

Corey Andrew (00:02):

I am joined today by Stedman Graham, chairman and CEO of S. Graham associates, his Identity Leadership book and programs are driven by his proprietary nine-step success process that teaches the value of understanding and embracing identity.

Corey Andrew (00:18):

The most successful CEOs, of course, they've all been able to navigate through the COVID 19 pandemic because they did make a shift. I spoke to the head of the Chucky Cheese restaurant brand, and he was like, you know, our sales are slumping during the pandemic because grownups aren't gonna buy a Chucky Cheese pizza. So they reenvisioned a more adult brand using their same ingredients and their same intellectual property and created more of an adult version because they had a good quality product and they have this whole new business model that they sort of led the charge on of people who have ghost kitchens, restaurants, sort of doing these secondary businesses. So they became a leader out of the fact that they were willing to be flexible during a difficult time.

Stedman Graham (01:03):

You can reinvent yourself. You can reorganize yourself because you got a mind. You're able to think. Hard to do that. If you don't read, you know, innovation and creativity doesn't come, just because, you know, you want it to come. Einstein said you cannot solve a problem with the same mindset that caused it. So if you stay focused on your historical background. You know, that storyboard going through your head all the time about you being the victim and how tough it was, and you can't do this and you can't make it because of the color of your skin and you can't make it because of this or that. You know, and you're making excuses all the time and you don't understand how to move forward. You put yourself in a negative mindset, which is really the challenge for most people is to, you know, the transformation, you know, as I learned it throughout the years, it's always about love.

Stedman Graham (01:50):

How do you transform negativity into a positive mindset? How do you transfer hate into love? Because you're not gonna transform your life any other way. That's impossible to do. And love is always about transformation. That's where we're trying to get to, is how do we love ourselves? How do we build value in ourselves? How do we love others? How do we share talents and gifts and abilities? How do we focus on what we can do? Looking at the glass half full as opposed to half empty? So it's a shift in our thinking, which allows us to now be more creative and realize that if we don't have love and, and a positive attitude that we go back to anger and rage, which often destroys. You know it destroys ourselves because the law of attraction says whatever you put out comes back. So you gotta make that shift in our mind first. Just say, you know, in spite of the fact that I'm not thinking in a very positive way, I'm gonna change my thinking. I'm gonna work on that. Then you change your feelings as a result of that, and then you change the result. So all of that is ...you might have to relearn that so that you can reinvent yourself so you can create new opportunities. So you can look at the glass again, half full as opposed to half empty and go back to creating a different way of serving your customer —like you talked about.

Corey Andrew (03:13):

I mean, it is definitely in theory, a good plan. I, I think you mentioned a few things that make it very difficult because of all those adverse things going on in the community. And then on top of that, you add the element of social media, which is just a rabbit hole of crazy unto itself. And even I get sucked into it. It can be a one second I'm talking about a cute picture of a cat. And next thing you know, I'm in this hideous political conversation and it's like taking time away from my life. My partner will say, don't you have like, you know, a script to write or a song to write. Like, can't you do something else with that time?

Stedman Graham (03:50):

Well, having a core base of who you are, that's why this work is so important because having an identity, you know, and being clear on what you're gonna work on. So you can eliminate the time wasters. Because on social media, there's a lot of time wasters on there. And, uh, it's great. If you can organize the information around what you do and to improve your talents and your skills cuz it's a great, one of the greatest tools in the world. To have the iPhone and iPad, and have the internet and be able to download information if it's relevant to your development so you can improve your socioeconomic status. That's a wonderful thing. But if you don't know who you are, if you have no way to source the information and if your foundation and your core base is weak and you're all over the place, and you don't know wanna become, or you don't know what kind of job you want to have, what kind of skills you need, what you're good at, what your natural ability is.

Stedman Graham (04:48):

If you can't translate that into a foundation for organizing, developing, and building, you're pretty much out of it. And you're just gonna get further and further behind because the 21st century is recreating information over and over as quickly as possible, quicker than it's ever been done in the history of our world. So it's hard to keep up and it's hard to keep up with the technology because it's constantly changing all the time. So I just know from my own experience of using technology and figuring it out myself, I need so much help to be able to do it. I've got a little bit of help to be able to do it. But imagine if I don't have help, I wouldn't be doing this podcast right now. We'd be trying to figure out a different way, if I didn't have some help. So you need to be able to have something you can build upon someplace. You can go something, you can organize something you can visualize. So you can begin to create a support system around that.

