

1 INSIGHT

with RICH LITVIN



Episode 5: "It's meant to be hard"

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Rich: Welcome to One Insight. My name is Rich Litvin. I grew up in London and I now live in L.A., and 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, it can actually be lonely. You can feel like more of an impostor the more successful you become. 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 One Insight because a single insight can change everything.

Success has a paradox built into it. Most people are chasing success. There are thousands of books out there about how to be successful. The problem is, as Rita Rudner says, the comedian, "If you win the rat race, the problem is you're still a rat." Or as Stephen Covey said, "You can climb a ladder of success and get to the top and discover it's leaning against the wrong wall."

I love working with extraordinarily successful people and usually messing with their thinking somehow. And I love working with coaches who've been successful in the past because usually they felt some of that pain of success and something was missing. They

want something else and something different. They want to play a different game. And so, I'm talking today with Briony from New Zealand, who got up extraordinarily early to speak to me, and Kacey, who's from Nashville, Tennessee and we're going to play and we're going to have fun, and we'll see where we go. So, hi Briony.

Briony: Hi, Rich, thanks for having me.

Rich: Well, my pleasure. I knew it might resonate with you because I read about you. You had a career as a lawyer, you had what everyone thought is all of it, and then you felt empty on the inside, something was still missing.

Briony: Yeah.

Rich: And you went off for some time of reflection and deep inner work and came back, actually recreated yourself where you could make a difference for other people's lives, and you're a coach now, right?

Briony: Totally. That's my journey. It's been amazing.

Rich: Yeah. Yeah, I feel that as you say it. So, tell me. Why are you here? What would make this a fascinating conversation for you?

Briony: Yeah, so for me, I think what's still there is absolutely... Underneath it, I think what still comes up is a sense of, even since my transition into coaching, it's been a really rapid rise. Comparatively, I've had awesome growth at there, and there's still a sense of feeling like I'm not fully going in. Have I really fully committed? And underneath that, I'm still trying to get is that because of a fear of success or what's really going on?

And I know so often with the high performing stuff, there's always just that sense of feeling guilty about doing not enough or it was too easy. So, I'm really interested to have this discussion and see what comes through. Yeah, as with most things, with coaching, I haven't been able to get that insight on my own.

Rich: Yeah, we do it for others, but we can't do it for ourselves, right? [crosstalk 00:03:48] conversation.

Briony: Yeah, yeah.

Rich: So, I love that, and I know you've been successful. I looked at your site, I saw the newspaper article written about you. I see what you've done. It's extraordinary to see. And then on the inside, there's this feeling now, these are what I call the guilty secrets of top performers.

Before it was, "I've got everything I could ever want, but I feel on empty on the inside." Now, I'm getting all this praise and accolades and success, I feel lazy. Am I really doing enough? So, both of those are very common in top performers. In fact, for me, when I'm

working with a high performer who says, "I feel lazy," what I say is my job as I work with you over time, is to have you feel lazier and lazier.

What our fear is, what that means is, you mean I'll be sitting on the couch eating Cheetos off my chest watching Netflix. But it doesn't mean that for high performers. That's never the place we go to. We need time out sometimes, but it's not about that. As a high performer, when you're feeling lazy, what that means is you're working in your zone of genius. You're doing that thing that only one or two people on the planet can do, and it's so effortless. You don't feel like you're doing very much.

So, when you get that acknowledgement, you feel lazy, but it actually means you're working more and more in your zone of genius. So, my goal for you, my vision, my desire for you, Briony, is you should feel more and more lazy as time goes on.

Briony: Awesome. Thanks.

Rich: Love it. That's it. Thanks.

Briony: So good. Yeah. No, it makes total sense. It's just being okay with it.

Rich: Yeah. So, you asked the question, have I really fully committed?

Briony: Yeah.

Rich: Let me turn it back on you and see if you answer it. Have you?

Briony: In my heart, yes. And I know the day that I left law, I made that decision, where the day I handed in my resignation and walked out the doors, although everything was going, what are you doing? I know I fully committed. It was a decision. I cut off all other possibilities of what I was going to commit my life to in that moment. Since, in terms of having a system in my business and in... Yeah, and maybe it is still the, am I doing enough? I'm going, yeah-

Rich: I can hear it. I can hear it. It's loud, right?

Briony: Yeah, it is. Yeah, I do work hard. I know I do and I fully committed in my soul and heart the day I left. So yeah, I am fully in.

