

Episode 80 – Fast Track to Business Growth with Michael Mapes

Jenn T Grace: So we are talking today with Michael Mapes, and I'm just going to go straight into having you kind of talk about what you do and what your background is, and then that will be clear as to why you are a guest on today's show.

Michael Mapes: Thank you so much for having me, I'm really thrilled to be here. And I was so excited when I came across your show in the podcast app, and I wanted to write you right away to say, "Oh you have to have me on," but I didn't. I actually listened, and absorbed, and I was so impressed by what you have so I'm thrilled to be here. I've actually been in business for myself since I was 19, so about twelve years now, which seems like a really long time. And I'm in a much different business now that I was in the beginning. I was very drawn to entrepreneurship for personal reasons. I experienced something of a personal tragedy in my life, and that really shifted my direction. In the beginning when I started, I was very focused on the intuitive and the spiritual side of things, really working with people one to one, helping them with their intuition, working with them on becoming more spiritual, becoming more connected. And I was kind of part time in my business, finishing up college, and really deciding which direction I wanted to go. After I finished college I found myself in a really depressing situation. I found myself graduating at the height of the economic recession, and I didn't really have a plan. I just sort of thought my business would take off, I was good at what I did, I cared a lot, I wasn't lazy, I was ambitious, I worked hard. And I actually found myself living in my mom's basement, for a month I had no job, and then when I got a job it was actually \$8.00 an hour telemarketing job selling postage meters to Canadians. I was actually so bad at the job I almost got fired, and the only reason I didn't is because they moved me to some customer service sort of department, and it was just really a low point for me. I didn't own a car, I didn't answer my phone because the only people who called me were creditors, and while I did amazing work with the clients that I did have, it was nothing approaching paying my bills, let alone something that I could thrive on. And as sad it was, as depressed as it was, as hard as it

was to not make any money, as hard as it was to feel disconnected from all of my friends and to feel angry about the direction I was going, that wasn't the worst part. The worst part was feeling like I had these gifts, I had this potential, and I wasn't actualizing that potential. And hard work and being smart weren't enough to get me to where I wanted to be. And one day I woke up and I thought the riskiest thing, the scariest thing I could do is continue to live this life. And I packed a bag, I had a few hundred dollars to my name, I walked upstairs to where my mom was and I said, "I am leaving, and quitting my job, and I'm going to figure out something. I'm going to figure out a different direction." You can imagine she was a little bit shocked and not pleased by this decision, but I called a taxi, and I got in that taxi, I took it to a friend's house and I said, "Please let me sleep on your couch, and if you do I will figure things out." My next step was the homeless shelter, I was not going home. And even though I was really scared in that moment, really afraid, I knew- I knew I had to figure this out. And I heard this voice inside of me that said, "Just take the next step. Just take the next step. Just take the next step." And that's what I started to do. And over that time grew my business, started an online program teaching intuition and spiritual development to different people. That business grew, what happened is people started asking me, "How do you get clients? How do you grow this business? How did you market?" And at first I just started telling them what I had done. And I sort of figured out, oh maybe I could charge for this. And from the time that I really started charging people for that advice, I shifted the direction of my business because I saw these amazing people; entrepreneurs, helpers, healers, therapists, coaches, consultants, people developing products. They were literally changing lives, they were literally saving the world, but they were broke, or they weren't charging enough. I tried to be a multiple six figure business. I had written an Amazon best-selling book, I had built a team, I had travelled all over talking about this. I mean my life really just changed so rapidly. And it's really cool that we're talking because I'm actually on the verge of my next evolution. So over the last three and a half years I've been running a coaching and consulting business, working with people, helping them build their business, helping them both make a lot of money, but also fulfill their social mission. And I'm actually on the verge of another evolution which is what we're probably going to talk about a little bit today, and my next evolution is I'm actually leaving my coaching business behind to start a company called

