Yeah. That’s interesting. That’s fascinating what you said about PTSD. I think that’s real. We’ve got scar tissue built up, and it can be really scary, especially if you think the work’s going to come up back to you, if you think there’s going to be a negative impact on clients, if there’s intellectual property and capital that could keep us from taking action.

But the interesting thing is, and after being at Coach since 1991, I have a few years of experience with this, it’s never as bad as we think, ever, ever. And in fact, it is that relief that you were talking about. And a lot of times people are saying, “What took you so long?” And we’re like, “Oh, gee.”

Ben Laws: Here’s a crazy thing. The productivity that we thought that we had, once we actually then started hiring back in, all of a sudden infused new ideas where technology and these different ways to think about it, the ability to actually do it, and quite frankly, not getting attitude and response and feeling the sense of relief, and quite frankly, enjoyment. And not only that, but putting yourselves in an ability and place to be fascinated with that person, all of a sudden, hand-offs. One of the things you’ve talked often about is this baton handing-off, all of a sudden just started happening a lot sooner. And I think what I realized is it was bottlenecking, not that that person is bottlenecking before it got to that person because they’re like, “You know what, I’m just going to handle it myself because I just don’t want a dose of that today.”

Shannon Waller: That is such a good point. And it’s like who do people avoid wanting to talk to, how many people keep work that frankly is not their Unique Ability because dealing with the other person has a pain in the, you know what, is so key and they start going around. They actually start giving that person an awful lot of space, which means that person is doing less work with the same pay, making less of a contribution. It ultimately doesn’t serve them. It may look like it does in the short term, but when you see your team having to create a bypass, bypassing is what happens, then that’s a massive clue, and the attitude is another one.

I had so much fun putting this chart together in *Multiplication By Subtraction*. It’s page 34 because it’s like, “Here are all the symptoms, the drama queen or king, the zombie.” Oh my gosh, I had fun naming them. When you start to see that, you’re like, “Oh yeah,” once in a while



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all of us fall down and we are not our 100% best selves. But when they start to add up to three, four, five, you're like, "Oh, I've got a problem."

Ben Laws: So Jenna is our 8723 Kolbe. Well, when you go to a Coach workshop, you come away with usually sort of little *amuse-bouche*, I like to say, like a little gift, and one of them had been *Multiplication By Subtraction* when it just said first release, and you just jogged a memory that I had is that Jenna was reading the book, opened it up, and goes—and I remember I was in the other room. She walks in, she's got the book open, she's looking at it and she has this really thoughtful look on her face and she goes, "I'm going to read some symptoms to you." And she goes, "What does this make you think of?" Well, anyways, she read these symptoms. I was like, "Well, I don't know if this is what you're wanting me to answer, but it makes me think of this specific individual." And she goes, "This book is absolutely brilliant."

Because think about it, most things aren't logic-based, most things are all felt: "How was your day at work?" "It was good." Not, "I was productive." And so, when we think about, in terms of collaborations, those collaborations are built off a foundation of feeling and trust. And I think that your symptoms piece has a lot of those feeling pieces built into there so that you can start to identify, "Hey, oh, that's interesting. I have felt this before. Where has that been?" So thank you for bringing that up. That's a great sort of a WebMD of *Multiplication By Subtraction*.

Shannon Waller: I love that. And I didn't know that story, so that's super-fun to hear. And that's kind of why I put it that way. And by the way, this all comes from either mostly my experience and our experience as Coach, because we lived all the things, just saying, lots of blooper reels there, but also some of my clients' experience and it's just fascinating. Yeah, there's some really good stories in there.

Ben Laws: I think the basis, when people read *Multiplication By Subtraction*, they start to feel bad because they're going to put a negative instance out into world. There's going to be negative interaction, there's going to be a negative sort of whatever because you're going to have a hard conversation. But when I think that *Multiplication By Subtraction* allowed me to put Jenna and I's mindset is, "What is our end in mind? What is our true intention of what we are trying to do?" And I think it became really clear is we just want to win. And that means we want to win at business, we want to win at entrepreneurship, we want to win at culture, but the most important thing is we want our teammates to win. That is a major impetus.