Rich: I've got a challenge for you. I'm going to play with your thinking right now in this moment. Let me own this. I say this one because this is the world that I live in. I sometimes catch myself spending hours in front of my computer working hard because I feel guilty if I'm not. And frankly, the truth is... I see you smiling, Kacey. The truth is there are one or two things that I do that make a massive difference. And if I only did them, we might only have 80% of the business we've got right now. But I'd be working 20% of the time that I'm working right now. And there's this little sense of... No, it's massive sense of guilt. You know what Briony? I feel guilty if I'm working because I

should be with my wife and kids. I feel guilty if I'm with my wife and kids because I should be working, and God forbid I should be having a massage. I feel guilty I'm not working in the business or with the wife and kids.

Briony: Yeah. Yeah, it resonates.

Rich: Yeah, All right, let me let you sit with that one for a minute because I see Kacey smiling. So, Kacey, what's going on? Any thoughts from that conversation so far?

Kacey: I'm smiling because I'm also guilty of being guilty. I notice I have an almost, it's almost like a superstitious belief that it's not okay to be happy with the success that I've built.

Rich: Yeah.

Kacey: That what I've built, if I enjoy it too much, if I'm too grateful and too happy, it's all going to just disappear and it makes it really challenging to slow down and just have... And I'm here at the Lake this week. Like I said, I'm having a partial week off where I'm taking some time to just relax. But even as I relax, I'm like, well, I could go outside and relax while I read that book about business building and leadership, you know?

Rich: I do. I do. I have a friend who took a year off, a sabbatical, and we chatted three months into that year off and he said, "Oh my God. I've realized for three months, I've been planning the book I'm going to write about my sabbatical and how I'm going to get clients as a result. Three months, I haven't even taken them off really. I was supposed to be traveling the world, taking time off." So, I know you've had a career as a professional opera singer. You've been an actor before you shifted into coaching. You got fascinating clients from Google to Broadway. And so, I get it. This is the world of being a high performer. And then, here's the thing; when you're coaching somebody, there's two places to go. You can go to the personal or the universal. So, just now we were talking about the personal with Briony, I owned where this is true for me.

Let's go to the universal for a moment. For most of human history, any of our ancestors who got too happy and relaxed, let their guard down enough, meant that they weren't any longer looking out for wild animals, dangerous tribes, warring enemies, and they didn't get to pass their genes on in the gene pool. They were killed. It's just what happened. You had throughout most of human history, even in a moment of happiness, to be looking out for what could be coming, the dangers down the road because they were so present.

And if I'm being honest, for many people today on this planet, there's still some truth in that, but they have to be really careful. That, we're talking means for us and probably for most of the people listening, is that there isn't an enemy around the corner, a wild animal about to attack. And yet, our entire nervous system is designed to keep us safe from that. So, the moment we get happy, the alarm bells go off like that can't last because for most of the human history it didn't. So, put the warning signs up and put your nervous system on overload to look out for danger.

Kacey: Absolutely.

Rich: Because we're on a podcast, I'd normally [crosstalk 00:10:47] longer to let that sink in. Yeah, yes. Yeah, but what happens is it sinks in, Kacey? What goes on?

Kacey: It's funny because of course this is one of the conversations that I have with my clients of like, "hey, what if your celebration doesn't have an expiration date? What if it's still okay to be with that win in 10 minutes or in 10 days or even in 10 months?" But the degree to which I let myself go there, I could absolutely stand to double, triple, quadruple, especially in the day to day.

Rich: We so often teach what we most need to learn, right?

Kacey: Absolutely.

Rich: So, on one level, we're there. Because I coach around insight, sometimes there's a moment like this, so we just need to sit with it. There's nothing to do but letting it land over time. It's powerful. So, I'll let you sit with that, and the impact of that, Kacey, for yourself. Let me come back to you, Briony. How are you doing?

Briony: Yeah, good. As I was listening in and hearing Kacey, some of Kacey's beliefs behind what's really going on, something that came through for me is it's meant to be hard. It's meant to be a struggle. And if it's not then, you don't deserve it or you won't have it or there's something. Yeah, and I'm creating it every day. And I'm living into that and I'm listening for that and the collective stories around me. People cope. People who say it's hard to keep clients or it's hard to make money. And I'm like, is it? I don't know. It should be, I don't know.

Rich: Because it hasn't for you, right? It hasn't been that way.

Briony: No.

Rich: But there's a little part, the human part of you wants to... If you want to be socially unacceptable at your next dinner party and someone says to you, "how's things?" Say, "you know what? Life's amazing. Business is flying. It's easy to get clients. I'm making more money than I could ever imagined than most people in my field." You can't have that. It's socially unacceptable to have that conversation.