Graveyard Innovation. What I see is that innovation, the rapid nature of change both online and offline has really changed what it means to be a marketer, what it means to sell, what it means to build rapport with your clients, what it means to brand your business. And there's a whole lot of people talking about little pieces of all of these different trends, but this company is really going to help entrepreneurs innovate every single aspect of their business so they can win. So that no matter what changes you can recession proof your business, you can disruption proof your business because we're all feeling these changes, but many, many of us, myself included, I think have relied on some outdated marketing tactics for too long, and we have to update the framework, some of the core premises that were relied on from the market. So it's really cool to be here today because I'm transitioning from a coaching business to Graveyard Innovation where we'll help people innovate at every level, and where we'll actually handle a lot of the execution and implementation, because I really see that in today's world entrepreneurs have so much to manage, and yet they're not always able nor should they from a cross perspective hire a full department, or even a full employee. One of the things that I've been doing recently is just going to companies that are thinking about hiring full time marketing people, social media people, and really looking at do you need that? Or is there a model that we can implement within your current team that is updated, and would still allow you to get the results that you want, or to do it through contract work so that you don't have to take on the expense of a full employee. Sometimes it's the right decision, sometimes it's not. So we're in a new world, I think it is super exciting, but I also believe if people don't innovate, if people don't watch these trends, if people wait too long, there's a lot of people who are leaving themselves very, very vulnerable to disruption, and very, very vulnerable to having their business either be taken over, or just not be relevant.

Jenn T Grace: I think there's a book called 'Innovate or Die.' Is that accurate?

Michael Mapes: Yeah absolutely, and you know we used to have the Seth Godin thing, if you're not online you don't exist. And I would update that a little bit and say if you're not innovating you're irrelevant.

Jenn T Grace: Absolutely.

Michael Mapes: You might exist, but not in a way that's relevant, and clearly not in a way that's profitable.

Jenn T Grace: So you have certainly said a mouthful, and I feel like I have a hundred questions, and we have about 40 minutes to get through most of them. So I want to try to figure out where we can hit the most meaningful conversation for those listening. So since you've been listening to the podcast, you know that there's kind of a mix of LGBT business owners listening, and then allies who are looking to market themselves within the LGBT community. I think everything that you just said is relevant to anyone listening. One of the things I want to ask you about though is- and I know you briefly mentioned it, but taking the leap from an established coaching business, which you've done at a young age, and now going into something completely different, but bringing the skillsets that you had to that new endeavor. What made you say that you weren't going to continue coaching while you build up the second thing, but rather just say, "I know that this is the right decision for me, I am done with this business the way it stood, and now I'm going to move on to this next thing." Because I know there's two kinds of trains of thought around this. One of doing it kind of baby step and gradually, and the other of just being done with one thing and just jumping into the next thing. How did you make that decision?

Michael Mapes: You have to know yourself and know your personality. And I can't say that one way is right or one way is wrong. I have seen people do this from starting their first business to their fifth business both ways. And for me I tend to work better without a net, just having that urgency of let's get this going. And certainly not an easy decision. I actually cancelled one of my biggest events of the year, and I of course lost a little bit of money because we planned this months and months and months in advance, and that certainly was not an easy decision for me, it wasn't an easy decision for my team.

My personality is such that when I'm ready to do something, I'm ready to do it yesterday. In this case I certainly was initially leaning towards doing it more gradually because it seemed to make more sense. And I didn't fire all my clients, I'm transitioning them either into the new business, or into coaching with someone else. But what I felt with this, is I really started to step back, and I really started to see what's going on online. And when I really started to see just the way in which people were doubling down and pushing themselves so hard, I honestly felt Jenn just couldn't stay quiet about it. I couldn't be gradual about it. I felt such an urgency in myself, and I felt this feeling that was if you never make another dollar but you talk about this, okay. If you have to go work at Walmart, or Starbucks, or whatever, that would be worth it to get this message out because I'm so passionate about what I'm seeing, and the fact that people don't have to get left behind. Of course as we talk in the context a little bit more here about LGBT hue marketing, there's a way in which it's called old and new. There's a way in which innovation is everything. So for me it was really the personal decision of knowing my gifts, of knowing that right now is really the time, and feeling like if I were to wait over the next year, if I were to wait two, three years to get this going, I would be leaving people behind. I also think that I have now being sort of on the third evolution of my business, and really what I hope to be the second very successful evolution of my business, I'm much more confident in the steps that you have to go through to initially build a business. And what I think is important to remember is there are phases of business. That doesn't mean everyone is going to look exactly the same, but in this first phase you have to go raise money, whether that's getting clients, whether that's getting investors, whether that is getting a loan, whether that's getting commitment. You have to get money in the beginning of your business. And so I've really honed in on what are those first few steps? And it's much easier to do that now in thirty to sixty days, whereas the first time it took me years, the second time it took me many, many months, and this time it will take weeks. And so I think you get better at it as you go. My passion, what I've also realized, and I would just encourage people be honest with yourself about where your genius lies, and where your genius doesn't lie. I would put my coaching programs up against anyone, I truly think they stand among some of the best when it comes to consciousness and spirituality and marketing; so marketing in a way that is really ethical. But my gift, my highest kind of way to work is not teaching

and training. My highest way to work is building. I like to see the idea come into the world. And what I realized is there are so many people that are such much better suited to be the coaches, to be the teachers. And while I love what I've done, I realized that my actual genius- not just my competence, not just what I'm good at lies somewhere else. And I think if you keep answering that, and you allow other people on your team to come in and fill in where you're not a genius, you can accelerate your growth so quickly. So get yourself esteem from what you are truly exceptional at, not just what you are competent at.

