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Revealing Failure as the Path to Success

Success Through Failure Podcast

Action Plan Episode #225

Jim Harshaw Jr Solo - Surviving the holidays

The holidays are my favorite time of year. They're also some of the most stressful weeks of the year. Some of it is the nature of the season-- there are parties to attend, people to shop for, money to spend (that you may not have), family drama to brace for, and a general sense of more to do. Combine that with increased junk food and alcohol intake and it's a recipe for disaster. Or at least an unpleasant season when the whole point is love, giving, and gratitude.

Quotes

"There's a difference between intentionally stepping off-course versus drifting off-course."

"Be happy now. Don't let stuff make you happy. Be grateful now."

"Ask yourself, 'What am I not doing that if I were, would help me feel less stressed, less anxious and less crappy about the holidays?'"

The Holiday Survival Guide 05:58

1. Productive Pause With Family/Spouse

Do a productive pause with your family or your spouse. Refer to [episode #112](#). A productive pause is a short period of focused reflection around specific questions that gives you clarity of action and peace of mind. It's **sitting down with your spouse/family and having the conversation of 'Where are we traveling to? Who is visiting us and when? What presents do we have to buy and for whom? What parties are on the calendar?'** It also includes things like your workout schedule.

2. Productive Pause With Yourself

Ask yourself questions like, **'Who do I have to shop for? When am I going to work out? How am I going to avoid family conflict?'** I have a client who identified a mantra he uses whenever he's going into a conversation, which is, **'I choose not to contend.'** Maybe you know someone who pushes your buttons, or they've got a different political viewpoint than you do, etc. Also, **ask yourself what's important now.** Do this before going into the chaos of the holidays.

3. Make gratitude a habit

At this time, there's so much business. Think about this; **do you have a car? A job? A family? A friend? A mall that you can go shopping at? Heat in your home? These are things you can be grateful for. Joy happens now.** Find joy in the small things. Put some change in change jar for the guy ringing the bell in front of the store. Give. Make gratitude a habit. Try to remember back to why this whole season is happening. There was a man named Jesus who lived on Earth and showed us how to live.

4. Think Moderation

It's so **easy to go overboard with things like food, alcohol, football buying more stuff than you need to,** etc. You can end up burning a lot of time and energy by being sloth-like and gluttonous. That stuff all catches up to you. **Be mindful.**

5. Sit Down But Not For Too Long

Take your downtime and celebrate. Sit around the table or at an event with friends, family, colleagues, community members, etc. **Sit and relax. BUT don't do it too long.** Get up and help clean up after a meal. Get your shopping done so you won't have that low-level anxiety that I know I feel right now. Sit but don't sit too long. Go work out, do something. You're not going to regret working out but you might regret watching another football game or A Christmas Story you've seen for the umpteenth number of time. Maybe watch it once, then get up and do something.

6. Saying Yes = Saying No

Every time you say yes to one thing, you're saying no to something else. If you're saying yes to a holiday party/event, you're saying no to working out, or shopping, or spending time with the family. Saying yes to one more drink means saying no to an additional 30 minutes of productivity tomorrow morning. You have to figure out the balance.

7. Don't 'Should' On Yourself

I should do this family tradition. I should buy a gift for the kids' bus driver.' **You can "should" yourself to death.** Some of these things are great, like buying gifts for people and being thoughtful. You have to do that at some level, but again, you have to figure out where that line is for you. **Draw the line and just be aware.** Helping yourself be aware goes back to the productive pause, journaling, meditation, working with a coach, having that conversation out loud with somebody.

8. Give Back

My wife had always gone to the homeless shelter every Thanksgiving when growing up to serve food. I have never done it. I did this with my boys for the first time together. They're 12 and 14. There was a lot of mumbling and groaning, but on the drive home I asked them, 'What did you think?' My 12-year-old says 'That was fun.' They had a conversation with several of the guys and it was awesome. **It was so much more rewarding than I could imagine.**

9. Check Your Vehicle

What my dad would do each holiday is he's going to pull up in the driveway and talk for a while. He's going to look at the car and he's going to tell me that the temperature's dropped and ask me if I have checked my tire pressure etc. He'll also tell me that at this time of the year, I should **have extra flashlights, gloves, jackets, etc. in the car.** Doing all this will save you some major headaches in case of an emergency.

10. Celebrate

It sounds obvious. What went well this year? What have you achieved? What did you get through? **Celebrating gives you something to look forward to next year. It's a reward.** Find the time to just be happy and to enjoy this season for what it is.

11. Plan To Make 2020 Your Best Year Yet

Set aside time for a personal retreat. **Do a year in review, as mentioned in [#175](#).** Plan for it. I usually do it early January but now I'm bumping it back to December and I've already set aside time on my calendar for me to do this. If you want help with this, set up a call with me. It's important to look at your year and see what you've achieved, look at the goals you've set a year ago, look at your journal entries, etc.

Free Clarity Call With Jim Harshaw

<https://jimharshawjr.com/apply>

Episodes Referred

Intentional Living From Loss of a Loved One: <https://jimharshawjr.com/178/>

Going Off-Course: <https://jimharshawjr.com/204/>

Productive Pause: <https://jimharshawjr.com/112>

A Year In Review: <http://jimharshawjr.com/175>