Corey Andrew (05:47):

Mmm yes. The technology issue is definitely a big one. I was looking for, um, a gift for my little cousins recently. They're like six and there was a book for them to learn how to code their own video games for 6 to 12 year olds. <laugh> six to 12 year olds, how to code! And I mean, so it's at that level and I'm like, so they're literally competing with me. I'm a grown man. I don't know how to code anything. So I thought, yeah, the technology thing is a little frightening. Moving into two other topics from your nine step success plan. I did touch onto two other ones. One, it sort of builds on the "Pilot the season of change." It is to "step into the outer limits," which is connected to the change aspect because it speaks to being fearless and not being afraid of the unknown. And also when I've spoken to CEOs, that is, a common thread and many of their stories where they were given an opportunity and they didn't know if they could, but they didn't say no. They said yes. And I'll figure it out when I get there, which leads to the next place and the next place. So I believe that is what is encompassed in your notion of stepping into the outer limits? Is that correct?

Stedman Graham (06:55):

Well overcoming your fears is, you know, man, that's a big thing. It's this fear we're in a fear-based society for the most part, you know, we're inundated with all kinds of information. Sometimes we're confused by it. We don't know it. And when you don't know something, you kind of fear it. Uh, we grow up with our own fears. You know, the behaviors that we have to deal with growing up, you know, learning that stuff, whatever we learned from it being in that household for 18, 19 years with our parents. What fears did we learn from them? What fears do we have to overcome? Do we have the courage of conviction? Courage is the greatest of all virtues because without courage we do nothing. So your ability to overcome the fears. That's a small step process. That's working on yourself every day. That's overcoming the obstacles. That's learning, that's developing, that's building.

Stedman Graham (07:50):

That's a lot, it's a lot to deal with. Then, when we're not working on it, we go back to that same comfortable place of being fearful. So we gotta constantly figure out how to get beyond that. And it's a process. I have to work on it every day as I grew up with low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in myself. So I'm trying to figure out how to overcome the fears and you overcome it by again, learning, reading, developing, and building and having the information and knowledge to be able to not fear what you're dealing with so much, but to be able to, you know, be a victor and not a victim.

Corey Andrew (08:29):

Absolutely. I love that. That should be on a t-shirt. I hope you trademarked that. At the top of leadership, comes the responsibility to make sure your team or the people around you are also given the tools they need and that they're set up for success. So you also have another point which is to build your dream team. And I think that speaks to people who are like-minded, maybe in your vision who share the same aspirations or understand your vision. And so you make them a part of your process. So how do you define that step of building your dream team?

Stedman Graham (09:03):

Well, no one makes it alone. No man or woman is an island into themselves. So it takes a team today, especially, you know, to create success over a long period of time. You can't do it by yourself but you need to be able to attract other people to be on your team and you know, and you build strong leadership skills, so you attract strong people. And if you don't, you know, it's hard to attract strong people on your team because you're attracting people who are not competent a lot of the time. And mostly because you don't know the difference and you don't really know how to do that. And you're not being, or becoming the role modeler and the example yourself. So you get what you put out. Your business is only as good as you are. And so having a team to help you succeed, which could be family members, is friends.

Stedman Graham (09:56):

It's people in your field. It's people that are going in the same direction who share the same vision. It's people who have common values, like you have. It's people that care about you. It's people who are experts in their industry. You can have all kinds of people at all different levels based on what you love. If you love sports, you know, you can have a sports team of people. You can have a business team of people. You can have community leaders on your team. You know, depending on what you're creating in terms of a structure and how do you begin to organize your life? And then how do you organize team members that will support every area of the segment that you want to self-actualize or develop or build? So I like that process of using the global marketplace as a way to organize a team that's relevant in every area of my life that I'm passionate about. And that I care about, that I love so that I'm able to motivate myself based on who I am and then organize the resources and the opportunities and the teams to help me get the right information, to solve the problems that I'm dealing with every single day. So I can create this flow and create sustainability over a long period of time. So I can actually self-actualize and reach my vision based on that. So that's a beautiful process.

Corey Andrew (11:23):

Yeah. And I think along the way, you meet wonderful people and you change lives as well. If that process works the way you've just described it, you're not the only one benefiting. There's also a bigger sense of purpose too, that you're bringing into it with those who are sort of along for the ride, if you will. And, and you are all doing the best to achieve a certain, common goal.

Stedman Graham (11:40):

It's a win-win situation. I mean, that's why you build with the idea of caring about the people that you're, that you're associated with. It's not just a transactional situation, it's more of a, we help each other and we're going in, we're developing a win-win situation. You're not gonna do it without a team. You're not gonna create wealth and you're not gonna create opportunity without empowering other people and have them empower you at the same time. That's the beauty of organization, cuz you're able to organize that. And once you understand the meaning, the true meaning of having a team, then you work to try to build teams in every area of your life.

Corey Andrew (12:18):

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by the national society of leadership and success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.