And when someone is struggling, that's not winning. And so, who are you truly benefiting by hanging on? Are you really benefiting them as they're struggling, and all of a sudden they're maybe not hitting their KPIs, they're maybe having negative interactions, they're maybe bringing a bad attitude to work? So I think *Multiplication By Subtraction* isn't just about company win, but



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it's also about giving that person, at the end of the day, the permission to leave a situation where, number one, it's just not the right fit.

Shannon Waller: And people don't fire themselves, as the expression goes—very few people do. And sometimes months later people go, “Thank God you had that conversation with me because I wasn't going to do it for myself, but I wasn't happy,” and they quit and stay. I mean, it'd be great if all of us had the self-awareness to take us out of activities which we're not good at. Entrepreneurs have a higher price if they don't, in my experience. I mean, one of the things that Coach does so well is gives you permission to stop doing the things you're not very good at. But team members are raised and trained very, very differently, so we have to help them.

And the other thing is sometimes it's not so much that they have to leave your organization, but they need to leave that spot, that position, that role to find something that suits them better, which is why you and I are both a fan of Kolbe, of CliftonStrengths to get to know people, because if you were to put Jenna in my role, that wouldn't work. And if you were to put me in Jenna's role, I would fail miserably.

So we can set ourselves up for success by knowing how we strive, how we problem-solve, what our strengths are that we can lean into. A lot of times there's other things you can do, and you even talked about it in our previous conversation. Sometimes people have to move seats two or three times before they're totally in the right fit. I think that's key.

So I want to talk about the why this is so important to do, and you've talked about that a little bit with really wanting to win for everyone, and obviously some of the very tangible results that you've got as a result of that. But is there any other 'why' in terms of why it's important to have that future-based mindset and why you might need to be upgrading your team? Anything else come to mind for you?

Ben Laws: Yeah. Well, in one of the first times I ever heard Dan speak, I can't remember what the exact context was, but he said something, he goes, “What got you out of Egypt isn't going to get you into the Promised Land.” I really kind of just took that back in and contemplated that. And I think the thing is that as you continue to grow, you hit different levels. I mean, think about it as just your growth as a human being at five years old to 10 years old, to 15, to 20, to 25, to 30, to 35, to 40, where I'm at now. The things that allow me to be successful at 15 are not the things that are going to allow me to win at 40. And we logically know this, but when you think about someone who's been along with the journey is that it sometimes is really hard to be able to have that conversation if you can't find another seat at the table that they can really shine in, but I think it's really important as you continue to grow.



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And here's the thing, that every person who comes into our organization is that I've been really clear: We need to protect the culture, the culture, the culture, the culture, the culture. And the biggest thing that can ruin culture is bad attitudes. Someone literally not as we would say, being a hero for others. I mean, there's a laundry list of these qualitative characteristics that could kill culture. And if you allow that permeate it all, to even get a foothold in, it doesn't matter where you're going, like your Promised Land, is that you're never going to get there. And I think that for us it's helping teammates win, it's about making sure that as we are continuing to grow in where we want it to go is that we have the appropriately sized horsepower to help us get there, and that can help continue to maintain the culture.

I heard someone tell me in terms of once that as you go up a mountain, think like Mount Everest, is that there are certain camps like Camp One where people are like, "Hey, anything above and beyond this, my body can't acclimate." And so do you bring that person and force them to go to Camp Two where they could potentially basically die? And then there's Camp Two. And so that was, I think, really sort of impactful when I started thinking about this, not just our well-being as a company, but for someone else's well-being. You may be bringing them along, but are you forcing them to go to Camp One, to Camp Two where they're not going to thrive, they're not going to be impactful? I mean, what's the impact that that's going to have on their personal life, their confidence?

And so, I think that's the biggest reason for the 'why' is our bigger future of what we have as a company is where they need to potentially have different people come in with different horsepowers that's going to help us get there. But I think there was also the protection of culture, but I think also the protection of the person.

