



JAMES **SCHRAMKO**

9 Mental Toughness Exercises for Business Owners with Lloyd Thompson

Mental fortitude is a must in business. VirtualDOO's Lloyd Thompson guests to share practices that business owners can adopt to thrive under pressure.



Lloyd Thompson

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. Today, we're talking about mental toughness, and I can't think of anyone more mentally tough than Lloyd, welcome back to the podcast, Lloyd.

Lloyd: Thanks very much for having me, James.

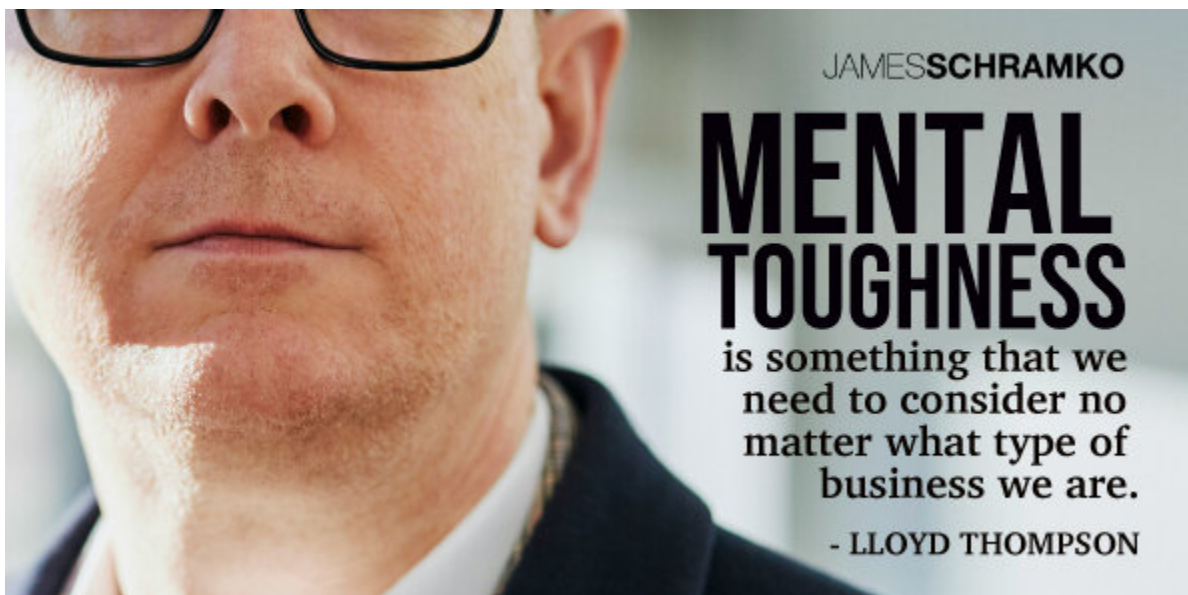
James: [Lloyd Thompson](#), of course, [VirtualDOO.com](#). You've been dealing with visionaries and company founders. And I imagine some of those have to have some pretty strong disciplines in the mental department just by the fact that they're an entrepreneur, they're quite often already at a pretty good run rate when you're getting in touch with them.

And they've got so many things to fend off and fight out there in the marketplace, you have to build a certain level of toughness. So it might be worth discussing what trends you've seen, or what we could use as a scorecard, perhaps, is how we might rate ourselves in the mental toughness department.

Storms as a given for business owners

Lloyd: I think just being a business owner is just the natural course of things that there's going to be storms. And it's not just, Oh, you know, this particular business is way more prone than others. I just think that's just going to be par for the course that as a business owner, you're going to have storms.

And they might be, as you said, it might be changing market conditions. And I know for many people at the beginning of the year, the market was particularly challenging. But it might be employee issues, or it might be some kind of crisis that comes up, for example, you know, a server meltdown or cyber attacks, which are becoming more and more common.



And so, I wouldn't say it's a particular business that I'm seeing or a particular industry. I think that mental toughness is something that we need to consider no matter what type of business we are. And I think that if we're not doing something to shield ourselves or prepare ourselves for that, then it leads you to increasing stress and anxiety. And that can impact your business relationships and your personal relationships.

And so, while my business is there to take the load off business owners and help them, so that they've got less tasks on their plate, so they're not in the operations, there's still so many things that they can do for themselves to make themselves more mentally resilient.

James: Yeah, this is interesting. So it's not just about strapping on a mask and a shield and just defending against it. Like, can we develop ourselves where we don't need to be such tough warriors?

Lloyd: Yeah, I don't think it's so much about being a tough warrior. So I mean, I've got, I would say, sort of three key areas, and I'd love to talk more about these and break them down. But I think the first thing I would say is talking about your mind and body. Let's start there, actually, so your mind and body.

