

1 INSIGHT

with RICH LITVIN



Episode 7: "Fear is a mask for desire..."

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Rich: Welcome to 1 Insight. My name is Rich Litvin. I grew up in London, and I now live in LA. This is a podcast for extraordinary top performers. You see, I've coached some of the most successful and talented people on the planet. I see what most people cannot see, and I dare to say what most people wouldn't dare to say. What I know about success is that on the other side of it, they can actually be lonely.

You can feel like more of an impostor, the more successful you become, and when you're the most interesting person in the room, you're actually in the wrong room. I coach around insight. Life looks one way, something happens, the world looks different, and your entire world changes. It can happen in an instant. This podcast is called 1 Insight, because a single insight can change everything.

Fear is often a mask for desire. When somebody shows up and says to me, "Hey, I've got this fear, Rich, help me get rid of the fear," I'm less interested in getting rid of the fear than finding out, what do they really want behind it, and then helping them get that.

I'm okay with feeling fear. Fear for me is a sign that you're dreaming big enough that there's something scary out there. There's no fear. This isn't something that's big enough, in my opinion, and I worked today in this session with Niki.

Niki works for the Red Cross, International Red Cross, does amazing work there. She set up a coaching program with the World Economic Forum. She's coached brilliant future generation leaders. She created something online for an NGO and a private sector company that raised millions of dollars, so I knew a secret that when she tried to fight for her limitations, and have me buy into her story, I wasn't going to bite.

The fun thing about this episode is that when she has this powerful insight, and I say, "We're there, we get it," we pause. And I say to the people who are doing the editing, "Okay, guys, you can cut this now, where we're complete, I'm going to just chat with Niki."

But then what she says is so interesting, I say to the guys, "Hey, let the recording keep rolling. Capture this too." I think you're going to enjoy this one. Hello, Niki.

Niki: Hi, Rich.

Rich: Hey, let's play. So you, you're saying yes to this. I know you must know a little bit about me and what I do, otherwise, you wouldn't even be here. So one of my favorite questions to begin a coaching session is often something around, what would make this an extraordinary conversation?

Niki: I think it would be, that I let go of the fear that I'm feeling about taking the next step, and getting some energy back into my coaching business.

Rich: So, let me play with the first one, and then we'll look at the second one. I'll let go of fear around the next step.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: I have a belief that fear is a mask for desire. So I try and teach this to my son, who's seven, who yesterday was afraid, and had a meeting. He had to a school for a small group of the kids. He was really afraid, and he came back home, and it was, it took a lot of energy to get him ready for it. Because he just didn't want to go. And it's me and my wife, the teacher, all having private words with him, came back, and it was his best bit of the day.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: And I'd keep pointing out to him how often the things that we're afraid of, when we go into them are afterwards, we call it fear, but it's actually, it's a lot of energy in our body. So you're feeling a lot of energy right now around what? What's, what are you afraid of?

Niki: I'm afraid of, so... I live alone. So I need to pay the rent, which means I need to work, which means that I get distracted, and ended up doing lots of different projects that distract me, because I'm going to pay the rent with them.

My deep desire is to work in a different way, and build my life in a different way, and have long term clients, not just clients that I see, maybe even, just one, for one session, or for 10 sessions. I want to work with someone on a sort of more long term basis, six months or a year.

Rich: Nice.

Niki: And that's, that to me is where the juice is. And I don't, I can't seem to shift out of the, "Oh my God, I've got to earn money to pay rent, and to buy food," versus my passion, which is working with people in transition, in a specific space of retirement.

Rich: Great.

Niki: So that's what I would like to do. I don't even know, even, how to get there.

Rich: Well, let's play. Let's find out.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: So first of all, I'll introduce you to a distinction I like, called sex versus cash. And it comes from a cartoonist named Hugh MacLeod. And Hugh MacLeod basically says, "It's all well and great to have our great big sexy projects, but sometimes you just need the cash to put food on the table, pay the rent, pay the kids' school fees, whatever it is." You got to like that.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: It's nice to be able to know, "Well, I'm doing this because I need the cash," or, "I'm doing this because it's sexy work."