Jenn T Grace: I agree on every single front, because I was just doing one of my group coaching programs last night. So we're recording this on a Wednesday, it will be released on a Thursday but we're recording on a Wednesday. It was Tuesday night and I was just having this exact conversation with them of focus on where you are naturally gifted, and just really hone in on that. Don't worry about all the other ancillary stuff that is not your strength, just focus solely on your strengths. And I know that when you do that and you outsource other things, then your business can grow exponentially.

Michael Mapes: I want to say one thing about that quickly, Jenn.

Jenn T Grace: Yeah, please.

Michael Mapes: Because I think especially for those listeners who are gay, or who are lesbian, or who are trans, or who are bisexual; I think that one of the things that we often experience in childhood is a gift and a challenge. We have something inside of us that often says a lot of what I see around me is not true because I'm seeing these models, or I'm being told this thing about what love is, and what relationships are that doesn't really match up with what's on the inside of us. And that can be very challenging obviously for all of the reasons that we know about, all the trauma and tragedy, or just the inner angst that we feel. One of the gifts of that I think is that for many, many gay people, it gives us a sense of- like we have an inner BS meter. Because we sort of can look around and go, 'Well

everything I'm being told is not really true.' And so it gives us an incredible core, and I think with what you're saying- but it can also cause us to become a little bit fragmented in how we approach things, or we can get very good at code switching. Very good at playing different roles based on the audience who's before us because we need often to do that to fit in, or for survival. But what you're saying about strength, I think is so important. If you focus on that alone, building that muscle, I truly believe- it's not that everything will be easy, but you will move through things with such a higher level of ease. Because have you ever watched a child? A child will naturally gravitate toward what he or she is good at. A child will naturally do more of the things that it likes to do, that it is good at, and less of things that it is bad at. The problem is- and that's evolution. That's why oak trees aren't zebras, they come here to be oak trees. And we come here to fulfill our potential, to do what we are naturally good at. We have this diverse ecosystem, but what happens is that impulse gets overridden so quickly into childhood. So it's like, "Oh Timmy don't play with dolls, that's what girls play with." Or, "Jenn why can't you be more like your sister and do your homework, and sit down, and be still, and stop bouncing around the room." Or, "Why can't you Michael, stop reading and go outside and play like the other kids." So what we are naturally designed to do is just to produce this diverse ecosystem of strengths and gifts, we override, and we want to be good little boys, and we want to be good little girls, and so we lose touch with what our strengths are, and we try to become the kind of- not great at anything, but sort of good at everything. And we really get stuck in confidence instead of genius. This is one of the main reasons we have so many issues in our education system right now, because we focus on getting everybody to a base level of competence, and we don't have a system that helps anybody really go deeper and wider with their gifts. So what I would say is especially for those small entrepreneurs, but even for grants and bigger organizations, drill down on what are you- not only what are you unique at, but what are you good at? What is the genius level thing that you do? And that will move you forward. But it takes some work because we have so overridden this, and often our strengths have become weaknesses to us. I was told, "You're lazy, you're flighty," because I had like fifteen majors in college, and I was always starting things and quitting things. But starting things and quitting things is essential to being a good entrepreneur. You need to know when to let something go. You

also need to know when to follow something through. The thing is nobody in my life knew to say, "Oh you're an entrepreneur, you're not an employee. You are a builder, you're not someone who sits back and absorbs, or sits in a cubicle." Nobody told that to me, so my strength had become a liability. And so sometimes what you think you're bad at, or what comes so natural to you is actually your strength, and is so needed.

