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How To Manage Micromanagement

Shannon Waller: Do you feel like you're being micromanaged or that you're the micromanager? Stay tuned for a simple and very effective strategy to solve this problem now. Hi, Shannon Waller here and welcome to Team Success. I'm going to talk today about an issue that I hear about all the time from both entrepreneurs and team members and team leaders. And this is about micromanaging. And we may have talked about this before, but it came up again. So clearly the issue is not resolved. And this particular situation arose and strategy is to really how to set boundaries with your entrepreneur. And if you're an entrepreneur listening, I have some coaching for you too. So stay tuned.

The number one thing is to really figure out why is your entrepreneur micromanaging? So this is something that you're experiencing. So what does micromanaging look like? Well, they're drilling into all the reports and then messaging or tagging you or other members of your team. It can look like asking you every five seconds whether or not something's done, and if not, why not? And you're like, hang on a second, it feels like you're not being trusted with your responsibilities, which can really have a negative impact on your confidence because you're wondering, why isn't he or she doing their job? Why are they trying to do my job? So that can be disheartening on a couple of different levels. It just leads to a lot of distraction and frankly, a lack of focus on results and getting stuff done. So micromanaging, not good. But to get rid of it, instead of just complaining about it, because lots of people love to do that, it's really important to look at the source. Why is it happening?

Let's dig a little deeper. Well, if your entrepreneur, or anyone else for that matter, is micromanaging on a particular topic, it's because they're feeling the opposite of confident. They're feeling worried, concerned, anxious, maybe even scared that something isn't happening. So if you're experiencing this, it's worthwhile, rather than just taking the easy route out to complain about it, which again, very easy to do, and you might need to vent for a few minutes, but let's get curious about what is the cause of this? And this is worth a conversation. And again, you'll need to put your sophisticated communication hat on for this one, but you can say, hey, I noticed that you seem to have a lot of questions and queries about X, fill in the topic that they're micromanaging, and say, I just noticed that you have a lot of time sensitivity. I don't know if you wanna say anxiety, that might be triggering in and of itself, but you have a lot of concern about this. I'd love to know what are the circumstances? If this is handled really, really well, what does it look like? And if it's not handled, what's the cost? What's the consequence? What's the bad news?

And when you understand that best and worst, great coaching from Dan Sullivan, it's kind of amazing how, first of all, when they describe the best case, you're like, oh, this is a way bigger impact than I realized. Or when they describe the worst case, you're like, oh, that's really bad. Now I get it. So we often don't know this. And sometimes we don't ask and sometimes we aren't told. That's okay. You can ask. You can find out for yourself. So it's worthwhile to just take a step back, do it in a really non-triggering, non-mad, not frustrated, no heat, just clear



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communication style that just says, hey, I'm curious. I'd love to know more about your thinking on this so I can better understand and I can do a better job. If that is your clear intention, which it is, they will hear you. You know, you probably go a couple of different rounds in this conversation. Maybe they're not clear. All of us, this happens during certain moments where we're kind of being run by our emotions, but we don't realize it. We don't recognize it very quickly. And they'll go, oh, I am a little bit uptight about this, aren't I? Hmm, I think it's because in the past this situation happened and it turned out really poorly, or there was a legal implication, or it created a relationship mess, or it's just something I don't feel like I know a lot about, so I'm worried that I'm gonna miss something crucial, and maybe there's a legal implication I'm not aware of. Who knows where their fear is coming from? But once you hear it, first of all, it might be incredibly well justified. Then you can get behind that. You're like, yeah, that would be really bad. Let's make sure that doesn't happen. So that is really, really powerful because they've gone from being your opponent to now you come around the table and you're looking at something from their perspective that allows you to be on the same side. And now that you know that bigger picture, you can take probably much better actions.

