

Hi, welcome back to The Amazing Career Project. We are on Video 12, “Build Your Support Community.” We are now in the phase of “Explore,” in the five steps of building your amazing career. Those steps are: step back, let go, say yes, explore and create.

Here we are ready to explore. So, here’s today’s takeaway. You can’t build an amazing career alone or in a vacuum. You need empowered helpers, supporters and angels. Let’s just talk about this for a minute. What does that mean, empowered help? I’m going to start on the flip side. What is help that is not helpful? There is such a thing and many of us are getting it. So, here’s what non-helpful help, that you’re going to want to stay away from. How do you know?

Number one, it’s the kind of advice or support that keeps you small and keeps you feeling like, “Oh, I’m not sure I’m ready to take the next step. I’m not sure I have what it takes.” If you’re getting that kind of advice. And it’s often from people in your environment, often family members who have known you a long time. They may not see you as the future self that you dream of. They just kind of know you as you were.

That’s an issue, even when you stay at a company. I was at a company 11 years. As much as I grew, and I did have promotions, in some ways they saw me as that young person who started 11 years before. So, help that keeps you small and doesn’t think that you can do it, that’s not the kind of help we need.

Number two, people who think they know better. I will never forget when I made the decision to leave corporate and become a therapist, we had a couple over for dinner. It was out of my mouth that I’m going to study therapy. I was so excited. And she said, without knowing me well, “You’re going to be burnt out, exhausted and broke.” And I went upstairs and I cried because, interestingly, my idea wasn’t fully baked yet and I wasn’t really ready to take on the onslaught of people saying I was crazy.

Even my financial consultant, who I then dumped, because he wasn’t the right kind of help, said, “You’re not going to make a lot of money in that.” This is not the kind of help you need. You’re going to be burnt out, broke, you’re going to hate it, you’re not going to make . . . No, thanks, not the kind of help you need. People who don’t see you as capable. Again, we touched on that but I want you to be aware of it.

When people may say, “Do you really have what it takes? Do you really have the best idea?” I’ve mentioned this before, I featured Sara Blakely, the billionaire founder of Spanx. So many people, a hundred times said, “Are you crazy? This is nuts. What a bad idea. It’s already been done. You’re not going to do it. You don’t know anything about it. What do you know about legal? What do you know about patents?” She tuned it out. And, now she’s a billionaire. So, there you go.

People who don't want you to be all that you want to be and don't want to see you spread your wings, again, be vigilant. Because it will be some of your friends who you've had for years who find it threatening that you're moving on to this next level or your chucking. I remember when I was chucking my corporate career. There were several people that said, "Wow, really?" Because it threatened them. They didn't want to think there was another way.

Finally, people that are connected to you staying put. That's all the kind of help you do not want. How do we find people that are going to be the right kind of supporters, the ones who are inspiring, enlivening? The ones who can pick you up by the bootstraps and help you when you're feeling down when you're feeling troubled and not worthy and exhausted, who can say, "Come on, I know this is hard, but you can do this. Let's go." How do we find these people?

The first piece is, as you reach out to people who are going to be your helpers, you need to be focused on service first. It can't be all about you. I want to talk about LinkedIn and Twitter and social media.

A lot of folks in the expert arena and I'm considering myself one of those, we get 100 e-mails a month and some get thousands, who want to collaborate with me. What they reach out and say is, "I have a new book coming out. I have a new video program. I think it would be great for your audience. Will you promote it." Tell you what, it's the wrong way. It's the wrong way. Don't come at me like that.

First, be of service to me. First offer something collaborative that isn't about you asking me to promote your book. Do you understand what I'm getting at? Be of service. Be other focused. Have humility. Understand, yeah, you're great, obviously you wouldn't be where you are, but have humility that there are people farther down the path than you and that you need to be respectful of that. Always respectful. Always humble. Although, still powerful. Be the student. Think about what you can learn, not only how you're the expert and how you're the best. Don't be a narcissist.

We talked in another video about that. Sometimes the courage it takes the grit to move forward makes you a bit of a narcissist. You think you're better and I've lived all of this. Trust me, I don't judge you if you've had these thoughts. There have been times that I've looked at other coaches and said, "Oh, I'm doing it better." Well, that doesn't help. That doesn't help. Remember that everyone has a message for you from the universe. Everyone can be of service to you. Don't be a narcissist. Tap into your own kindness, your own generosity of spirit when you reach out to build. Make sure that you're trying to build a mutually beneficial arrangement and collaboration.

All right, so let's talk about building your support community offline and online. Let's start with online because everyone has the same questions.

The first piece is, do I really need to be on LinkedIn? Do I need to be on Twitter? Do I need to be on Facebook? I'm going to share my thoughts. Everybody has a different take. Here we go. LinkedIn, to me, has absolutely changed my career. It's changed my life. I'm a very big fan of LinkedIn. Twitter, absolutely and Facebook to a lesser degree. For me, it's all personal. It depends on your business. It depends on your personality. It depends on your likes and your preferences. Let me just share a little bit.