For me, I am - I think people look at me and think, he must be an optimist. And actually, I'm a secret pessimist. And perhaps it's not so much of a secret anymore. And that's because I go around, and I'm looking for threats. And I think that for many people, that's a natural way, and I'll expect the worst. And then when it doesn't happen, I'm happy.

The simple act of being grateful

And so, from the outside, I can be quite, you know, Oh, he must be the happiest person ever. And so, if I just leave that process unchecked, then that can lead to anxiety. So I've got a very effective method. And people have been doing this for thousands of years. And it's really simple. Gratitude. Like, the simple practice that if you do this daily helps rewire your brain.

And so, for me, all it is, is every day, before I go to bed, I think about a number of things I'm grateful for, you know, Oh, I've got to go for a surf today, or I knew I was going to have a challenging meeting and that turned out actually pretty good. Or, you know, all of these things. And what happens over time, you know you're going to have your daily gratitude practice.

You start thinking about throughout the day, you start thinking, Oh, what else am I going to add to my list? And so, it starts rewiring the brain to make you more grateful, more positive. And the result of this is less stress and anxiety. And it's a really simple practice.

James: Come to think about it, this is something that could be applied to children and even employees, right? So I know with my daughter at bedtime, we talk about things she's thankful for. She's like, Thank you for mommy and daddy, thank you for the things that happened during the day. Like last week we hopped in a four-wheel drive. and we drove up the beach, and went to this fantastic lagoon, and got to run around and splash in the water. So locking that in makes you feel like you appreciate it.

I've said before, I think entrepreneurial journey is a little bit like [two steps forward, one punch in the face](#). But if you know you're going to get the punch in the face, you can really enjoy the steps knowing that this is your break, right? It's part of that journey. But to some extent that's life, right, life isn't necessarily easy.

Eli Goldratt said something along the lines of, don't wish for an easy life, wish for a rich and full life. Right? Just acknowledging that there are going to be challenges. And to your point about looking for what can go wrong, I think that is wired into humans. I was walking back from my surf on the weekend, and I had a gut instinct to be very mindful of the path. Because where I surf, the greatest risk is not drowning, or being eaten by a shark or whatever, it's being bitten by a brown snake on the way there.

And I paused and straight in front of me, and I'm talking like probably only five or six feet in front of me, was a very large lizard type of thing. Probably my friend Zac, who was with me, calls it a dragon. But it was probably about four- or five-feet long. And it was staring straight at me. And I had to do that - the Crocodile Dundee thing where you just look at it and enter its mind. Yeah.

And I just basically paused still, and I just had to wait it out until it decided to move on. Because they have very sharp claws, and if they're frightened, well, they charge you, they run up you like a tree and they dig into you, and the bite or the claw marks can give you a bacterial infection. And it's very dangerous. I used to have a dog that would take these things on in our backyard when we lived on acreage.

Anyway, the point is just that human instinct of keeping an eye out for danger that could kill us. It's something we carry into work. And I know coming from the corporate environment, I've felt like the last year or so of my job, I went in every day looking for an axe swinging, was going to take my head off. I really thought, today could be my last day, pretty much every day for the last year, because I could see the pressure in the market.

I felt the pressure of being highly paid. I felt the pressure of having done such a good job of making my role redundant through systemization and good communication and achieving all the targets. The need for me was lessened. So I felt that pressure. And I think a lot of entrepreneurs are feeling the pressure from the taxman, or from the team member who might take off and go work somewhere else, or a shift or change in the market that causes your offer not to be as effective.

So I think that's why we need to take stock of that. And I love your first tip, gratitude, being thankful for all the things that haven't gone wrong, all the things that did go right, all the things that we do have. And one technique just a sort of hinged to that, that I like is the contrast method. If you think you're having a bad day, you just look around, and you'll find very quickly evidence of someone having a way worse situation than you.

Whether you turn on the news, which I don't recommend you do, but there'll be, you know, like last night, there was a new story of a car drove into a pub and killed people sitting in the beer garden. Like, literally you could be there having a beer, and next thing you know, your life's finished. Like, it's that fragile.

So if you made it through today, and you're all intact, you've done well. And that's something to have gratitude for. If you happen to be doing that in your nice house, or you've got a great family relationship, or you had a good surf, then - it's free, it's cheap, it's easy, why not give it a shot? And for some people, they might say, Oh, that sounds a bit woo-woo, Lloyd. What would you say to them?

Lloyd: I mean, it's just one of the oldest practices, it's been going for thousands of years, I think of so many cultures through - I mean, for me, I'm not doing it through any kind of religious ceremony. But many people in many cultures, they practice prayer. And when you look at what a lot of prayer is, so much of what they're saying is gratitude.

And now it makes so much sense to me, because it's such a powerful thing. And if you say, Oh, well, that's really woo-woo, I say just give it a shot. All you're doing listing out three to five things you're grateful for. Give it a go, it doesn't cost you much, super quick, and you just see the results. So go for it.

