



Freedom Practice Podcast

Episode 1: Overview

Welcome to the Freedom Practice revised podcast. This is Craig Hersch, we're revising the whole format of this podcast, which is intended for estate planning attorneys, particularly those in smaller boutique firms, although we do have in my consulting group, several attorneys from large firms. What I'm here to help you with is practice development, which is a fairly broad term, you know, what is practice development? Is it getting clients? No, not really, the way I look at practice development is there is how I named the Freedom Practice.

Essentially, what practice development is, is gaining freedoms, gaining freedoms for yourself, and for your team. Freedoms of time, money, relationship and purpose. Now, those of you who are familiar with the Strategic Coach and Dan Sullivan, you'll know where that came from. I am a Strategic Coach, participant, and have been so for many years, but what I've done with what I've learned in that entrepreneurial program, is how to apply various concepts to an estate planning, practice and make that practice more successful, so that you as the leader of that practice can be happier, your team can be happier, your clients can be happier.

Let me take you back to a place when I wasn't so happy. This was several years ago. I was about 15 years into my practice. I was in my early 40's, married, I'm still married, of course, my wife Patti has put up with me for more than 30 years, and we have three daughters who were at the time, very young. I was unhappy because I was gaining weight. I wasn't exercising as much as I'd like to. I wasn't participating a lot of the fun things that I like to do because I was working. In particular, I was drafting estate planning documents. I was spending all hours of the day and night drafting estate planning documents, and I was complaining to one of my colleagues.

His name is Alan Gasman, you may know of him. He's a very prolific writer, and he's a very smart attorney that practices in Clearwater, which is about two hours north of where I practice in Fort Myers and Naples, Florida.

While I was complaining about to Alan, I said, "Alan, if these clients would only leave me alone, I could get their work done." I was considering, I was really seriously considering quitting the practice of law. I knew I could make good money some other way. I was just working too hard. I was missing out on my kids' activities, and I'd come home for dinner late and I'd be grumpy. Alan, listened to me complain and said, "listen, try this Strategic Coach program," and I said, "Oh, that's a bunch of Kumbaya, you hold hands, you're saying and then you go back to your office? And everything's the same." He goes, "No, Craig, before you throw away what you've spent years developing, why don't you try this program?"

So, I called them up, and it was very expensive. I mean, this was back in 2004 or 2005, you know, \$10-\$12,000, for four sessions for quarter annual sessions. I complained to Alan, about that, and he said, "just spend the money and go do it."

So here I am at my first Strategic Coach, session, and Dan Sullivan is actually leading it, he is the Strategic Coach. They have a lot of associate coaches, but he is the Strategic Coach. Dan said, Craig, why are you



here? Introduce yourself to the group and tell us why you're here; and I told this story, I complained that if the clients would only leave me alone, I could get their documents done, and I'm working too hard, and working too long, and all of that. Dan, patiently listened to me, and then he asked me a very thoughtful question, which was this: He said, "Craig, why are you spending all of your time working on the commodity of your practice?" "The commodity" I answered, "it's not a commodity." You know, the only differentiating factor in a commodity is price. You know, a bushel of corn, a barrel of oil.

I said, "No, no, you know, the documents are the most important thing that I do," and then Sullivan asked me a follow up question, which was my epiphany. It was my turning point. It was the it was the moment that changed the arc of my career, and really, of my life, and what Sullivan asked me was this: He says, "do your clients really understand the difference between your documents, and those of the attorney down the street."

Now this is in the days before Legal Zoom and Rocket Lawyer, but he could have honestly, asked me that now. Do your clients really understand the difference between your documents and those of Rocket Lawyer Legal Zoom, or the guy down the street? At first, I resisted, and I argued, but then I realized that he's right. Now, documents are important, and you want to have very good well thought out estate plans for your clients. But understand this, they don't care what your documents say, so long as it achieves their goals.

Now, what is it that they really want from you? What they really want from you, is your wisdom is your experience is your wisdom; is your knowledge of working with folks like them over all these years, and what should they do? These are very successful people who have earned a lot of money and saved a lot of money and invested, created businesses have commercial real estate interests, on and on and on.

But they want your wisdom, and if you're in the backroom of your office, constantly writing documents, and not attending to what they really want from you: your wisdom; then you're not going to be successful.

What I did from that point forward was changed my practice, I changed the way that I practice, I changed how I practice, I changed how I hire people, create teams, I changed the technology that we've used and always have used. We change everything constantly as the world changes around us. That's what this podcast is about. It's about practice development from that angle, where everyone is working in their highest and best ability, using their unique capabilities, providing clients the highest value, so that the clients will pay you a premium. Because if you're not in that world; if all you're doing is selling a document, then you're always going to be getting from your client, "Well, why is it so expensive? I don't understand." So that's what this Freedom Practice is all about. That's what this podcast will be all about, and I hope that you stay tuned for future podcasts where we'll discuss all sorts of things. Building a team, building a front stage and backstage using technology to attract prospects, and so forth.

I hope you got a little bit out of my story today. Thank you very much for spending your time with me. If you found today's information valuable, please do subscribe to the Freedom Practice Podcast, and you can also find us on the web at for freedom, practice calm. That's the number four (4) followed by freedom practice. So, it's 4freedompractice.com. Until next time, this is Craig Hersch, and I look forward to speaking to you again soon.