You could bond with people. "How's life?" Business is hard. The economy's challenging. Look at the political situation," because that's how we bond and connect over failures and fears and struggles and worries.

Briony: Yeah. [inaudible 00:13:40]. Yeah.

Rich: Tim Ferris asks a great question. He says, "what if it was easy?" And he asked that when things are hard, so you're dealing with the challenge. What if it was easy? It allows your

mind to go, well it was easy, I would do this or that. But I'm asking it for you now as, what if that was the place you came from? What if it was easy and you looked for the effortless path and you looked for people who want to play that game too. They are harder to find. But if you put your attention on that, where your attention goes is where the energy goes and you'll discover, sooner than you realize, how you can surround yourself with other people like you.

I love how both of you, I can tell, you just get insight, and it's just the shift has happened. The silence comes in. Kacey, what about you?

Kacey: The place where my mind is going is just how different it can be depending on where we come from around it. And thinking about your friend who's on the sabbatical, mentally writing his book three months in, you can be disempowered and stressed out and guilty about taking a break, or you can be excited and rejuvenated. And some of the doing or the thinking may be very similar, but who you be about what's coming up, makes so much difference.

Rich: Have you ever read the book *The Big Leap* by Gay Hendricks?

Kacey: Not yet.

Rich: So, the beginning of that book, he literally asked the question, what if I could let life get better and better every day? And so, most of us don't know that's a question we can ask or even answer. And that's a really powerful question to live into. What if life could get better and better every day? What if life could get easier and easier every day? What if life could be more fun every day?

Kacey: That's great. I already feel more peaceful and more joyful.

Rich: Yeah. I'm going to pause in this moment because I think we're there for today, and that's the power of insight. Thank you both. Okay, Kacey, you said you've got a question.

Kacey: It might be a separate topic actually, but where this has me going is another place where I tend to get caught up and taken out of my joy, is around the blessing and the curse of being a multipreneur. I have so many things that I enjoy, so many things that I bring to my practice or different topics that I enjoy focusing on. And as you said, I have a background as a professional opera singer, and now I work as an executive coach, which is quite a pivot. But really sticking with the strengths part of that and the consistency of bringing all of the things that we're interested in, I think it's something that makes for great coaching. But when it comes to building a business and making sure that the message that you're putting out there into the world as a coach is gettable for your people. Thoughts on-

Rich: Turn it into a specific question for me.

Kacey: Let's see. Probably, the best ways to capitalize on my strengths as a multipreneur, instead of getting caught up in the confusion and the noise. There's a lot of noise around niche yourself and narrow things and get smaller. And for people like me, that doesn't always resonate, and it's not always effective. So, what's the best way for me to capitalize on the way my brain works instead of feeling messy?

Rich: Well, the first thing that comes to me is counter-intuitive. What's wrong with feeling messy?

Kacey: Oh. Yeah, it's all about trying to do it the right way instead of just being with what is. Well, that was easy. Thanks.

Rich: I really like spending time with both of you because I can tell what great coaches you are because of how coachable you are.

Kacey: Thank you.

Rich: Yeah, I'm tempted to go in deeper and also attempted to say we're there. You got it.

Kacey: Totally.

Rich: And look, I get caught in this too, right? The world online is very noisy, and it's noisiest... The people who shout the louder, often the marketers, and they're the people who say they're the experts in the field. And when you look into that, well, the marketers are noisy for a reason. It's their job. And sometimes, they are good at marketing, but they're not necessarily good at the thing that they're telling you to do. And the other people who say they're the experts, too often when you go into that, they're not quite the expert that you'd think. Or maybe they're an expert in a field, but they're not the expert in you.

So, last year, the end of last year, I sat down to do a review with every member of my team. And a member of my team said, "do you realize, Rich, that every year around about October, November, you hire a business expert as a consultant or a guide to help you go to the next level in business and you fire them about a month or two later." I went, "oh, my God, you're right. I hadn't spotted it."

And what I realized is, in the last quarter of the year, I start to get afraid, I start to think can we hit our numbers for this year? Or even if we're doing well, I think, how am I going to do it all again the year after? There must be some expert out there who can help me. And after hiring someone, I realize the metaphor is like I'm climbing this pristine mountain and there's white snow in front of me. And I want someone who can guide me up the mountain to get to the top. But I'm forgetting it's pristine stone. There's no footsteps in there. No one's ever been up this mountain before because it's my mountain. So, I can read stuff from other experts and learn stuff from people, have great conversations, but where I'm going next, I've got to make this stuff up.