James: So we can solve toughness by being thankful.

What's next on your list?

Calmness on demand

Lloyd: Yeah. And I also like what you were talking about, being able to change context or just change how you're feeling about something.

James: Changing the frame.

Lloyd: Change the frame. And I think there's another thing in that vein, which I want to talk about, which is mindfulness. And many people, when they hear the word mindfulness, they'll associate that with meditation. And that's what I'm talking about. But also, the ability to change your mental state quickly.

So as a business owner, you might be sitting there going through many meetings, some of those things might be quite stressful, things come up, things get emotional. And yet, you've got to be able to put yourself back to a calm state. And if you don't put yourself back to a calm state quickly, then when you're under pressure, you're more inclined to make a bad decision if you're not calm. So how do you get yourself back to a calm state, and quickly?

And so, lots of people have heard about meditation or mindfulness apps. It's really easy, actually, a lot of it's just breathing. There's plenty of free apps out there that do it. I use one called Insight Timer. And you can just select, I don't know, five minutes to do meditation. And you just go through some breathing exercises, and you can go from feeling a bit overwhelmed of all the things that are happening, you might have many decisions to make, to suddenly after five minutes, coming back to clarity and calm. And the more you do it, the better you get at it.

So it's another really simple thing to just be able to tune in and make quick decisions. Calm decisions, rather. And in the same vein, here's a tip. I think I got it from The Tim Ferriss podcast, he talks about, also in the same vein as breathing, just doing - if you need to switch your response quickly - doing six deep breaths, just that simple. And it's known to just change your feeling very quickly just to come back and come back to calm.

Strike a power pose

So those are kind of two simple things that you can do. Actually, another one that's just come to mind, just to round this out, another one in terms of just changing your context. So you're going from that sort of tense to calm, being ready, is a power pose.

James: A what?

Lloyd: A power pose, like standing tall, breathing in, right, a power pose. And probably the most famous person for doing this would be Tony Robbins, like before he goes onstage, he's got a trampoline, he jumps up and down, feels big. And so power pose. Just simple, physical way to just bring yourself back to calm and ready quickly.

James: I like it, yeah, just relating to that. When I'm surfing and the waves are big, or a bit scary, or I might have had a hold down, your pulse starts to jump, you get the adrenaline going through your body, you can feel that sort of nervous energy. I often put my fingers on my neck to feel my pulse, and I concentrate on slowing it down.

And then I'll try some Navy SEAL box breathing technique. It's where you breathe in for three seconds, hold for three seconds, breathe out for three seconds, and so on and so forth. And hold for three seconds and then breathe in. And so, putting myself basically on train tracks for my breath, stabilizes me and my pulse comes down, and then I'm back to in control.

The power of visualization

So that's a physical one. The mental one, and I was just talking my daughter through this. She goes, Daddy, how do you go to sleep so easily? And I'm like, I visualize. She goes, What's visualize? I'm like, It's where I imagine something very, very nice. Something that I'm looking forward to or something that I feel really good about.

So for me, for example, if I have a surfboard that's on order. I do have a surfboard on order right now, actually. Okay. So the surfboard that I have on order is orange, like a vitamin C tablet. And it's got six channels, right? And where the channels are, it just goes a bit darker in the lines, looks magnificent. And it has this beautiful bird logo in blue, like a faded T-shirt design on the board. And it's getting made at the moment. And it's coming in the future. So I will just think about that. I'll think about the board, and I'll think about how it looks. And then I'll imagine putting fins on it and waxing it up. And then surfing...

Lloyd: Gliding in the waves.

James: And I'm asleep by that point. I'm basically just off into a bliss visualization now. So far on my sleeping app, I'm getting great scores. Combine that with a bit of magnesium and getting off the tech early. The visualization I can find I can do anywhere. I can do it on a plane. The last flight I had had no entertainment system for eight hours, but it didn't matter because I had my own entertainment system, in my mind. I can go into my mental movie theater and play whatever visualizations I want.

I can work my way through my surfboard quiver, and just switch out and just go into a flow state where I'm just zoning out. And I agree with you, you make really crap decisions if you're stressed or wound up. Another teacher that I heard, when I went to a strategic coach conference, he said he's got a rule in his household, no one can say something negative unless they say something positive first.

So if you want to whinge about the dinner, you can say, Well, the positive is that I have dinner, where some people have no meal today, but it is a little overcooked, or whatever. And it does seem to take the edge off the whinge, you know? I like that. It could be three positives to one negative, because we bombard ourselves with negative.

But getting yourself mindful and relaxed, I don't use an app for that. I don't think I would, it seems counterintuitive to me to try and use technology to escape technology, where that's the thing that's more likely, I might have read an email that that creates a reaction or, you know, like, usually from the accountant saying, I've got to pay this big amount of tax or something. I'm like, I'm happy that I have to pay tax, but I'm not so happy that I have to pay tax kind of thing.