I know when I've stopped and asked this, I'm like, oh, if that's what you're after, then we should also be doing this, this, this, this, and this, not just that, which is what you told me to do. And they're like, oh, right, yeah. So when you can get your mind, don't just implement the strategy, find out what's the obstacle that they're actually trying to overcome. What is the desired end result? That is what you need to find out. In Strategic Coach, there's a Strategy Circle. This is the very first tool that kicked off the company and the Program. Dan created the Strategy Circle, which has four components. It's a circle. So keep in mind, it's the strategy. It's the end result. What does it look like when it's done and done well? Then relative to that result, what are all the obstacles in the way? And then what are all the strategies? The problem is sometimes you just get the strategy and you're not sure what obstacle they're trying to overcome. Again, you don't know that end result. So just knowing that framework allows you to ask really good questions. Really great coach, asks really good questions, really great questions, hint, hint. So that's what you want to be able to do. And know that you don't know. Know that you're curious, you're inquiring, and you can be really, really open and not defensive, not triggered. You're just being super curious because you want to get to the bottom of this too. You want to solve this particular issue for them in a way that works for them and for you. I'm making it sound simple and sometimes you'll have to find the right moment and such, but if you can do it with grace and with some humor and definitely with caring, I would say with love, but it depends on how you feel, I think it's really powerful. And you can eliminate a source of friction that is brutal for most people.

Now, are there some cases where this might not work? Well, yes, and I tend to think of overbearing managers in sitcoms that are doing it for humor, and maybe there are, but you're an entrepreneurial team. You know, this is what it is that you have to bring, and this is the environment that you're in. So probably your entrepreneur has bigger and better things to



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worry about if this is taken care of. So when you can be a partner, in the Team Success Handbook, this is what I talk about being a partner. So sometimes being a partner is helping to figure out what the concern is. What is the worry? What's the worst case scenario? You know, how can you get the bigger picture so you can do an even better job? How can you decrease some of the mental and emotional load that is on your entrepreneur? First of all, it's a very gracious thing to do, and it will benefit you too, because as they get calmer, they will not be hounding you quite so often. So I think that that's really important. Oh, one other part about this is to say, okay, I can see a bunch of steps to the solution. I'm going to take a few of them. Hopefully you don't have to delineate what every single one of them is. You know, let me check back with you. I'm going to report back in two days and let you know my progress. And then I'm going to do that again, and we'll report back in the next two days. Does that sound good? Does that give you the cadence of communication and feedback and status that will support you in this process? And have your entrepreneur or team leader say yes or no, right? And find out what would make them feel good. You might have your own cadence, but you need to check in with your audience. That's who you're serving. People are going to clap or not in terms of whether or not you're being successful. So be sure to figure out what you're going to communicate and how often. That will be most important.

And again, remember, and I learned this with talking about delegation, sometimes your entrepreneur is in an area that they do not know anything about. And that can be very anxiety producing. There's a lot of uncertainty. So the uncertainty actually has nothing to do with you. It's not a lack of confidence in you. It's a lack of confidence in the situation and their knowledge. So you don't need to take it personally is kind of what I'm trying to say. So just find out what it is. If they are taking it personally because you've done a not great job of this in the past, then you know exactly how you can improve. And if it's something you've done well in the past, but this is a new topic area, then just know that it might be the fact that they just don't quite know. They haven't done this before. And for whatever reason, that's causing concern. So that allows you to be a little bit more gracious in the situation.

Now, what if you are the one who's micromanaging? Hmm, this could be interesting. And by the way, we probably play both sides on this fairly often. There's some things where I tend to micromanage and some things where I don't. If it's something that is outside of my area of Unique Ability, anything you do with it will be better than what I do. So anything to do with paperwork or administration, yeah. Please just make it go away. However, if it's something that is brand new for me, it's a high stakes thing, it's something I'm anxious about, then I will look much more like a micromanager. Now, I do tend to think that Unique Ability is pretty much baked in at this point. Can't say it's factory installed, but it's definitely baked in. And I'm very conscious and aware of how people strive, what their motivations are. I take that into account with my teamwork all the time. So I'm not asking people to do things that they're not suited for, or I'm hopefully not trying to do things for which I'm not suited for very long anyway. So I try and have a pretty high degree of self-awareness, which I would highly recommend for you too.