Jenn T Grace: I completely, completely, completely agree. I think the other piece to this is it's all well and good- so for those listening who maybe they're a solopreneur right now, maybe they have one other person working for them, I think what happens is you recognize that your gift- like for me, I'm just the get shit done type of person. A client asks me for something, they know what's needed, I will get that shit done. No one knows how it happens, but it happens. And it's because I have- I can delegate to a team, and I can do it really effectively. I know that's something that I'm good at. There are plenty of people who don't manage teams well, and it's a matter of finding that balance within your own team. But the question is when you recognize what your gift is. So if I'm looking at it from a marketing standpoint, I am the strategist. I can lay out the strategy and build the team to get it done, whether it's my team or the client's team. The problem then is if I'm good at strategy, and I'm a generalist with everything else, then how does a business figure out who that next hire is? I think that next hire, whether it's the second in command, so some kind of admin person, or VA, that's usually one of the next things that people hire for. But how do people look for the offsets of their own- where their gaps are? Do you have any recommendations for people listening on how they would actually get to that place of recognizing, 'Okay I'm good at strategy, or I'm good at execution, but I can't see the vision.' Like how do people find their counterparts to really exponentially grow their businesses?

Michael Mapes: Absolutely, and I think that for anyone listening, Jenn and I had quite a long conversation before, and I'm sure we'll have many, many more. But I can say when you said you're good at strategy, I just want everybody to get that she really is. And you can tell by the way that she spoke about that question, by talking about

building things at multiple levels, by speaking you must have a team to execute and deploy this. What most people are good at- and we need both, and yet we have some blurriness here, and I'm really passionate about this. What most people are good at is much more tactical than strategic. And they use the word strategy for it, but it's not. Helping someone figure out how to do Facebook ads is a tactical thing in your business. I would say they're actually helping you do ads that you then put on Facebook rather than Facebook ads. And many, many people are more tactically focused. A business absolutely needs that, however one of the big things that I think is missing, and one of the things where I believe there needs to be a lot of innovation is in shifting from only tactical approaches to strategy; because you can't wake up with a goal of just, 'I'm going to win this day.' Because you can win a lot of days, and yet still lose the war. And you can see many, many examples of this even if you think of political campaigns where people will have many great days where they may win the press cycle of the day, but they don't ultimately emerge victorious. And you can see examples of this in sports where- I'm going to do the best I can to talk about sports here as a gay man. But where people may win many different moments of the game, or do things that are incredibly impressive and not emerge as the person who wins that game. So I just want to point out that what Jenn is saying is absolutely incredible, and I'm more and more convinced that if you- because again there is so much shifting, and none of it is a total difference, but it is a very rapid evolution. I'm more and more convinced that if you don't have someone that is stepping back that can kind of look at all of the interlocking pieces before they rush in and start saying, "Do this, do this, do this," I just think that kind of advice is going to be less valuable for a lot of people moving forward. So I just really like what you said there. But to answer your question around your next hire, this is something that I have screwed up so enormously. And the reason that I have screwed up at many different points in my business is because I got in the mindset of following what other people did. Because I didn't- like you said, I am not a good manager of teams, and so it took me a while to figure out that I am the creative force, I am the energy. I can bring the business in, I can create something out of virtually nothing, but when it comes to managing people and holding people accountable and making sure they're super invested, it's not my gift. So one of the things that I had to figure out was I didn't just need it to be the straight edge support, although I started there in

the beginning. What I needed was someone who could actually manage people, who had that gift to call them out when they needed to be called out, to motivate them because it just was not my skillset. So I think that it really goes back to again, just be willing to be honest with yourself. And that doesn't mean I didn't have to become better; I still had to grow, I was still the leader, and there are still things where the buck stops with me, so you have to grow. But I would say certainly learn from other people in terms of what's next, but also really think about your business, and think about your business model. Because about a year and a half into my business, when I hit the six figure mark, we were rapidly growing, rapidly accelerating, I had hired an administrative person that I promoted to my business manager, we then brought on two quarter time administrative people, and a sales person. And my thinking about this was sort of what I had seen other people do in their coaching businesses, and their model. And what happened was we quickly became overleveraged both financially and I became overleveraged because it was essentially still me that drove all of the lead generation. There was a way in which I did that, that nobody else could really do as effectively. And so I became very exhausted, and I really had to change things. What I sort of figured out was how am I going to leverage this business? Now as I move forward with Graveyard Innovation, I'm actually taking a very different approach where I'm less focused on getting a salesperson, or getting an administrative person. I do have assisted help, I should just say. But I'm much more focused on let's get account managers, where they're all invested in this business. And one of the things that I have learned for me, working for more of that solo entrepreneur with contract worker model, is it works better for me and I think for my personality, if you can have people that are truly committed to your vision, and then are incentivized based on sales. Or incentivized based on delivering some other kind of result. If you're going to work with people that aren't in an office, you need to build in a lot of ways to motivate them, to be disciplined, to motivate them to want to show up. So I would say know yourself, think about your business and your goals, and really think about your model. I hired people because I thought, 'This will pay off,' and it really didn't. So I would say hire people that can really produce revenue, or allow you to produce revenue very, very quickly. And just kind of think about what is that business model? How am I going to make money? How am I going to scale this? One of the things that coaches I think really have to