Now, my biggest partner in business, I'm contributing a lot to them. But I can just move myself out of that space. Do my breathing, do my visualization, I'm back and relaxed and ready. And having some biometrics to help me understand that is good. They've actually added a new feature in the Oura ring, which is stress. It shows your high stress and low stress, and it tells you which way you're at during the day.

And I've noticed that graph versus what I'm doing during the day, and I went to the dentist on Friday to have a filling. And I was actually able to manage low stress state through that. And that was through a conscious effort of being mindful of the logic of it, and that it's just a necessary process.

James's black box technique

And I actually broke it down to the most simple, possible mental model. And that was - I'll explain it, I've never heard anyone talk about this, but it's how I also process going to the gym - imagine there's a box, a black box, I go in on one end of the black box, and do whatever the thing in there is, and then I come out in a better off position.

So when I go to the gym, I go in, he makes me do all these horrible workout things, and then I come out a better version of myself. I go to the dentist. I go in, and then I come out with fixed teeth. What goes on in the black box, I don't worry too much about thinking about, I just let it happen because I'm focused on going in and then coming out, and the bit in the middle, I can just let go.

Anyway, I'll have to come up with a tricky name for that. But it's my black box in-out theory of doing things that are necessary, but you don't actually really want to be doing.

Lloyd: Yeah. You don't have to worry about the process.

James: Like changing into a cold wet suit or going on a long flight. Just work with it. Get on the plane, get off the plane. What happens in the plane, I'll just go into my own zone. So what's next on your list there, Lloyd?

Get going physically

Lloyd: Well, we've actually implicitly talked about one of those things that we both do. And it's exercise. So I mean, it seems so obvious, right? But many business owners, they're hunched over their computer for hours. And being in that, like, cramped position for a very long time, can build up stress.

And probably one of my best explanations of why business owners or just why stress is increasing in society came from a friend of mine who practices Japanese massage. And she said to me, In modern society, we now get so much stress come to us, mental stress, but we don't do the physical side as well. Whereas perhaps when there was less automation and computers, work to people meant doing physical work and thinking at the same time, so the two, kind of, counteracted each other.



So that makes a lot of sense to me. But whether you buy into that philosophy or you don't, there's just no doubt about it. But going out, doing some exercise, and getting some endorphins pumped through you will actually make a huge difference to your creativity and your productivity. And also, if you've been sitting in meetings, dealing with difficult emotions or challenging things, being able to take that break and come back fresh and renewed makes a huge difference, not just to your productivity but also to your health.

So I think making the different - like making a priority to schedule in that time in your calendar, I always do it every single day. I block out 12 to four in my calendar. I do my morning calls, I've got 12 to four blocked out, and I'm going to go for a walk, take the dog for a walk, I'll eat something and then I'll go for a surf, and then I might have a couple of calls in the evening, and then I'm done. I feel great, you know, I've always got in my calendar one surf day - and that keeps me in a positive mindset and regulated and calm and content. So I really recommend exercise.

James: I do too. For years, I was grinding away in corporate and smashing my body into a desk-and-chair situation in an office, not healthy. I'm in my early 50s now. I'm absolutely 100% bonafide, statistically, in way better shape than I've been since the 20s. On every metric - on blood levels, body fat, strength, my food diet, everything, my resting pulse, my sleep, every aspect is better because I spend time away from the computer.

I'm only working 10 to 15 hours a week with scheduled calls. And the rest of the time, I'm very active. I have a minimum requirement of 6000 steps a day, but sometimes I get up to 22,000. And I feel fantastic. And it's the blood getting through that brain and taking the toxins out of your body, you've got to keep moving.

And I know some people have built their whole life around frictionless living. They've got people stocking their fridge with water and fueling their car for them. And they end up very unhealthy because they're just not doing any stoic work. I think it's okay to go up and down stairs, it's okay to be lifting shopping and stuff, like get your hands dirty, roll up your sleeves, do some stuff.

I'm still very active. And better for it. My work is better for it, because I can show up calmer. I can show up with more endurance when I need to, etc. I'm ready. Ready for life, ready to live. So get out there, put some resistance into it. I think adding strength training in the last three months has been a big change for me. And it's part of the work that I've been doing with [Zac Mason](#).

And the inertia to start that was a bit high. I didn't really want to do it. And I think even in previous podcasts, I've said I didn't fully understand why people would go to the gym when you can be doing real world activities. But doing a dedicated strength routine, I only do two a week because I figured if I do more than two, I might not enjoy it. And now I actually look forward to it.