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So be aware, if you notice that you're kind of hounding people, or you're starting to be distrusting, or you're wondering, oh, did they actually do this or not? And like, where are the numbers for this report? And why isn't this higher? And what are they doing anyway? If that kind of litany is starting to go through your mind, know that you are in danger of becoming a micromanager, something no one likes or loves, and start saying, okay, what am I actually worried about? And then for yourself, do the best and worst. Think, okay, well, if this turns out really, really well, what does it look like when it's done and done well? And then if it doesn't happen well, if we make a mistake in this area or the wrong numbers input or that we don't register the intellectual property or whatever it is, what is the worst case scenario? What is the source of my anxiety? And it's good to admit to yourself when you're freaked out about something, just again, self-awareness, and then say, okay, now what you've done is you've taken a feeling and emotion that's in your body and you've moved it to your brain. You've taken it from the back to the front, your prefrontal cortex. And now you can think about it. Fast thinking, slow thinking. This is the slow thinking part. So really taking the time to process, think about your thinking. Why am I so stressed about this? And then, you know, ideally write it down. Talk out loud to yourself if you don't mind doing that. And say, oh, I'm worried that this could happen. And guess what? I didn't tell Joe or Jane that this is what I was really worried about. They could probably benefit from hearing this. So communicate your worst case scenario. Here's what you're trying to avoid.

Your team wants you to be happy. They do not want to see you stressed. They don't want to be micromanaged. So many people are supportive of us and we don't realize. So when you share your motivation, you share your concern, you're transparent with them on that level. First of all, it garners incredible appreciation that you've trusted them with this, what could be sensitive information. And they will work like heck to make sure that they deliver for you. And if they can't do it, hopefully you create enough openness within your team that they can go, oh, I think that's a little bit out of my skill area. However, I know that Tom over in this department actually has done this before and solved this problem and he did it in a really elegant way. Are you okay if I reach out to Tom? And the answer is going to be yes. And then your job is to say yes. So it's really, really key that we are aware of our own reactions. Again, we can all get driven by our own emotions. We can all get overridden by them sometimes. So the more self-awareness you can bring to you, the more you can be aware of other people and how they are approaching things. And if you know someone looks at something very, very different than you, and they're probably not sensitive to what you're worried about, find a way to communicate that or bring someone else into your project who does have that same sensitivity.

And I know this really well from working with Babs Smith, co-founder of Coach, and that sometimes she'd be like, oh, she'd give me a strategy and I'm like, okay, what's the obstacle we're trying to overcome? What's the result we want to accomplish? And then once I could state back to her what she was concerned about, the project was mine. Until that moment, it was not. I'm not going to say it was a wrestling match, but there was a lot of conversation and I



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just wanted to go away and do it. She's like, no, no, hang on a second. And then once I could describe the issues to her and she knew that I got them, bam, I had full ownership. So that was a really important lesson, which I'm now able to pass on to other people. So if you're on the giving or receiving end, don't shy away from this information. It's absolutely essential to getting the result you want and to prevent more than number one, lack of teamwork issues that I hear about, books are written about micromanaging, courses are made about not micromanaging. And I think this is one of the clearest, the most direct and quickest ways to solve the problem. So I hope all of us will learn to not micromanage or learn what to do when we are. That is my wish for this particular conversation. All right. Any questions or comments, please let me know at questionsatstrategiccoach.com. Love to hear any circumstances or situations where this has happened with you or where you found yourself being the micromanager. It can also happen when you feel like you don't trust someone, but give them a chance. Let them know your big picture and see if truthfully they probably didn't know some key piece of information that will allow them to be a hero to you. I really appreciate your input and feedback, so please let me know any thoughts at questions@strategiccoach.com. Thank you so much for listening, and as always, here's to your team's success.