LinkedIn for professionals, it's it. It's reaching millions and millions of people. Why wouldn't you take advantage of that? Why wouldn't you build your online profile? Why wouldn't you build your brand? So, that when people search on, I'm looking for a graphic designer, I'm looking for a writer, I'm looking for a media specialist that you pop up. And you look amazing and compelling.

There are some steps to that. I've written a number of articles on that. I will link those in the resources for this program. What you need to know is, you've got to put your best foot forward there, your best face forward. Use every piece of it that you can to present the most compelling picture.

Again, I've talked about this, tell the truth. Always tell the truth, but re-frame the truth so that it fits the facts equally well but it allows for as much opportunity as possible. So, use LinkedIn.

A few tips, start getting testimonials and endorsements. It makes all the difference. First of all, people can see what other people say about you and it will be glowing. Secondly, it will help you connect to how you're glowing. I can't tell you, I think I have something like 36 recommendations and every one of them has been incredibly meaningful for me because it shares what other people experienced me as, that I didn't even know about. So, ask on LinkedIn for testimonials. Use every piece of it. Fill your profile and then start connecting, start connecting.

Here's another tip. Don't use the generic language of LinkedIn. For every person you sent an invite to, make it special. Why do you want to connect with this person? I love your articles on Forbes, they inspire me. I came to your talk and I loved it. I loved your book. Make it real. Make it authentic. Why do you want to connect? Use LinkedIn.

Now, for people who say, "Who's got time for any of this?" That was me. I'm running a business. I'm coaching. I'm training. I'm writing. Are you kidding? Do I really have to do this? Yeah, you really do. Why? It's how things are done today, in terms of how we engage, how we communicate, how we spread the word, how we connect to audiences and customers and clients. It's how you build your support community. It's there and it would be so wonderful if you used it to the max.

LinkedIn, here's how to use it to build your community. Reach out, whatever number of connections you have, make it double. I remember, I saw that some people had 500 plus connections and I thought, I kind of like that number. Remember we talked about goals, metrics, specific, measurable, achievable, I thought, I want 500 plus. So, I just wanted it. I reached out. I found people from the past. I found people I worked with. I found movers and shakers in the industry that I'm in. And I just started connecting. Now, I think I'm at something like 1500, which connects me to millions of people at the third level. It has totally brought new opportunities, new speaking gigs, new consulting gigs, new writing gigs, travel. It has brought me so many opportunities and it will you, if you embrace it.

Now, let's think about Twitter for a minute. Do I need to be on it? Again, it depends. I have found it is someone who is involved in thought leadership and wanting to put my message out there. I have found Twitter so, so, so helpful.

But, again, this is important to know. A lot of people say, "You know, I gave social media a month and it didn't do anything." It's not going to do anything in a month. That's like saying, I gave this new relationship a month and nothing happened. It's a relationship. It's engagement. You can't put parameters on it like that. "I need to get a new gig from Twitter in a month." It's just not going to work that way. It's that you're engaging, you're adding your voice to the conversation. You're sending out link love. You're following people that you love and promoting their work. You're starting conversations. It's amazing.

There are many, many programs that tell you how to make the most out of Twitter. How to make the most out of Facebook. There's one I just saw, FB Influence. Absolutely, amazing. We'll give you some resources in the homework. But, I would say, embrace social media as a way to spread your message, connect with the line people, see who the movers and shakers are. It will definitely move you forward.

Now, offline, you've got to be doing a lot of things, personally, to build your support community. The first is networking in person. If you're looking for a job. If you want a switch. If you want the next level of success, you've got to connect with people that are going to help you do that.

The first piece is network, network, network. Ask people out to lunch. Ask people for coffee. What you're asking them is key. If you need a job, you don't want to pick up the phone and say, "Hi, I know you're at Google. I'd like to work at Google. Are there jobs?" No, try to be of service. Even ask them, would they be open to having coffee with you and talk about their trajectory. Just talk about themselves, so you can understand. Be of service. Let them speak about themselves. Don't be all about what you need to get out of this, but network.

Go to as many events that you can that are in your industry. Join new organizations. If you're thinking about launching a business, there are so many for women, Savor the

Success, ClaudiaChan.com. Tory Johnson, who I just interviewed for Forbes, her Spark & Hustle. There is so much out there. In Connecticut there is the most amazing organization, The Women's Business Development Center. It's all out there for you.

Start networking. Start putting yourself out there. Start meeting people. Truly, the fact is this, if you want anything, whether it's a new job or a new career, it's who you know and how you engage with them that's going to get you to the next level. Even though everything is so digitally and technologically oriented now, we still get jobs by who we know. That's how it's done. Yes, you can find a job on LinkedIn. You can do research online. But, it's truly who you know and how you stand out that gets you to the next level.

I hope that's given you some wonderful tips about how to build your offline and online community. I hope you will embrace it as a way to move forward. It's going to be fun and livening, if you believe it will. Thanks so much. Do your homework and see you next time.