So I've turned the corner on that, I feel like I'm on a home straight. And now I can lift more than my body weight for the basics, you know, chest presses and deadlifts and stuff. So I'm really building strength and feeling fantastic. So big tick in the box for health and wellness. And I do believe the least healthy, least fit people are going to pay for it at some point in the future, either with an early death, with a sickness, an illness.

I have seen people accumulate massive wealth without it. I know some really rich but very obese, unhealthy people. So I don't think it's a mandatory thing for the business performance initially or in the midterm, but you're going to pay a price later.

Lloyd: If you don't make time for your wellness, you'll have to make time for your illness. That's the quote.

James: Yeah, I like the food is medicine thing, or pay now or pay later, but you're going to pay.

Lloyd: Yeah, yeah.

James: So what's next?

Defining the big three

Lloyd: Well, we've talked about mind and body. I was quite keen to talk about what we can do in the business and running the business. So straight off to getting stuff done. Obviously, if you're a business owner, and you have a team, then you want to try and delegate or delete tasks you don't need to as much as you can.

But what I just wanted to talk about as well, let's just say you've done all that, let's say you've just handed off all the tasks, and there's some stuff that you really need to do, it's really specific to you, and it's just building up. Well, if you don't take action, then your task list is going to get higher and stress is going to increase. So you're going to have to do it, and perhaps you're not feeling motivated.

So I've got a couple of things that just work for me. And I'm sure I would have got these things from the likes of Brian Tracy and things like that. And for me, before I go to bed, I just write down on a piece of paper, what are like, the big three that I'm going to do the next day? And I circle the one big thing. If I get that done, it's almost like that's the achievement for the next day.

And I feel like overnight, my subconscious is already working on it. Now I like framed it there and it's ready to go. I feel like when I start the new day, it's already gone and had some thinking process about that. So that's one of the things I do. And then as I go through the day, yeah, stuff comes up. But I'll get that one big thing done.

And when I strike that off on a piece of paper, so the reason I recommend a piece of paper is because it's just not as satisfying as just striking it through on your computer, it just might be just a tick box, and a task tool. But these are the three to five big things, just striking it through, you can see those things getting done, and you can see your progress. So that's really mentally satisfying. So that's the first thing I'd say about getting stuff done.

Work till the sand hits the bottom

Another thing is, sometimes people find that inertia just to get going. And I don't know where I got this productivity hack. But I've got a sand timer, here it is down here. And I just put this thing on my desk. Some people have digital ones. And I just put that there. And I say, right, and I've got a 10 minute one, a 30 minute one, an hour one.

And I put that there and I'm like, right, I'm not going to look into my phone, or any other thing. Whatever the task was that I put in front of me, until that sand has hit the bottom, I am going to do this thing. And I find that challenge really helpful. You just buy those things off eBay. So that's one productivity tip.

James: That's a Pomodoro technique.

Lloyd: A Pomodoro, I think they call it the Pomodoro.

Just get started

And then finally, like, the Japanese calls this Kaizen, small change. And if there's a big task that you're not wanting to get started on anything, Oh, it's just a huge task. So obviously, the best way to get started on it is break it down into small tasks.

So what I do is I take out my timer, and it might just be the small one, like five minutes, two minutes, and I'll just say, I'm just going to start, I just look at it for two minutes, maybe I'm going to sketch an outline of whatever I'm going to do. And I know what's going to happen. If I just start, I'm not going to spend two minutes on it, I'm probably going to go for 30 minutes. So just commit to making a small change, just start whatever that process is, is a really effective way to get going and actually complete the task in the end.

James: That's right. Just whatever the first steps would be. I know that comes from Instant Influence. They talk about when people turn up in the emergency ward and they need medication, they just break it down to, what would be the first step? Like if you maybe just change into the smock, right? So we can do a couple of measurements. Like, just ease them into the first step.

Once you get the first step, you get the momentum and then you can keep going. I like that. I mean, I don't have a lot to add to that. I use deadlines as well. Pomodoro technique is great. I actually combine it with the physical thing. Same when you go to a strategic coach workshop, they'll do a 50-minute timer and then 10 minutes of standing up and moving around, but they'll never go more than an hour in one block. Let's talk about the on your business stuff.

The value of community

Lloyd: Yeah, okay. So on your business. This is about, for me, being an entrepreneur is a bit of a lonely sport. Like you're there, you might be providing coaching or supporting your team. But what do you do when you don't know what to do, where you're like, where should I steer the ship now?

So for that, I think it's really good to have some kind of community or mentorship, because, you know, it's great to be able to get some feedback from others, other people who have already gone through that kind of challenge before. It's great for soundboarding, it's not your immediate team, you can just go out to other business owners.

Of course, in my world, I've got you, James, and your community. And that's been fantastic. And there's also other communities I'm a part of as well. But just having other people you can bounce your ideas off, who've gone through those challenges, who've had those lessons, saves you making those mistakes. So that is my top recommendation, is being in a community. You can get the support from others, and it's not necessarily a task where you're going to say, I need to solve specifically this thing.