Now, it's so tempting to want to go into the sexy work, because it's the thing that makes us feel most alive. Throughout history, great artists often had a benefactor. The reason Michelangelo could paint the Sistine Chapel, the reason great artists were able to do their work, was often, that it was the church or royal families. Those were the where the money was in those days. Sometimes there was a wealthy person who would pay an artist.

These days we have to be our own benefactor. And for me, knowing that distinction around my cash projects and my sexy work allows me to say, "Okay, well, right now, I really need money. So actually, it's four and a half days a week of cash projects, and just half a day a week for sexy work." Or, three days a month of sexy work, if... Their entire business goes up and down.

There are moments, it's all cyclical, and where I put a lot more intention on bringing in cash, or a motorcycle, a lot more attention on the sexy work, the sexy project. So, how does that land as I draw that distinction for you?

Niki: I think it's a great distinction. I still don't know how to get to the sexy work, though.

Rich: Right, so-

Niki: Like, there's still that thing. I get it and, but it's not, yeah, I'm...

Rich: Yeah. Well, what that tells me then, is, it's not the right time. So what you need, where is it? I just, I have... This is an ideas journal.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: And an ideas journal is where I write down all the sexy ideas I have that one day might come into reality, but I capture them, so I know they're safe. And then I can get on with the things I need to do in that moment.

So it sounds like, right now, your attention needs to be on cash.

Niki: Yeah, but I think it's also an excuse. I think it's also a, I don't even know how to even imagine getting clients that I need. So I'm going to just do busy work, to see what I like out of my comfort zone.

Rich: Okay, so I don't believe you. You do know how to create clients, because you told me, the reason you know who I even am is you've read the book, The Prosperous Coach.

Niki: Yes.

Rich: And The Prosperous Coach gives you a very simple, it's not easy, but it's simple, framework for creating clients. That's why that book has sold 55,000 copies by word of mouth alone, who just pass it on, because it works and people feel that. Connect, invite, create, propose. There are four steps to this framework. If you want to create clients, you start at number one, and you work your way through. Connect.

Who would I love to speak to today? Not, who can I connect with, because they could be a client? It's just, who can I connect with? And then you find out what they're up to. You put their attention, your attention on them, and at some point, when they ask you, "Well, what are you up to?", you can say, "Oh, you know what? Right now, I've got a space for one coaching client." Connect. At some point, you invite those people into a conversation.

Create. You serve them. You give them an experience of your coaching. The heart of The Prosperous Coach approach is the concept, give people an experience of coaching. Don't try and sell the idea of coaching.

Niki: Sure.

Rich: So, and at some point, then you make proposals. "This is how much of a cost. This is how we work together." So you've read that book, you know what to do.

If you're not yet doing that, it tells me... Oh, this is an edgy thing to say, but if you're here, then I know you're ready for what I call high flame coaching. It doesn't mean I berate you, but it means I'm going to turn up the dial.

If you don't have clients, well, that tells me is that you don't yet want clients.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: Now part of you might be thinking, "Well, no, hang on, I'm here because I do want them." There's also a part of you that doesn't want them. That's why it doesn't happen. Because what I know about you is, you've done extraordinary things.

You're involved in the Red Cross. You still have a coaching program for the World Economic Forum. You helped to launch a, an online program for a non-government organization and a private sector company. You raised millions of dollars to raise awareness for the environment. You are a high performer. You do extraordinary things that most people can never do when there's enough of a desire.

So this isn't happening. It tells me either the desire isn't enough, or there's something that's in the way that is more powerful than desire to make this happen. No judgment. It's just the reality.

Niki: I think it's the fear. It's the fear that's in the way, and the fear of, yeah, that juggling act between reality and what I really want to do. [crosstalk 00:10:46] And I don't know how to give myself that space to go, "Okay, well, you have six, I don't have six months to build that, or to create that."

