

I'm going to be talking to Sarah and Sarah, I know you've got a PhD in archeology, that you've got it 27 years old. And then going down this path you just knew it wasn't the right one for you and said, "I'm going to go in the direction that I really feel cool to go in." I'm going to be speaking to Monica who for 28 years led teams and worked in the corporate world. In fact, went to teams of up to 250 people, she was in charge of, bringing in sales of more than 10 million euros every year.

So there's something about each of you that is very different and has me go, wow. And I have no doubt that just like me, you have your doubts, your fears, your insecurities, and probably if you're human, as you heard me say the things about the other people who are guests on this podcast today, you were thinking, "Wow, it's impressive what they're up to." But on the inside you're like, "That's what I do." Right? Because the problem with being in our zone of genius, doing that thing that we just do effortlessly, is it feels effortless. So we can hear the acknowledgment from the people around us, it doesn't really land. It doesn't mean so much.

I'm glad you're here. Let's play. Sarah, hi.

Sarah: Hi.

Rich: What would make this an extraordinary conversation for you today?

Sarah: I love this question. I think it refers back to what you just said, actually really seeing my own brilliance. Yeah. Seeing my own brilliance.

Rich: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I believe in something called the fraud paradox. When it comes to imposter syndrome, we've all heard of it and we all hope that finally one day we'll get past imposter syndrome. Finally we'll fit in. We know we're meant to be in this room. I don't believe in that game. I hope for you, Sarah, that you never quite see your own brilliance. You always feel a bit of an imposter and a bit of a fraud because it will mean you continue to put yourself in rooms where you feel you don't fit in.

Sarah: Yeah. It's almost like the imposter syndrome, it kind of spurs me on to do things to put myself in places that I... Yeah, exactly that. Yeah.

Rich: That's catch. So I know that you moved to Portugal. You took a real risk. Moved from England to Portugal, you met someone you fell in love with, you started a business nine months ago and you're oversubscribed. You're fully booked.

Sarah: Yeah.

Rich: So whilst I could work with you on doing the things I need to do to have you get your own brilliance, just so you know, I get it over here.

Sarah: Okay. Yeah. And when you say that back to me, I'm like, "That's pretty cool."

Rich: Yeah, we ground rule [crosstalk 00:04:45]-

Sarah: That when you are living in it.

Rich: Obviously we have a ground rule. Your job is to believe that everything positive anyone ever says about you is true.

Sarah: That's beautiful. Thank you.

Rich: What was that? Three minutes? An insight happens in a moment and whilst we could do deep inner work and you're doing more on your beliefs in yourself, sometimes we don't have to. Just that shift in where we're looking changes everything. And maybe in a few moments we'll go deeper and see where else do you want to go today, Sarah?

Sarah: Perfect.

Rich: Excellent.

Sarah: Thank you.

Rich: Hey Tony.

Tony: Hello.

Rich: Hey! Hey! How should we play today, Tony?

Tony: Ah, there's so many places we didn't go. I have been thinking a lot about the more of less and how I use my time. And when I started coaching, I had so many things that I wanted to do and still have so many great ideas of directions to take. And just started grabbing at it, just saying, "I'll do all these things." And now I've come to the realization that I need to clean the slate and focus on the things that would be the most impactful for me. And that's the mindset I'm in right now, is trying to be really focused on the things that are going to be the most impactful to make me happy, but also make my business the most flourishing business it can be. But it's not just a business, but to make an impact on the people I want to make an impact. Every day I've clarified my who I am speaking to and it's become more and more clear, which is amazing.

Rich: Nice. Nice. So we spent time together at one of my intensives recently, so I see you're putting that into practice.

Tony: Yeah.

Rich: Here's the paradox though, right? I believe in this less, the better. It's a phrase that comes from the book... Oh, what's the... Yeah, the book escapes me. Nope, can't get it. This idea about slowing down to speed up changed my life. I'm the guy who always hustled to make stuff happen, worked really hard. I know how to play that game.

Tony: Yeah.

Rich: And slowing down to speed up has changed everything. But here's the paradox. I want to focus on the things that are most impactful you said.

Tony: Yeah.

Rich: The problem with that is how do you know what's going to be most impactful?

Tony: Exactly. Exactly.

Rich: So I love a concept I call small bets. I'm taking small bets all the time and to use the poker metaphor when something begins to take off then I'll double down. But I'm constantly taking risks. You were at my intensive recently when I said to the room, "I've noticed there are at least 50 out of the 150 people in this room who are leaders, who come from a corporate background, who are executives. I'm going to do something just for you guys tomorrow evening if you'd like to join me. And then I'm going to try and sell you something that doesn't exist yet." Because I just had this idea where I could create something for that group of people.