It might just be having someone you can talk to, to bounce ideas off. You know, maybe just to hear yourself, you've got that support, other people who have gone through similar things, other business owners who are weathering the storm as well, you know? They've talked about times where they've had ups and downs. So being a part of a community.

James: Yeah, and I want to sort of extend upon that. It's good to be part of a community, part of networks. A huge part of the way I built my business was traveling and attending events, networking with people, establishing relationships. I'll also go beyond the business side. It's pretty important that you have, and especially as we get more virtual, that you have people that you can just talk to and share ideas.

So some of my greatest conversations, I'd say, would be when I'm walking through the National Park with one or two friends, and we just chat. Like real talk, where you can just share things on your mind, get perspective and to pressure relief things in a safe place. Recent guest that I had, [Jaemin Frazer](#), was talking about that, we all need a clean space where we can talk about stuff without being judged.

I know that's what I'm providing for a lot of the people I help. When we have that private sounding board, it's a one-to-one container where people can say whatever they want, it could be anything. I've heard it all before from others. And it's just feeling heard, it's letting someone to share that information, someone who can support you and help you figure out what the next steps are, or provide you some insights on what steps are possible, if you don't know the steps sometimes.

And I'd say it also extends beyond just a business perspective. I get help with my physical work. I've got a PT, I've got a nutrition and health helper, I've had people help me in the past learn to surf better. So go outside just the traditional things when you're building your team. Get help.

I've had people help me with crafting stories, helped me with video production stuff, like, get mentors in different parts of your business to develop the more rounded thing, in the principle of kaizen actually, that there will be some links in your chain that needs strengthening. And building a good strong team is critical.

Whitespace and doing what you like

Lloyd: You mentioned another thing there, which is, you talked about when you're going on your walk, maybe through the national park and sharing ideas. Well, we talked about physical health and fitness. But there's that aspect of scheduling in that white space, which is important. And I'm not necessarily just talking about taking a couple of hours out. Maybe it's a week out or two weeks out.

And that's not just to prevent burnout, which is a big thing for resilience is, yeah, you don't want to be someone who is eventually going to burn out because they're on all the time. But there's actually a productive thing there for your business also, which is showing you where the gaps are in the business, the things that were dependent on you, what's going to go wrong, and what processes can you put in place to prevent those things depending on you?

So it's kind of a double benefit. Like, not only are you getting that time away from your desk, and perhaps, you know, going somewhere, going on a holiday, not taking your laptop, just having your phone, and seeing what breaks without you so you can fix it. But also, yeah, taking time out so that you can decompress.



And another thing I'd like to say about that is, I think it forces you to think about what it is that you're doing in your business that you like and don't like. So for me, if you can be focusing on the tasks that you like doing the most, then you can thrive at it. Like, you're just doing the things that you enjoy more and more and more so you're in this flow state.

And then you can hand off the things that you don't like. And so, it puts you in this state where, actually, you don't need to go on a holiday away from your work because you're enjoying it, you're in flow state all of the time. So kind of two things there, both scheduling in the whitespace, but making sure when you are in work that you're doing the things that you really enjoy.

Are you putting off scheduling?

James: Well, a friend of mine just had this realization last week that he's been resisting putting things in his schedule, because he always had this notion that being an entrepreneur means you're able to do anything you want, anytime you want. And we had this great discussion. I said, you know, the very act of putting something in your schedule protects it. It makes a line in the sand that where you're on or off.

So for me, when I commit to doing calls, predominately three days a week -I've got up to 10 hours of calls scheduled over three days - that gives me the rest of the time, given the other four days off. Four days of no calls. That's plenty of whitespace. I have to say, I don't ever feel burnt out or that I would need to take a month off or two weeks. Because that's one of the biggest questions people ask, Well, if you're going to commit to coaching people, when could you ever take a month off?

I don't actually need a month off. I'd probably be concerned if I had a whole month off about, like reintegrating into the work. I might not want to. Or I might be stressing that I'm not working enough or something, you know, like the old habits that come with that. I want to read you this thing here that I got yesterday, this was from a client,: You remain the only person, online coach consultant I've ever worked with, who shows up literally each day for their clients, I applaud you for all that you do for your clients and community, it's very rare.

So I've turned my weakness of being connected with my clients on a very frequent basis into a strength, because I'm the only one that does it. But I don't need to take months off. What I noticed with people who take a lot of time off, there's a huge build up prior, there's a massive stress in the deadline prior, there's uncertainty and disconnection sometimes while they're away, but when they come back, it could be quite stressful and chaotic, it's kind of like the whole thing was canceled out.

So I would encourage people, maybe look at building more time in on the way. And part of my foundation of this was I worked 11-day fortnights. So for our overseas listeners, that's 11 out of 14 days, I worked that schedule from March 1995 up till about 2005, 10 years, I worked an extra day every two weeks, right?