Rich: Where do you generate money from right now? What does your money come from?

Niki: From consulting and working as a coach at 50%.

Rich: And do you, consulting and coaching, do you bring in enough money to allow you to have a good lifestyle?

Niki: Yes.

Rich: Okay.

Niki: For now.

Rich: So this isn't-

Niki: This is all new. It's all very new. I'd spent 25 years working for one employer, having a paycheck at the end of the month, and this has been a big jump.

Rich: Well, first of all, congratulations. It's amazing to hear that your creating this. Really, I want to acknowledge you. Most coaches are in struggle mode the entire time. They don't ever become, really, professional coaches, and you have become one. And that's great. It's really important to acknowledge that.

Niki: Thank you.

Rich: The second thing is just to slow down, and get present to the moment. We tend to live in this fear about, the money will run out, and what will happen. Business goes up and down, so you definitely want to find ways to balance out the ups and downs, a savings account where you start to grow short term savings and long term savings, and eventually, what I call financial freedom, the money that you'll never touch.

But start off with a few dollars every time a new client comes in, a few dollars here and a few dollars there. You'd be surprised how quickly those accounts will build up, but do that, because they will smooth out the ups and downs of business.

Because the challenge of having only a, "I have a practice with only a few clients," is that you can have a month where it's great. You sign up three new clients, and then, and two months go by, you don't sign a single client, and it feels like it's up and down to that. That generates this scarcity mode inside of us.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: Second thing is, you can see me, so I'm smiling. It's time to put your fees up.

The thing I love to do is to challenge coaches to double their fees. Because if you double your fees, you only need half as many clients. And if you're full right now at capacity with your clients, it's time, and you don't have to do this with all your clients.

You could say, you know, "I have space for one client," whereas a different kind of engagement to everything else. That this would look like, we'd have, we'd start off with a two-day retreat. You've come to my home, we'd meet at a hotel. And then we'd do our work together, and again, we'd meet for another two-day treat in the middle, retreat in the middle, and something at the end, and create a package that's, oh, it's obvious. Well, I know that I'd be paying more for this one, or for this one, and start to talk about that.

I think back, I don't know, 12, 15 years. And I remember, at the time when I began coaching, I'd struggled with confidence so much of my life, that I figured out, I could do something around confidence. I studied confidence. I was doing something called instant confidence sessions. Get on a call, 30 minutes, within 30 minutes, you would

leave with this renewed sense of power and confidence, more you'd had in years. Got really, really good at it.

And then one of my coaches said, "Rich, do you want to be known as the person who does instant confidence sessions?" I said, "No, I don't want to be known... I want to be known as the guy, you spend a year with me, and your life entirely transforms."

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: And so, that became the place I came from. That was my new intention. This is who I'm, what I'm about.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: Well, I lost the insight I just had.

Niki: That I'm so busy, that I actually haven't really created my specific intention.

Rich: Yeah.

Niki: Like, I have a general idea, and I have already built my life in the end there, but I don't have a really specific intention. Yeah.

Rich: Tension is powerful.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: Tension shifts all sorts of obstacles out of the way. I came to, I don't say this very often, because it was only an intention I set inside my head. I don't know. I'm not sure how I, I haven't really shared it publicly much, but when I came to the United States, in 2006, I'd spent two years learning about coaching as part of a qualification to be a head teacher. And then I'd lost the job, and I'd shifted into, I want to be professional coach.

When I came to the United States, I set these three intentions secretly inside myself. I didn't tell a soul. Sometimes it's good to put intentions out there. Sometimes it's good to keep them inside, when you get to deciding one. I said, "I want to learn from the best coaches on the planet. I want to be trained by the best coaches in the planet. I want to be one of the best coaches on the planet." Set those as internal intention.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: I remember, it was a few years later, I was in England with couple of my friends who are world renowned coaches, and we were on the London Eye, just having a little fun trip. And I said to them, as we got into the, one of the booths, I said, "You know what, guys? I set this intention all these years ago, I want to be trained by the best coaches on the planet, with my peers and my friends, and here I am hanging out with you."