So they came to the room, I served them as proudly as I could, coach people, taught stuff. And at the end said, "Here's my idea," and it was an idea to work with a small group of leaders in that way, to help them build a coaching practice. It was a small bet. I just threw out an idea. It didn't even exist. I had this little card in my hand, and I read from this, and I remember turning to the other side and going, "Oh, that's it." That's all I had. Just a couple of ideas. Two people went to the back of the room and said, "Can we join? We want to pay." It didn't exist yet.

So now I knew it was real and then I went away and thought about it and designed it and it became this thing that I've called Project Kairos and we've already sold, I think 14 out of 20 seats have gone within two weeks. It was a small bet though. If no one had been interested, I wouldn't have done anything with it. Now it's become a thing and people know I'm running this program, but it didn't exist before.

So I love the idea that you want to focus on the things that are most impactful. In order to do that, you also have to focus on putting a lot of stuff out into the world and seeing where there's something of interest.

Tony: Yeah. That insight is really important to me because it has to be small. You can't over-commit because once you over commit, you can't do anything well if you try to do too much. It's great to do a lot, but you got to do a lot relatively well. So you can't do a lot of stuff crap in a very poor way. It has to be done with a way that it is intentional, with intention. If you just do it-

Rich: That's that phrase I started with less, but better. And that comes from the book, I've just remembered, Centralism.

Tony: Yes.

Rich: So this idea of less, but better, it allows you to do more. So I was speaking to a friend who runs a \$40 million business the other day. Super successful entrepreneur and said, "I'm an accidental entrepreneur." I was a high school teacher for the first part of my career. I didn't know anything about business. And then I became an entrepreneur and because I didn't know about business, I've had a one-line business plan for over a decade, for almost 15 years, meet fun and interesting people. Every time I do that, my business flies. When I don't do that, sometimes it struggles, sometimes it thrives, but it drains me of energy. The reason the three of us are talking is that you fit my filter of fun and interesting people.

And so whenever I do that, I don't know how the business is going to fly, but it does. And he said, "Thank God you weren't trained to be a businessperson." And I have a number of those heuristics, rules of thumb that helped me create a great life and a great business. So slow down to speed up is one of them. Meet fun and interesting people is another. Here's a third, money is the most perfect expression of my creativity. Money is the most perfect expression of my creativity.

It blows my mind you guys, that if I go to a bank to ask for a loan for a mortgage, I'm seen as high risk because I'm an entrepreneur. If we have a friend who works in an organization, they'll get a mortgage very quickly, but I know because I've worked in organizations and lost the job, but I've had many friends who've been fired from organizations. That's not a safe job. But as entrepreneurs, if we want to create money, we just get creative and money comes. You can't always guarantee the timeframe, but if you're someone who gets creative enough, money's going to come back. Because I have a belief for me, I'm not saying you have to take this one on. This is one of the rules of thumb how I used to create my life. And it is the most perfect expression of my creativity.

Tony: That's great. I like that. Money has been the challenge in my mindset and just kind of putting it in that frame, helps me to think differently about how I should look at it.

Rich: Well, it's almost ironic and not quite that the man who understands how to manage billions of dollars [crosstalk 00:12:44] organizations, it is challenging to do it for ourselves.

Tony: Yeah. Which is exactly why coming into this world of entrepreneurship, it's been challenging because I think it's almost like an embarrassment in the sense. You feel you're embarrassed to feel like you don't have a good handle on your relationship with money. Whereas when you were in your prior world, that was like your job to be in good harmony with money because that's what you did. You managed money and-

Rich: Okay, so let me play with you on that one. So first of all, I get why it might feel like an embarrassment. Over here, what I see is so often in our world we teach what we most need to learn.

Tony: Exactly.

Rich: Of course, you understand this for others when it's hard to apply it for yourself. It's why I have coaches. I can't do this stuff that I do for others, for myself. So it might be beneficial for you to have people in your world who could help you with your money stuff.

And here's one other trick you can play, which is to have one day a week when you become Tony's money manager. When one day, two hours, you go somewhere nice, a hotel near where you live, and you sit in a beautiful space and you look at Tony dispassionately. Okay, what does this guy most need to know? If Tony was my best client, what would I teach him about money? What would I tell him to stop doing? What would I have him do more of? If every week for a year you became Tony's manager, Tony's money manager for one or two hours a week and you answered those three questions alone, Tony's world would change. And by coincidence, so would yours.

Tony: Yeah, that makes sense. I think it's not just the money manager, probably a bunch of other managers that I need to have to help me manage through a lot of things that are happening. So, that's great.