If you calculate that, that's 26 extra days a year or something like that, which is like five extra work weeks a year for 10 years. So I'm just catching back up, basically. And I can tell you that by the time I get to the end of three or four days of no calls, I'm more than ready for a call, and I can throw myself into it. Like, this call we're doing now is the second call I've done this week. And I haven't done anything for days. So I'm really ready and fresh to do a good podcast because of it.

Now, I do believe also, you learn the most about your business when you're not there. And it's also worth paying attention to all the - go and pull out an old to-do list and see what still hasn't been completed. And then question why. Why didn't you finish that book? Why didn't you build that website?

I just went through my last to-do list, which was about four years ago. I just found it and I went through it, almost everything on it was either done or no longer relevant. One of them was to reposition my SuperFastBusiness brand where I'm not required in it. I definitely achieved that by turning it off. [laughs] It's gone. Right? I just didn't approach it the same way that I thought I would.

So I think for me, I naturally know where I want to lean, and I don't put too much focus on structured lists, because they would stress me out. Instead, I just remember to tell my team. I make a note in Slack. And then I pass it on to someone else to worry about. And it reminds me of that Tim Ferriss thing, where the YourManInIndia delegate was saying, Don't worry about worrying about this. I'll do your worrying for you.

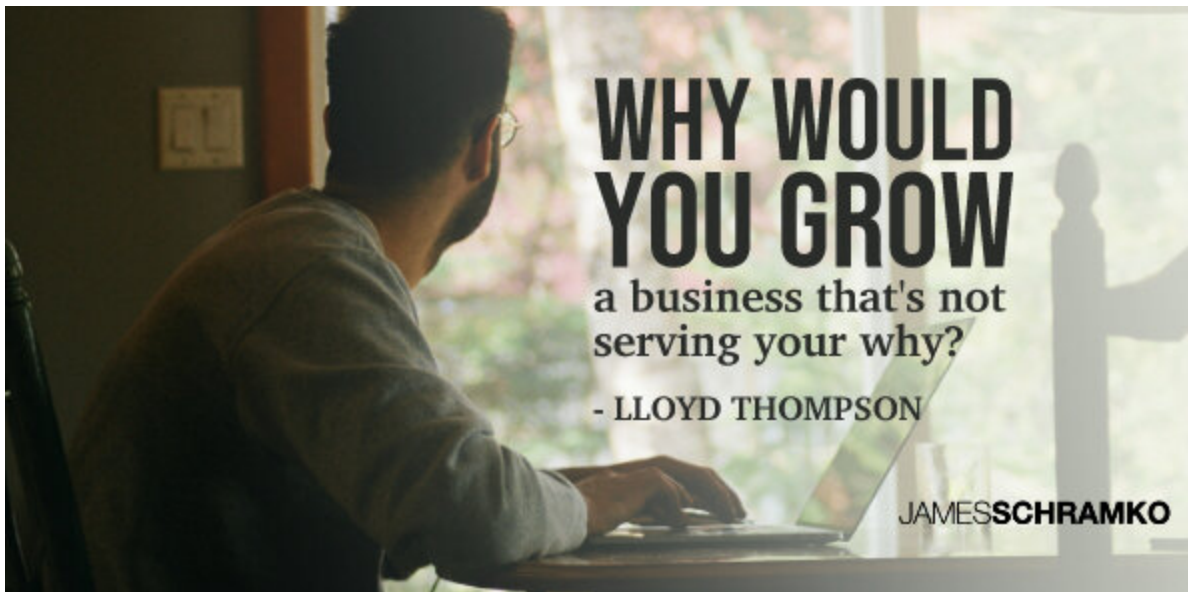
Regular reflection on where you're at

Lloyd: [laughs] Perfect. I think that's a good way to actually just talk about the last point I wanted to talk about, that on your business. And that's coming back to reflecting, like coming back every 12 weeks or 90 days, and reflecting on your business. Now a lot of people do this with business goals. But I'm not just talking about that. I'm talking about going back to why you got in your business in the first place.

So for me, I got into my business because I wanted time and location flexibility. So when I have this 90-day reflection, I look back at what the activities I'm doing. And I think, is this achieving my goal? I'm like, have I got time flexibility, have I got location flexibility? And then it makes me think about the kind of work or projects that I would want to take on or not want to take on.

So I always come back to that. And then I think about the other things, which are a big part of that reflection, like is this serving me in the sense of my relationships? Is this serving me in terms of my exercise and all of these other goals I have in my life? So it's not just about the business and how much profit it's making, and have we achieved this particular strategic goal? But also, the other things, which are really important, as like, why am I doing this? Is it serving me?