Sometimes in a team, on a team call, we'll get caught up in, what should we do now to sell this program, to tell people about this thing, to share this article? Do we share it on this medium or that medium? Do we use this way or selling it that way or selling it? And we debate for ages. In the end, I usually say, "you know what? We should use the plan that we always use. Make shit up."

That's really what I've done for 15 years. I just make shit up. I don't know what's going to work. Nobody does. That's the funny thing because even if you're a marketing expert and you say, "hey, do this thing to get your stuff out on Facebook," the algorithm changes tomorrow and it's meaningless.

Kacey: This is so funny. I always find that my clients who are the trailblazers are the ones who least think they have the answers. It's so great. I'm like nobody can possibly know this but you. You're the only one who has the answer. It's great. I like the snow analogy. It's brilliant. Thank you.

Rich: Briony, I saw you nodding as well. How's that [inaudible 00:21:36] that thought?

Briony: Yeah, just so much freedom in that space because there is a lot of noise and you still find yourself, you're looking for the right way or the new thing or... And it is just going in with it. And I just know in those moments where I have made those choices where it's from a fully aligned internal place knowing, it's just like it always works or you're following, or you're fully committed because you came from such a different place. When it's out there and trying to get somewhere, it's a really different energy. And again and again, I have that challenge with this in my business... Is not having funnels and the whole thing being word of mouth, literally people are like, how do you get clients? And it's all word of mouth, and that not being the truth. Most people invest all their time in social media or market or funnels. So, it's just awesome to hear your experience and to have permission, again, that you know what you're doing. Yeah. And you don't-

Rich: But what I have to remind you, this is the hard thing. We get caught up because social media is so loud. Throughout most of human history, there's only one way to create a business. It was word of mouth. If you had a great service or a great product, people told other people about it and you had a great business. Now, these experts say you need social media, you've got Instagram, Facebook, and whatever the latest thing is. That's how you grow a business. Well, did you see the fire documentary, the fire festival documentary recently? Those guys who got all these Instagram models to say how amazing this business was. It fell apart because there was nothing to it. There's no substance there. You meet the platinum standard for any business. Beyond the gold standard, a word of mouth business is extraordinary, Briony. It truly is. It's amazing. The reason you don't hear people online talking about it, because if you have a word of mouth business, you don't care about telling other people about it, you're just busy doing the thing.

Briony: Yeah, it's exactly that. Yeah.

Rich: I started to teach a little bit about word of mouth business because I got a marketer to work with me recently who's a high level marketer. It was interesting getting his insights, and he said, "Rich, if your business was like a store in a mall, in a shopping center, once you come into your business, in that store, you are taken care of, people have got products and services that you can buy, if they're not the right one, people tell you. If they are, you'll come in and we'll be taken more care of. And people go out and they talk about this business and their friends come in. But if you go out onto the mall, your store is boarded up, there's not even a door. You have to bang to find your way in. It's hard to get in."

Because we looked at my website on that moment and we realized that someone in my team, six months earlier, by accident and taken off the signup box for my email list from the front page. We don't even have people in signing up. But they had because they were interested. And he said all the other stores in the mall have amazing shop windows. You go inside, there's nothing there. And it's "oh yeah, that's what I've been doing for years." We sold 55,000 copies of The Prosperous Coach. Steve and I have never done anything to market it. It's a word of mouth book. The most common thing I hear when I say, Why'd you get the book? My friend told me to get it. My friend bought it from me. I love that you're creating a word of mouth business. Keep going. Kacey.

Kacey: I'm over here laughing that we got two coaches who built really successful word of mouth businesses, who are showing up saying, tell me how to do this the right way and to build all those funnels, and do all those things that I'm not doing enough at, that I'm not good at. While we're also talking about, hey, how do we celebrate ourselves? So, we just need to take a minute to actually be proud of ourselves.

Rich: Really. T.

Kacey: To be proud of what we've built.

Rich: Yeah, really. And I'll say it for you, I really acknowledge both of you. It doesn't make sense, right? You should not be an opera singer who becomes a coach. [crosstalk 00:25:58] at 26, leave a career that could be as lucrative as law and go into coaching. Everyone will be telling you don't do those things. Yet you did and when you did them, you shouldn't be successful because you're not using all the things you're supposed to do to become successful. And yet you are, because you're following your path. It doesn't mean I've got no doubt you've had mistakes you've made and challenges you faced along the way, and what works today might not work tomorrow. That's life, it's business. But you're following your path and I love that. I really acknowledge you both for that.

Kacey: Thank you.

Rich: My pleasure. It's been really fun and an honor to speak to both of you

Kacey: You too. Both of you.

Briony: Yeah, thank you.

Rich: Thank you, Briony. 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.