Shannon Waller: And I think that gets underestimated a little bit because here's the thing about a really great company and a really great culture: People hate to leave. And actually just another podcast I did not that long ago was the downside of having great company culture. People want the company, they just suck at their role and there may not be another right fit for them. So it's really hard to leave that. So people need to have the self-awareness, but we need to have the leadership awareness as well to recognize that we're going to the summit and you might be part of base camp, Stage One, Stage Two, Camp One, Camp Two, but are you going to be there for the whole journey or do you belong on another mountain? That is a cool thing.

There's one thing I want to ask you about with culture, and this is a part I really—it's a small part of the book, but it was so critical. It's actually what caused me to write the book. It's the kind of example you talked about a high-performer with a really lousy attitude and in this case it was a leader, and I called it the first time I met the person, told my client I was doing a similar program that I did with you, and I'm like, "This person is just paying lip-service to everything we just talked about." "Oh, no, no, he's great, he's going to be the succession plan, all the things." Two



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years later, we're talking, he goes, "Shannon, you were right." I'm like, "I know." Two years later, and it was really awkward and expensive to make that change. It was like, "Ugh." It just annoyed me.

I usually write books when I get annoyed, seems to be one of my creative motivations, and I get bothered. But I find that people who are there for their reasons, not the company's, it's insidious. But I wanted to get your take on this because I think you'll get my gist here, is that when people are there trying to kingdom-building, building their own little territory, there for their own agenda.

Now, I want people to win working for Coach, so I want them to be growing as a human, but I also want them to be in service of our bigger future, and I want those two things to align. That's one of the success criteria of a great entrepreneurial attitude—*Team Success Handbook*—is alignment. But when I find that people are not, by the way, these are usually also the clever ones who are good at saying the right things, so they're a little harder to find, but those are the ones that are really, really counter-culture and they can sometimes take people with them. So anyway, love to get your thoughts on that.

Ben Laws: I think one of the things that has made Multiplication By Subtraction easier for Jenna and I, I've really come to this major conclusion, you can't expect a person to care about the company if the company doesn't care about the person. And what we have done is just put massive amounts of time, effort, financial resources to helping the person win personally, helping them professionally develop. Because truly it's not just lip-service like, "Oh hey, it's important about culture," it's literally like, "No, no, we are going to show you that you are important to us. If you come into our sphere, we are going to surround you with so much love, so much support." And what's become really easy, then, is that if someone doesn't care about the company, well, it's really easy to go, "You know what, we left it out on the field." We left it out on the field. There's literally nothing else we could have done to help them win. And quite frankly, they're probably not a core value fit because we are also a DOS company, they're probably not a core value fit-

Shannon Waller: A hundred percent.

Ben Laws: ... if they're not necessarily wanting to be part of what we're all collectively doing. Because, let's just face it, when you do it together, it's just way more fun. I can tell you for Jenna and I, one of the great joys that we have is pouring back into everyone and it's honestly made business so much easier, but specifically this Multiplication By Subtraction because you can start to see lip-service versus action.



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Shannon Waller: Nice. Okay. This is one of my huge takeaways. You can't expect someone to care about the company unless you first care about them. Mic drop. That was so good.

All right, my dear, and my last couple questions, because I've kept you a long time today, so you've already given some really great coaching tips, but if you're going to give people direction and maybe to have the 4C's of Commitment, Courage, Capability, and Confidence, what advice would you give? How can you see people taking action on this and learn from some of the things that you've learned to do or to not do?

Ben Laws: Well, I think number one, if you haven't read the book *Multiplication By Subtraction*, you absolutely need to read that.

I think the second book that kind of helps with this decision is the book by Dan Sullivan, *Wanting What You Want*.

But I think that there are other things that if you don't know where you're going, how can you expect to know what are the teammates, what are the talents that you need to grow? And so, there's a couple different platforms. Again, I'm little biased, like you, towards the EOS. They have some really great structures so you don't need to reinvent, but like their BTO: What is the vision of where you're going? Then you can work backwards from there to understand what you're doing.