Rich: Yeah. Well, so again, less but better. Slow down. Yeah, absolutely, we all need a board of directors with people who have different qualities and skills, but it's so tempting. Here I give you this idea that could change your world and you're ready to say, "Okay, I love that idea, but I also I need all these people on the team."

Tony: Yeah.

Rich: Probably you've lost... Let's slow down. What if you made that commitment for the next 90 days? Do that one thing alone.

Tony: Yeah. You can see that's how I'm wired. I quickly move to the next idea. It's funny how you pick that up, but I-

Rich: Do you want to know why I picked that up?

Tony: Yeah.

Rich: Because it's my struggle. You guys know that one too. You have success for a moment and you're already looking at like how I should've better or bigger or differently or what I should do next. That's why we're talking, right? You're my people, I'm your people. We get each other. It wasn't hard to pick up because I see the reflection of me in you.

Tony: Yeah. But I think the commitment of the finance manager is the key. My financial advisor, Tony is going to help me on an ongoing basis.

Rich: Nice.

Tony: I love it.

Rich: Thanks Tony.

Tony: Thank you.

Rich: What do you get from either of those conversations for you, Monica? An insight, a thought?

Monica: I really loved your advice for Tony to be his financial advisor once per week and that's for sure that I will do this because I'm creating so great business strategies for all my customers but I never do it for myself. I never saw this perspective so I really, really loved it and I was smiling during your talk with Tony and I saw myself in a nice hotel and doing this. So yeah, great advice. Yeah.

Rich: Beautiful. How about for you? What would make this an extraordinary conversation for you?

Monica: Also, as you said before, I want to go with many staff. I was all my life a leader. I enjoy doing a lot of things but of course, I fear of failure. And going all in with this coaching business in the last month-

Rich: Let me slow you down for a second. Let me slow you down. You said "of course, a fear of failure." So we have to listen closely to our client's words and hear the way that they are creating their world. Why 'of course?' I'm wondering over here because what I've seen in my life is that the more times I fail, that's the path to success. If I look back in my life, I sometimes get interviewed and people say, "What would you do? What advice would you give to a 20-year-old Rich? What would you tell him to stop doing or not to do?" And I always think that's a lazy question because I wouldn't tell him to do anything differently. All of the struggles and fails I've had on my path got me here. If I hadn't failed at that thing back there, maybe I wouldn't be here. And so I bet that's true for you too if we slow down enough to check it out.

Monica: Yeah. Yeah, that's for sure. But I still continue to wonder sometimes what if I fail? What if I go all in and something will not be exactly as I thought, but [crosstalk 00:18:37]

Rich: So let me slow you down again. I'll slow you down again. So I'm really listening very close to what you said.

Monica: Yeah.

Rich: "I sometimes wonder what if I fail?" Well, we have these thoughts and they're rhetorical questions in our mind, but it's not a rhetorical question. You can answer it. A rhetorical question is a question we sit with and sit with and sit with, and never have an answer. I sometimes have this questions in my mind, what if I fail? What if you answer that question right now, Monica? What if you fail at the next thing you're up to? Then what?

Monica: Okay, then I will try other things because I have them in my mind already.

Rich: Right.

Monica: So yeah.

Rich: Right. I think sometimes we have that question, what if I fail? And what it means is, what if I fail at everything and then I ended up homeless and having to live on a street corner? Instead of, what if this project doesn't work? What if this thing doesn't work here? I mean, I've had employees who I've hired and I had to fire because they weren't right for my team or someone did something that's out of integrity. I've made mistakes in business. I grew my team to 10 people a year ago, which felt amazing and I was scaling and then it became overwhelming and it wasn't the right direction and I've scaled back down, which feels energizing and exciting. These were not mistakes. These were things I needed to do along my journey to find out my path.

But we don't do it. The question that I had, what if I fail and secretly we mean, what if I fail at everything and my life is a disaster? And just answering that one question, there's a sense of relief in you. There's a smile in you. Oh yeah, what if I fail? I'll do what I always do. Pick myself up, dust myself down, try something else.

Monica: I just feel so relieved right now. Really. It's suddenly... Yeah, I really slowed down. For one moment I said, "Yeah, exactly. Nothing could happen because if I fail with this, I can do so many other things." Yeah, thanks.

Rich: That's beautiful. So I know before this call you were excited. You said to me like, "I want my life-changing insight." And insights can happen in a moment. They really can. And when you've had it, life has shifted. Now the thing about a life-changing insight is that whilst I have absolute confidence, I can speak to anyone and in a conversation they'll have a life-changing insight because of how I'm listening to them, because how I'm willing to challenge their thinking, because of how I'm willing to be still enough to find out what's really going on, not what they say is going on.