reconcile with- even coaches that are at the seven multiple seven figure mark, is that many of them created businesses that are so personality driven, it's hard for me to see the business really sustaining if they step away. And to leverage and scale in that model, you have so much money to hire these other coaches, and so much money to hire these other salespeople because the emotional impact of what a salesperson can do when you've built your brand around you, versus what you can do, is always less. So I think that it doesn't mean that it's wrong, I just think there's some ways that business model may need to be evolved or shifted a little bit. So I would say be willing to entertain something outside of conventional wisdom, even if you ultimately go with conventional wisdom. Because what I would have done looking back is I would have shifted my business model much earlier, instead of looking around and doing what other coaches were doing because it just- it's not that it didn't work for me, it worked, just not in the way that I wanted to live or run my business.

Jenn T Grace: So now on all of that. So talking about changing I guess the way that you're running your business. I know that you had mentioned when we started that you had written an Amazon bestselling book, which I would love for you to talk about for a couple of minutes, but also talked about programs and courses. Did that evolve? I guess when in the evolution of this business did that maybe 'ah-ha' moment of like, 'Oh wow if I just created this program, I can scale faster.' Or 'I can scale me,' which is always the challenge of any founder of any business, is scaling an individual person. So where- first if you can just share for a couple of minutes about your book, based on I work with a lot of authors. I'm just curious if you have any kind of piece of information that might be helpful for someone who's listening who's about to write a book. But then also that scaling via working with online programs.

Michael Mapes: One of the things I'm super passionate about is the idea that I have for anything that I want to do. Whether it's the idea for a new business, the idea for a book, or the idea for a program. One of the things right now, because you are such a plug in world, is there's this temptation to avoid the idea part of things, and to rush right in. What's ironic about this is we rush right in, but then we spend

all this time preparing, getting ready to make money, or getting ready to do the next thing. But preparing to do the next thing, and really getting a solid idea aren't the same. And I think one of the things that is so benefitted me is that I spent time in ideation; what is this business, where does it fit, why is it needed? What is this book, what is the gap that it is filling, why is it needed, how can I position it? I think the same thing is true of my programs, and my courses. So that as Einstein said there are no new ideas, there are many, many re-inventions, and many, many re-imaginings. And I think that if we would all just unplug a little bit; and when you do this it doesn't have to take months, and months, and months, and months, and months. But if we would all just spend a little bit more time making sure the idea was a bit stronger, I think people would have a lot more success. When I started this business, my goal was not just to have a business coaching business. My goal was to help those people who wanted to make great money and make a difference in the world be able to do that in a way that was really genuine and aligned to their value system. That was my goal because I saw some companies like Toms Shoes or Trader Joe's that were doing some really ethical and cool things; it wasn't the norm, it wasn't the scale that I thought it should be. So that was really my idea. And that idea helped me so much because I wasn't able to go to people and just say, "I can help you market, I can help you with money." I was able to go to people and say, "Here is this mission that I am on. And you are a piece of this, let's work together." So they were invested in both my idea as well as their self-interest. And this is the key innovation that I think business and so many of us who are entrepreneurs need to grapple with. It is not solely a self-interested proposition anymore when people buy. And so most marketing, you hear this, 'Focus on the results, focus on the transformation.' Yes that is very true, however you also have to focus on what's the bigger mission? What is the bigger thing that you're a part of when you do this? It's also that recession proofs your business. And so spend some time on your ideas. My book is called, 'The Conscious Entrepreneur's Guide to Creating Wealth,' and it's based on a series of what I call Wealth Alignment Principles which are I would say timeless wisdom put in the context of creating wealth, put in the context of growing a business. Whether you think of these as mindset shifts, or spiritual principles, or as I said timeless wisdom, that's what the book is all about. Because here's what I figured out. There is no outer playbook for success. Oprah did not follow the same path as Bill