Ooh. If every person on your team does not have a Kolbe, a StrengthsFinder, potentially if you want to do PRINT, but I think StrengthsFinder, Kolbe, because at the end of the day, if they are not providing to the value of the formula, this Multiplication By Subtraction, I think the first question you always have to ask yourself, "Is it their fault or is it my fault?" Am I not being a good steward of the resource that they're providing? That would be I think one piece.

And then I think in that vision of where you're going is, who are you about as a company? What is your culture? I think one of the things that *Multiplication By Subtraction*, what I loved visually was that it's a formula. So I think one of the things you'd said, math is abstract.

Shannon Waller: Numbers are abstract. Yeah, absolutely.

Ben Laws: Numbers are abstract. So at the end day, you can assign any value to whatever you want. So one of the things to decrease the amount of time of Multiplication By Subtraction is getting really clear about where you're going, who you are about, and what you are about. Not just about the impact you're trying to create in the world, but as a culture, is that I think that allows you the ability to work backwards, to understand "What is the recipe card for each position?", so that when you actually hire someone in, you're not putting them in a position to



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fail. I think it's the number one thing as entrepreneur when you're bringing a Who in to help you with your How. Again, by the way, if you haven't read that book as well, sorry, not to name drop books, but *Who Not How*.

Shannon Waller: Yep, 100%.

Ben Laws: Another big one to go through is that sometimes entrepreneurs look at, "Well, the Who Not How is another entrepreneur." And what they forget is your first Who Not How was you're a collaborator and you needing a problem or there's a skilled or talent that you don't have and you go hire someone in to do that. It's the first thing about the Who Not How.

I think those would be the things I would say that are the biggest learning lessons that we have. And honestly, if you don't care about the person, how can you expect them to care about you? I think that goes back to "What are you about?"

And I think those are the learning lessons that when we look back where we've had some failures and telling the truth is that we weren't really clear about what it is we were about, where we're going.

And as we got clearer on that, we were able to understand what our resources—because all this talent and we understood and measure that, again, Dan-ism of, "If you can measure it, you can manage it." Guess what? Kolbe, StrengthsFinder allows you to understand it. It allows you to add that formula in "Where do we need to Multiply By Subtraction?"

Shannon Waller: I love it. Ben, you are a treasure, so thank you, and thank you for sharing your experiences, both the successes and the challenges on the way there because multiplication is not easy. What I have learned though, and what some people are gratified to know is that the hard conversations don't have to be long.

Someone finished the book and they're like, "Oh, if I have no, it would only take 15 minutes. I would've done it sooner," which I thought was funny, but it takes a while to come to that conclusion. And my intention with the book was to simply give people confidence to take action. Maybe that action was to move someone or give them a profile or just have a conversation, something. But that was really the intention of the book because I want to help create Unique Ability Teams that produce the results that you're talking about, that are growing at 30% a year, that'll free you up to go from one company to four, like holy mackerel. Like that whole freedom-to we were talking about earlier too. So that's my mission.



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So thank you, thank you, thank you for sharing your experience with that. I find it so illuminating and illustrative and very helpful to give people the confidence that they need to take action. So thank you.

Ben Laws: Yeah. Well, you're welcome and thank you so much for having me. I think that what you're doing I think is so incredibly important, and in part because I hear entrepreneurs and they struggle, and I think that there is a world out there where they have what I consider, again, one of these other freedoms that Coach given me, a freedom of emotion. If you're being bothered, that's fuel. Why are you being bothered? And especially when it comes to team, what is being bothered, and start with yourself and keep moving forward.

So I want to say thank you for your *Team Success Handbook*. The *Multiplication By Subtraction* has been absolutely invaluable, and so I'm really grateful that I can share the successes and also some of the trials and tribulations so other people can shortcut to be able to not repeat some of the headwinds and headaches. And so, I'm glad I was able to share them.

Thank you for having me.

Shannon Waller: Oh, love it. Thank you, Ben.