And that is a really good filter to show you where you want to go, so that you are in this motivated state. Like, when you are working on something that resonates with your why, it gives you so much motivation, whereas when you're working on something that is not resonating with you, for me, I can feel it in my gut.



I just feel this uncomfortable position. And so, why would you grow a business that's not serving your why? So that's why I think it's really important to just take stock every 90 days, every 12 weeks, come back to your why, come back to those things. And when you do it, you not only can come back with increased motivation, but also, sometimes it's hard to see the progress when you're working long on things.

Sometimes it's hard to see the wood through the trees. And so, when you've had that 90-days reflection, you get to the end of that, and you can go, Wow, actually, look how much I've done. Look how much this business has achieved in 90 days. So really good for your mental state.

James: Yeah, I'm sure you know, I've sent that - every 12 weeks, I send that out to my members to ask them where they're at on each part of that. And I notice there are other products out there that do something similar, that look at each aspect of your life. We can't be just focused on the money. You end up like the frictionless people who are unfit or unhealthy. So you want that well-rounded thing, you need to look at all the aspects.

I'm definitely looking at numbers fairly frequently. Every 10 days, I get a P&L every month end, I get a full P&L of every cost, every product. I'm often sitting down and mapping out on a piece of paper with a pen, my business and where it's going, and what I'm looking to do. And I'm also paying attention to the feedback of others.

I got a message yesterday from Isaac, he's a member of mine. He's been helping me with YouTube. And I'd sent a full YouTube outline for a video that I'm making on surfboard fins. And he goes, This is amazing. Where's this for your [business YouTube content](#)? I said, I've never done one before. Like, I wasn't that interested in mapping it out to this extent. He goes, Well, harness that, right?

And I've got Zac also encouraging me to, you know, where's the thumbnail? What about this? And like, he's like a taskmaster. He's very interested in YouTube, because he's had some breakout videos. And so, I take that feedback. Yes, I absolutely should put the same level of preparation into my business content as I would with the [surfing channel](#).

And so, pay attention to that natural thing. But it does lead me to think that maybe in five years or 10 years from now, maybe that's what I'll be doing. And so, I pay attention to that, and I think about what that might look like. And I start planning it well before I need it.

The importance of adapting

Lloyd: Well, I think being adaptable is important. And I think some people can be concerned that they're going to be left behind. And so, it can be just small steps that mean that you will remain. Like, I mean, how often are we hearing about AI? I mean, I've been talking about AI every day, I've got an email in my inbox about AI.

James: We pretty much got the last 40 minutes without mentioning it, which I think was pretty good.

Lloyd: [laughs] Sorry to bring it up. But I mean, that's something that business owners can do, is make sure that they're on top of things in terms of new market trends and not be left behind. And it doesn't have to be a huge investment of their time. Like for me, I'm encouraging my team to take small innovative steps. It might be things that they're doing, it might be experimenting with videos, it might be trying new tools.

And then for me, I get through quite a bit of audiobooks. And that's just something I do in that window between 12 and four, I have my food, and then I might have a little post-food nap, listen to an audio book, upgrading my software, as you call it. And then I use that. I use that in my socials as well, when I'm thinking about some things that I've learned from books, I can then take out the key takeaways of my latest book that I really enjoyed. And I can post that on my socials.

So that's another thing that business owners can do to reduce that fear of being left behind in all of these things that are evolving in the market, is just take little bits of time to encourage innovation in your team and constantly upgrade their software.

James: Well, I think that's how you stay tough, is you train. You know, I've managed to get my surf content some virality. I'm getting more views than I have people following the channel, which is a great metric. I did use AI for a YouTube video outline, which I then modified by hand based on some of the trainings I've done.

And then I deploy. Like, I'm one of those teaching practitioners. I do and teach. Some people just teach, some people just do, I do and teach. Everything that I'm learning, I'll pass on, you know, from one of my channels will inform the other channel, and I'll also share anything that works with anyone who I think it would help as part of my process.

So that is good. You want to get tough, you have to practice in the offseason. So I'm continually refining and improving, and I want to pass on the best of what I know to the people who are investing in me to help them. And I love what you're doing too, Lloyd. You're really helping those entrepreneurs. You're giving them a person by their side to help them build their systems, to manage their people better.

This is episode 1048. I've been chatting with [Lloyd Thompson](#) from [VirtualDOO.com](#). He's an operational expert. Get in touch with him. How do we get in touch with you if we want to chat to you about helping our team out?

Lloyd: Just head to my website, [VirtualDOO.com](#).

James: Thanks, Lloyd. Catch you next time.

Lloyd: Thanks, James.

A photograph of a wooden desk in a room with a window. On the desk is a laptop, a lamp with a conical shade, and a smartphone. The laptop screen shows a dark background with palm leaves. The window looks out onto a blurred view of trees. The overall lighting is warm and dim.

JAMES SCHRAMKO

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