And they looked at me, just kind of laughing at me, like, "Why, what the," it was so dismissed. They were so, "Why is that even a thing for you? We're just your friends. Why is that?" And I realized, "Wow, I just," I'd made this happen.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: The power of intention. I can't tell you the time frame in which that will happen, when you set an intention, but if you've set an intention at that place that you come from, day after day after day, things shift.

Niki: Yeah. But yeah, I'm a big believer in that. I still feel that that's intellectual, and that there's still something that's blocking. I can feel it in my aim, my body, that I can set the intention, but as, I would find reasons not to.

Rich: Well, I'm going to mess with your thinking in this moment, because-

Niki: Okay.

Rich: That if, if you don't have that, Niki, that sense in your body, like, "I shouldn't be doing this," "I'm afraid," or, "There's a block," I would say you're not dreaming big enough.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: I mean, the projects that I know you've done with the NGOs you work with, with the Red Cross, am I right, that in the beginning of those projects, either you said that they were going to be impossible, or someone else that they were impossible?

Niki: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rich: Now I've got news for you. You've got a track record at doing impossible things. I love impossible goals. For me, the power of an impossible goal is the, my distinction about an impossible goal is it's literally impossible. There is no way on Earth this could be done, in which case, you can't, you know it's an impossible goal when you can't turn it into a 17-step plan.

If you can, if you get a goal, and you can turn it into a plan, it's an audacious goal, it's a bold goal, it's a scary goal. It's not an impossible goal. I was teaching this concept for many years, teaching it to the guys in my men's group many years back, six, seven years back.

And I drew out from each of them an impossible goal. And then, they were like, "Oh, that feels exciting, and it's like, this is what I'll do next." Now that's not impossible, then, because you know what you're going to do with your next step. And we turn it into an impossible goal, and then it's my turn.

And they said, one of the guys said, "Well, Rich, I know you only ever work with 5,101 clients a year. What if you had five million dollar clients, five clients who each pay you \$1 million?"

And I started to say, "No, no, no, you don't understand. In the world of coaching, maybe Tony Robbins has that, but you know, nobody else." And I realized, I'm trying to convince them that the thing that he just said to me is impossible, why I shouldn't be doing it. So I started, and I realized, "Okay, that's my impossible goal."

Niki: Okay.

Rich: Now here's the thing. It's not a place to get to. I can't tell you when I'll have a million dollar client, or if I'll ever have a million dollar client. But I've been showing up as that person ever since. And two days ago, I was sitting down with a friend of mine, and the two of us were looking at the kind of people that we're working with next, where those kind of numbers are, they spend that kind of money all the time, like it would be a no brainer for them to spend that kind of money.

Niki: Right.

Rich: And so, it's closer than it's ever been. And again, I'm not attached. It may never happen, but I've been coming from that place every day. It's a place to come from, not a place to get to.

Niki: Sure. I get that. Can I ask you a question? Do you ever get lonely?

Rich: Yeah. I love-

Niki: With the work?

Rich: That I love, because the book that I'm writing right now has gone through three different titles. It started off with The Success Paradox, this idea of, what got you here won't get you there. And then the title shifted to The Loneliness of Leadership.

And I would say that title out, because [inaudible 00:20:01], in terms of writing a book, the title's, Loneliness of Leadership. And it was polarizing, because I got two responses. People would either go like, you just did, like, "Oh yeah, it's really lonely up here." Or they'd go, "Well, that's interesting. What's that about?"

So I was like, "Well, it's not for you, you're not, goodnight." And so, and the title it is now likely to be published with, it's just a riff on that. When You're the Most Interesting Person in the Room, You're in the Wrong Room. Which relates to this idea of loneliness.

People think that, "Well, hopefully, finally, one day when I'm that successful, that fascinating, life will be amazing." And there's challenges that come with that. So absolutely, I get lonely.

Niki: Yes. Okay.