The insight alone isn't enough. It's what you do with it that will change your life. So what might be really valuable for you over the next 30 days is at the end of every day, maybe before bed there's a piece of paper on your nightstand and you answer the question, what did I fail at today? So you can really build that muscle of knowing it's okay to fail and have a laugh at it and have a smile with it.

I have a ritual with my kids. My kids are five and seven and every night at dinner we sit down, we have a ritual. We say, what was the best bit of our day, what was the most challenging bit of our day, and what's something we're grateful for? And why we do the first two is to have a look at, you know it's possible every day to create something great and it's possible to face challenges every day and still be okay. And even at five and seven I want them to get that to be part of their world.

Monica: Yeah, great. I will do this.

Rich: Beautiful. Let me come back to you, Sarah. Thanks Monica.

Monica: Thanks.

Rich: An insight, a thought from anything that's happened so far or the question that you want to dive into next?

Sarah: Well, really listening to Monica, the notion of surrender really came up and that's something that I've been really contemplating over the past couple of months. This idea of really allowing myself to surrender. I think as well you said that you can mess with the timeframe and that for me is such a relief, because old Sarah would be trying so hard to make something happen by a certain day and if it didn't happen, it was almost like, "Okay, I'll throw it away. I'll throw it out." And listening to Monica and listening to your words, I have the sense of, what if I just keep going and what if the timeframe is just completely abandoned and I just keep doing what I love and surrender? Almost surrender to what I love.

Rich: Yeah. As humans we are really poor at estimating time, so we tend to really underestimate what we'll accomplish in 10 years and we overestimate what we'll accomplish in one year. And whenever I say that to people, I get a nod and then I say, "Look back 10 years ago. Imagine if I was talking to you 10 years ago, looking into the future and you could see what you're going to accomplish. Would you have had any idea that those things were coming? Would you have even known... Were they even on your goal list 10 years ago?"

Sarah: No, not at all. 10 years ago I was just finishing my undergraduate. I had no idea what I was going to do with my life and I was a completely different person. So the goalpost changed.

Rich: And then we get to now because... We see so much in the media about goals and how important they are. And so we fall in this trap of thinking, "Well, I need to set goals for what's happening next." Of course, it's okay for a project. You're launching a program, you want to have three new clients. Those are projects. That's okay to put a goal on that. But I've realized over the years that I kept falling into the trap of thinking I had to set goals. And what I would do, I would write them on pieces of paper and then I find them months or years later in a drawer somewhere, they're back of a drawer crumpled up and I'd pull it out and go, "Oh, accomplish that one, done that one, done that one. Didn't do that one, but it's not relevant anymore. Didn't do that one, but I've forgotten about it anyway. Accomplished that one, accomplished that one." So I don't set goals in that way any longer.

What I've realized is I'm an opportunity seeker. When there are opportunities, I do what I said to Tony, I take small bets. There's about half a dozen small bets I'm taking right now and I have no idea if we speak in a year's time, which if any of them will become

something real and exciting and fun for me. I've got a potential to partner with a friend to create million dollar clients. I've got a potential idea that I'm working with, with somebody to create an online program that I've never done before. The senior level leaders and executives who are transitioning into coaching. I'm constantly playing with ideas, and I take small bets. I don't go full in until I see some energy starting to build and then I'll invest a bit more energy and a bit more.

Sarah: Yeah, I love that. And if I think back to what my goals were as a 21-year-old, I mean very, very different.

Rich: Yeah. Yeah. Because what do we know at that age about what we want? We don't know. And we have to go through what Monica says she's afraid of, all those failures along the way because they give us the lessons.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Rich: It's never a failure if you learn from it.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Rich: And one of the problems with success is that when we fail, we tend to turn around and see what could we do differently to avoid it next time. When we succeed, we tend to just keep going. I'll leave you guys with this thought, it's a really powerful exercise each time you have a success in life to pause and take a breath and slow down and say, "How did I create that? What did I make happen? Why did I do this?" So that you can build on that success too.

All right. Thank you for trusting me, the three of you. I love playing this game. Insight does happen in a moment and then life simply shifts and there is a place where it's really powerful to capitalize on an insight, to reflect on it. So one of the most powerful tools we have as coaches I call gentle reflection, it's the time between the conversations. So it's the time between now and the time each of us might speak next that we'll see what occurs. Did you do anything with that insight? Did it shift? Did another insight come after that one? How are you making that real? How did you fail? Where did you succeed? And then we talk again and we see what happens. And that's the power of working with someone over time. And it's really fun for me to work with someone like this, in the way I worked with each of you today. So thank you so much for trusting me. Thank you for playing with me. Bye for now.

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.