Gates, did not follow the same path a Hillary Clinton, did not follow the same path as RuPaul, did not follow the same path as Barack Obama. You know there are many, many ways from an external point of view to become successful. Now that doesn't mean you don't have to learn a new system or a structure, but there's many different ways to do it. But there is a rule book when it comes to the inner game of success. If you read books of highly successful people, you will find that the shift that they have at the inside, the way in which they approach things, how they handle adversity, how they respond to challenge. All of these people have been knocked down. It took Edison 10,000 tries to create the light bulb. It's like what would have happened if he gave up at 9,999. Walt Disney declared bankruptcy many, many times. You will find that there absolutely is an inner play book for success. And when you focus on certain principles, that's really what needs to shift. And so that's really what my book is about. Why I decided to write the book, is because I felt that this real leap, this real merging between what do you do practically? And what do you start to work on, on the inside? Because anyone who's a business owner or entrepreneur knows on any given day you could be riding high, and then a challenge comes out of nowhere. And how do you handle that such that you stay in equilibrium? So for me, writing the book was really a way to bring this idea to more people in a less expensive and more accessible way, and that idea fit in with everything else that I had. I didn't start with the book, I had a full practice of private clients, I had a successful group coaching program, I had launched self-study courses in different partnerships with people, and then this was a way after having that revenue of money to say, 'Okay now how can I democratize this wisdom?' And I just want to say for people that I know that we can get so into, 'Am I going to do one-on-one work? Am I going to do group coaching? Am I going to do a product? Am I going to do a book?' And I write about this in the book, but the medium is not powerful. Too many people are actually diminishing themselves by the platforms they choose to use, and they're going, "I'm getting clients," I'm like, "Well how many clients are you not getting by doing this?" But the medium that you choose, the way that you choose to market is not powerful. The message that you choose, and then your gifts, and then based on that message and those gifts, choosing the medium is what makes it powerful. So when you're thinking about how do I set up your business, begin with the idea and then go, 'Well how would I love to deliver this?' I

knew that I had- I liked teaching groups, I liked working with people, there was an energy there. Other people it seems would ask a question that other people on the calls needed to hear, and there would be this synchronicity that kind of happened with no planning at all. And so for me that was something I wanted to do, it seemed like a party I would want to attend. And so I just began, I just started it. But every individual thing came from an idea, and a reason for existing. And I think if you don't have that, it's hard to really- you could sort of create a marketing plan, but it's hard to really I think get maximum results from it.

Jenn T Grace: So what would you say along the lines of what you were just talking about with your book. So in terms of maximizing a marketing plan. A book obviously is one very small piece of a much larger plan. So if a business is listening right now, and they don't necessarily have an actual concrete plan that they're following, what would you say might be a couple of things that they should be thinking about as they maybe- not build a plan, because I know especially for clients that I work with, building a marketing plan stresses them out. So I try not to do that. But there are low-hanging fruit opportunities for them to take advantage of that maybe something that they're already doing, they're just not really looking at it as like a marketing thing. Do you have any like maybe one or two things that you would say, "Focus on this," to at least get them started in the right direction?

Michael Mapes: Absolutely. And there does come a point- and I know that you know this, Jenn because you work with some amazing clients, and some incredibly large and potent companies. There does come a point where scary or not, we've got to sit down and do it. There just becomes a point where to get to that next level without a full plan, without a full strategy, it is not going to work. And I sort of think about this- I'll use a political example, but I think about this as the difference if you're running for like state-wide election versus if you're running for President. If you're running for state-wide election, you just kind of want to go out there, and do it, and meet voters, and you can win doing that. But when you're running for President and you have to split your resources among so many states, without a strategy there is no way to do it. And you can sort