Rich: In fact, the very selfish reason I created 4PC, this is the community of leaders and high level coaches that I run, is that I was frustrated that I didn't have an amazing community I could find anywhere that was right for me. I decided to now create one.

Niki: Yeah. Right.

Rich: Well, here's another impossible goal, right? I said, "I'm going to create this community of people who are all more amazing than me. Well, how am I going to do that? I didn't know." I didn't have to know. I just had to keep speaking it into the world, and now, that group has the most extraordinary leaders and coaches in it.

Niki: Hmm. Yeah, another, and not something else that happened. I don't think... I think I need a different community. Yeah.

Rich: Now I'm silent in this moment. If we were coaching just the two of us, and this wasn't being recorded for the podcast, I'd leave that silence hanging even longer. That's what I call it, an insight moment, as this stillness in this moment, because there's a realization of the truth of what you just said.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: That doesn't mean you have to do anything today or tomorrow to make that happen, but sit with that. Begin to look at that. It's edgy. It's sometimes, the friends, the peers, the colleagues that we've got are not the ones for where we're going next. That doesn't mean we dislike them, doesn't mean they're bad people. Sometimes it just means that it's time for a new community.

Niki: Hmm.

Rich: And you can do two things. One, you can look for that, and two, that you can create that.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: When I moved to LA, I was coaching a lot of very powerful women at the time. My wife is a very powerful woman. I knew I needed a little panel for men in my life. I wanted to be in a men's group. I did not want to lead that group. That would be my day job.

So I looked for a group of peers who would challenge me and meet me, but they'd been my peers, not people I was leading, and I'd co-created that and co-led it for seven, eight, 10 years, I think, almost. The most extreme of the people, we're still friends to this day. There's a man who works in NASA, a man who trains billionaires, a man who runs a wolf sanctuary in that group.

Niki: Yeah, right. Thank you.

Rich: Yeah. Yeah, With that, thank you for playing, Niki.

Niki: No, thank you very much.

Rich: Thanks.

All right. Whoever's editing this later, that's, that was on pause point. We'll stop there, at that.

Yeah, can you stop doing all that, Niki? I mean, it's a lot of energy, right?

Niki: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, sorry.

Rich: One of the [crosstalk 00:23:50]-

Niki: A lot of stuff.

Rich: Yeah.

Niki: Yeah.

Rich: Yeah. So what's fun is, if you're editing, don't pause it there. Keep it going, the laughter. Whoever's listening, feel the reality of this. Niki is feeling all this energy in her body right now, because it's an intense moment when you have these insights.

Niki: Yeah, yeah.

Rich: And give yourself permission to slow it down. What we need to do right now is to start looking for... Here, I'll give you a tool. It's called an energy audit.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: An energy audit is very simple. Take a piece of paper, draw a line down the center. On the left hand side, write, Energizers. And on the right hand side, write, Drainers.

Niki: Okay.

Rich: Now, you can do this for all sorts of things in your life. You can do this for habits, projects and activities. But for you right now, it's people. What people or what kind of people, and also environments, people and environments, what environments make you feel alive? What communities make you feel alive? What people make you feel alive, inspire you, excite you? What people, environments, communities, drain you of energy?

Niki: Okay, that makes sense.

Rich: And if you like, you can, if you're not sure, is this an NGO, is there a drainer? I would say, I love Tim Ferriss's rule. Give things a number in making a decision from zero to 10, but not allowed to use the number seven. Seven is the [inaudible 00:25:27] number. So yeah, it's okay. It's pretty good. Working with that, no sevens, eights, nines and 10s for you.

Niki: Okay. Wow!

Rich: Yeah.

Niki: thank you. Thanks, Rich. I really appreciate this.

Rich: Thanks, Niki.

Niki: Thank you.

Rich: For most of human history, it wasn't called coaching. It was called leadership. And it's what I love to do, to coach people, to lead people, and to mess with people's thinking. If you'd like more of this, or if you'd like to learn more about our community of extraordinary top performers, go to richlitvin.com/1insight.