of see this where you'll have certain candidates in the Presidential race, they'll win some tactical victories, they'll win some states. But they run out of time if they don't have that strategy to be able to overtake someone who does have a strategy. In most cases, there are always exceptions of course where something just works. But what I would say to anybody who is starting out, and just needs to get going, at that point having some big overall comprehensive strategy or plan, you don't need that. What you need to do is get into action, and you need to- I would say this is where coaching can be so powerful. It certainly was for me because people do the wrong thing, and I just have to be kind of blunt about that. If you are getting clients, building up that initial revenue base, the most important thing is not your website. The most important thing is not what's on social media. In fact until you get several clients, you don't even know what to put on those things really. So I would say you need someone, or you need to be able to quickly identify the highest value action. Now if you're in a service based thing like you're selling programs, products, eCourses, services; then the highest value action is getting people to pay you money. Whether that is \$100, \$1,000 or \$10,000, you need to have conversations with people one-on-one and get them to say yes to your idea. Because until then, you don't know if you are selling something that people want. I don't doubt that any of you are selling something that could change lives, or that's a value, but you also have to have something that people are responding to, and that people want. So the place that you want to begin is going out there and selling it. You don't need a business card to do that, you don't need a website, you really just need to be willing to talk to your idea about someone. Now if you're selling an app, or a product idea, or you're just a startup, that maybe investors that you're doing that with, or partners that you're doing that with. But the process is the same; you need to go pitch the idea to people. So I would say every single day get up into your highest value action. Because this gets hard when there's no clients and there's no revenue because you don't just get clients and then everything is okay. You have to build up by looking at your growth sales numbers over a number of weeks and months, a certain baseline because there's a delay between when money starts coming in, and when you really feel profitable. So I'll give you an example. How did I go to on track to hit six figures in six months, when so many other people struggled and haven't even hit six figures to this day? Well I set a standard for myself, which is every single week at a

minimum I will ask five ideal prospects to work with me. And at that time- at the beginning I started selling a \$300 coaching package, but pretty quickly it became a \$3,000 program for six months. And it was a weekly private coaching with me, so there was a ton of value in it. And people get the value of one-on-one work without you having to say much about it. So every week no matter what, I did not end on Friday until I had asked five people. And if I didn't do it Monday through Friday, I worked Saturday and Sunday. And there were no excuses. If a newsletter got delayed, if a blog post didn't go out, if something didn't get posted, if the infrastructure that I was building- I would let anything else get pushed back except for that, because I knew- I had a roller coaster right in my business, I knew if income wasn't steady, I would never be able to build a team because I couldn't promise that I could pay them, and I wouldn't feel right about that. I would never be able to get the money I needed to make the investments that were essential to growing quickly. And I would not feel within myself that I could create a group program. And there are people that are doing this, and I would challenge it a step back. How could I create a group coaching program telling people to do things that I didn't know if they worked, or if I hadn't done myself. That didn't seem right to me to create great marketing or great copy that was inauthentic, or that was essentially lying to people. And so that was my commitment; no matter what, I will do this. And I thought if I fail, if I succeed, either way it will be okay. But for one year, every single week I'm going to do this. So I think that people get so distracted. If you're in the beginning of your business and you don't have clients, you can't just work on a landing page for a week. You can't just work on getting a webinar scheduled. Those are your second priorities. Your first priority is get the receivables up, get the client base up, it's going to give you confidence, and then you can not only get referrals from that, but you can ask people and hear from people what they like. Because how you have things arranged in your mind, and how people actually need them arranged, are I would say almost always very, very different. So get focused on that high value action. And here's why people don't do this; it's scary. I had such an intense fear of rejection from being gay, from being bullied, from an emotionally abusive father, and all of these things that I had lived through. So picking up the phone to me and asking someone to pay me, I mean I would almost rather die than do that. But when I got coaching, high level coaching, I said I will listen to this woman no matter what, because she has

done something, I have not done- my best thinking didn't work, my plan didn't work, it didn't get me there. So I had to come to terms with that, I had to go in the bathroom and look in the mirror to go, 'Your way didn't work. Are you willing to try something else?' And when she told me get on the phone, ask people to pay you, set up these meetings. And again, I wasn't calling through the phone book, these people requested conversation with me, or I asked them if they would want to have a conversation with me. I did that, and so I would literally almost be in tears, and then I would center myself, and pick up the phone and make the call. And it was really hard in the beginning, but then I would do it again, and again, and again, and again, and again. If you haven't exercised in ten years, and you go to a yoga class, it's going to be hard. You're going to be panting and your muscles are going to hurt, you may want to throw up, but that's not a sign it's not working, that's a sign it is. If you want to receive more, you have to be able to hold more, you have to become more. And so you have to transform all of the inner stuff that's actually stopping you. And I just want to say that you have to identify the difference between a stretch- and remember, just think of exercise. A stretch can hurt sometimes as you're growing, and in actual pain. You don't want to overextend yourself. Like if something's just truly not you, that's a different story. But most people, it's we don't know what's authentic to us because we're not coming from a high enough level of awareness to know. And as I did that, I was this person who thought success doesn't happen for people like me, it doesn't happen for people that grew up poor, it doesn't happen for people that have this kind of a background, it doesn't happen for gay people, it just doesn't happen for people like me. What I found by doing this, the things that I thought I could never do, ask people to pay me and raise my rates again, and again, and again, and again, and again. And speak on stages, and all of this stuff that I thought I could never do, I learned something about myself. What I had been told had been a lie. I wasn't a victim, I was so powerful, I was so creative, I was so resourceful, I could handle anything. I wasn't going to fall apart and die if somebody said something mean to me. I'd already lived through that. I wasn't going to break if somebody said, "No, I'm not going to buy this." And what happened was people were grateful. They loved hearing from me. Even if they didn't become a client, they sent me referrals, or they became a client three months- because I followed up, and I followed up again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and I let them know, "You may not

think you need this right now. You may not care about me right now, but I care about you. And I'm not going to stop working for you." And so I kept following up and connecting, and I just had a conversation with myself and a conversation with these people. So usually whatever you are the most afraid of, whatever is freaking you out the most, is what you need to run toward. And instead we run to our comfort zone. And as one of my mentors, Derek Rydall said to me, "Michael most of us would jump in front of a moving train to save a loved one. But we wouldn't get out of our comfort zone to save ourselves." And what I had to do was get very uncomfortable; that was hard in the beginning, but I had a good cry, and then I centered myself for the call, and then I had a good cry. It's like you freak out, and then do what you need to do, and then freak out, and you will start to build these muscles. Because remember, if you're not willing to go get the clients, I am. If you're not willing to go get the clients, somebody else is willing to go get them. So look at- we have this whole thing, the 99% and the 1%. But what is the 1% doing that you haven't been willing to do? And that's what I had to look at. So we know it's like, what is it less than 2% or 3% of businesses make over \$250,000 a year?

Jenn T Grace: It's less than 3%? Wow, jeez.

Michael Mapes: I think so, yeah. So what does that tell you? Well that tells you that you have to do things differently than 97% of people. But what are people doing? They're looking around at the Internet going, "Other people are doing this." So you're probably actually modelling people that aren't successful, which is a problem. Or you're modelling successful people, but you don't understand the reason, the sequencing which is so important in business, the timing of why they're doing certain things. So a lot of times what are happening is people are in phase one of business, but they're implementing phase two, three or four strategies. And that's disastrous and it really diminishes your ability to elevate yourself and cultivate a sense of influence over the long term.

Jenn T Grace: Wow, I feel like you have said more in this interview than we could have probably done in twenty interviews. So I appreciate just how

robust, and how tactical in some instances your information is, but then also such high level information as well for people listening. I know that we are already pretty much at our time, but I want to make sure that those listening know exactly how to find you. So can you please just share how they would go about doing that?

Michael Mapes:

Yeah, absolutely. So just thank you for having me, Jenn. And as I said to you privately, and I just want to repeat here, I spend a lot of time cultivating, curating, aggregating, reading, absorbing information every week. And so for something to stand out to me, for me to want to go back to something, it really has to stand out. And I just think for all of your listeners, what Jenn is doing is needed. To me it really stands above, and it really stands out. So I mean share it, like it, review it. She didn't pay me to say this, I'm not a sponsor, we don't have some kind of influence or marketing campaign. I just really believe it because it really stands out to me as something that's so useful. As far as connecting with me, there's just a couple quick things that you could do. If you want to get on my list, which is all about resources right now, there's not a lot of pitching or selling, especially given my new direction of who I'm going to be working with. But if you want to get on there, and kind of get information about what's changing, what are these trends, how can you evolve? Whether you're a marketer yourself, or whether you're an entrepreneur, I think that this information is so cutting edge, and while some of it's out there, I haven't seen anyone bringing it together. So you can go to www.Shift.MichaelMaves.org. And that will give you access to my list which is blogs, and articles, and resources, and videos, and podcasts that are all about innovating, and building on what we know, but then also bringing in the new. So that's one place that you can start if you want me to be in your inbox, and if you give me that opportunity, I will work very, very hard to earn my place there, to earn my right to be in your inbox because I know how crowded that gets. However, if you don't want to get on my list you can go to our blog, which The Marketing is Broken Blog, to get a lot of resources and articles, read more about me, and see if there's something there that might be of value. And that's just www.MarketingIsBroken.com.

Jenn T Grace: Excellent. Well thank you so much for all of your wisdom today. I know my audience is going to appreciate it, and I have no doubt the two of us will continue our conversations.

Michael Mapes: Thank you so much, Jenn.