

Smart Ass Success Teleseminar

Week 3 – Creating an Awesome Plan that Will Get You Results (That You Will Actually Follow!)

With Robert Bradford (www.SimplifiedStrategy.com)

Interviewer: Avish Parashar (www.MotivationalSmartAss.com)

Avish: Welcome everyone, you are on the Smartass Success Tele-Seminar series and this is week three and we are here with Robert Bradford who is going to be talking to us about how to create an awesome plan that will get you results and one that you will actually follow. So Robert welcome to that call, thank you very much for being with us.

Robert: Well thank you for having me, it is an honor.

Avish: Well I... I was honored when you said yes when I asked you to do this. So Robert, what I like you to do right at the start just in case people will have to leave early for whatever reason. I want to be sure that they know how to find you. So why don't you just let people know...If they want to get information about you and what you do and some of the books and things that you have, where can they go?

Robert: I would go to www.simplifiedstrategy.com and you can find all kinds of tools and things that people can read at their leisure and also of course contact information from me out that direction.

Avish: Well excellent, that simplifies strategy.

Robert: simplifiedstrategy.com, yeah.

Avish: simplifiedstrategy.com, which segment that might see the...kind of overview of you we're going to talk about, Robert is the expert on strategic planning, has the number one best selling book on Amazon, on the topic, works on lots of companies and we're going to get, I'm going to get Robert tell you a little about himself in a moment. But first --just kind of frame this call. Robert is an expert on helping companies, big and small business come up with strategic plans to get them where they want to go and get the competition. And so we're going to use his knowledge to show us as individuals whether it's for business or for other things how we can apply those principles to make great plans. And Robert, I don't know how much you literally read it in advanced, but the overall theme of this Tele-Seminar series is to help people figure out what they want, then help them divide the plan to get it, and then stay on track as they go through it. So that's what we're going to be working thru.

Now Robert works a lot with businesses, so he's answers may come towards a business event. But we'll make sure that I ask questions to help those of you listening who

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maybe are more interested in career changes or even personal goals. So Robert; before we go into your story and you know; you tell us how often you are which we all want know. I want to start with a little bit of the content first. So in your experience doing strategic planning work with the companies and even of things you've seen individuals do, let's start with stupidity. What are the stupid things you see people and organizations do when it comes to making their plans?

Robert: I think there are two colossal things that I see so often that they eclipse everything else. The first colossal things is that people tackle things that are just too big for them. And by that I don't mean they're tackling a big market or a big issue it's just they're trying too big too fast. And so it's unusual from the world of speakers to see people with form you know; Robert Bradford Global Incorporated headquarters, well you know; the headquarters is my kitchen table, and that's not just brief chance, it's not just to show that they're doing it but it's also that they're trying to behave as I speak of that type of that person or business. And the realities, you need to match what you're doing to your resources? What you're bringing to your table? What kind of reputation you have? What kind of resources you have? What kind of knowledge and expertise you bring? And the market will try and force you down, but if you try and force yourself up harder then you should go...you're just setting yourself up for her. Because there are people with far more resources out there to compete with you for the big stuff. And it's not that you can't get there but you need a plan for it.

The second thing that people do is their plans that they don't spend enough time thinking about scheduling and following through law and execution. To me execution is the weak point when, you're talking about individual or companies. It's very easy to say these are the things I'm going to do in my life, it's to say these are the things I'm going to do next year and it's even to say these are the things I'm going to do today. And yet all those things need to be put together and acted upon in order for a plan to come to foolish.

Avish: Okay. God, well those are...you got bits of advice; let me ask you a little follow up on that. So when you say too big too fast and, you know, in our industry, the speaking industry, we come from an area where people are constantly preaching this idea of big thinking, dreaming big, setting huge goal, visualizing your objectives and as supposed to motivate you. So where did that, I mean, you completely disagree with that or be -- how does that balance with what you're saying about not trying to be too big too fast.

Robert: I think it's fine to think the important thing in thinking big is to understand that there are steps along the way. You can certainly give me examples of people who've skipped those steps but I can give you for every example you give me and the first is skip those steps. I can give you ten and then people who've though they could skip those steps and then ended up in disaster. So I've already known far too many people whose in the speaking business in particular who got into the speaking business thinking big and thought they could skipped steps and ended getting out of this business because they just didn't want to take the steps that they have to take. And there is no skipping, that

you know; if you want a ten million dollar business, you got to start making sure you can make it with the one million dollar business, you know; as a speaker, you want to start and making sure you can do a hundred thousand business and that's thinking big, but if you don't have the basics that make it work at a hundred thousand dollars, it's hard to see why you would feel to make it work for a million or ten.

Avish: Alright, and I guess if we have someone who maybe looking at embarking on a new career, you don't start at CEO right? You...

Robert: Exactly.

Avish: Possible but you have to take those steps to get there.

Robert: Yeah I mean I might decide I want to go in to politics, but I wouldn't announce I was running for President of the United States. That would be the stupidest thing ever. You know, there's steps to take from point A to point B and thinking big is really about laying that target out ahead of you. Saying at some point in the future, I'd like to say "hey...you know; in five years or ten years or whatever it is, I want to reach this point and then your plan is to take you to the intermediate steps and you need to do the hard work that it takes, give you out to intermediate steps paying and then fee and then see and most people, you know; they just want to focus on Z and the reality is you can't get there by skipping over the interview of steps. The people who are most successful are the ones...you know what? In the next six months, if I do X Y and Z, this little thing are going to happen and also if I say at anyone at this point, so I'm not going to stop, I'm going to have a plan B that I'll learn from that failure and I'll keep moving forward

Avish: Right, and for those listening, last week we with Bill O. Hamlin and means get some strategy as well on when those steps back happen, how do you kind of pick yourself up? So I think that's hugely important. Oh great, I think we both know who...in both the speaking industry and a lot of other areas who really try to jump way ahead, it's like actually...not that I'm trying to took my own horn. But when I first got out of college I've thought about going into acting as a career because I do a lot of acting, I like performing, wanted to be on Saturday Night Live. But I realized I had no desire to beat the streets, worked as a waiter, go to audition after audition and I, would love to be an actor, I just don't to go to the process of becoming an actor. And I think that's kind of what you're talking about right? You have to be willing to go through the steps to get that dream you want.

Robert: Yeah absolutely and I mean, you know; as a speaker, the one thing that a lot of people don't want to do is they don't want to do the writing, it takes to have good marketing, they don't want to do the speaking practice that it take to actually did good in front of an audience before you and get paid. They don't want to make the sacrifices because it takes to have a real expertise that people want to pay for, instead of just garbage you made up. Everybody would love to have a career where you make huge amounts of money with absolutely no effort, no preparation, no sacrifice. And the problem is

because everybody wants that, the minute one job opening like that pops up, there's a kind of competition for it and you just have to be incredibly rough. And that's why...you know actors have to beat the streets, for the sacrifice involve to do it once you're there if you're any good pretty well, it's a fun job but everybody wants that job so you have to make sacrifices to get on the first role on at it .

Avish: And would you say that that's pretty true across the board whether you're trying a multi-million dollar business or whether you just want to loose twenty pounds, that principle's pretty much the same that people would do succeed and take those steps and the one's who don't?

Robert: Sure...I mean if it takes loosing weight and absolutely gets me up, everybody knows how to loose weight you know? If I want to -- I'll tell you the secret to loosing weight, the secret to loose weight is eat right and exercise and you have to do it, you have to do it with discipline. That's the secret, it's not, you know, there is no secret.

Avish: (laughs) there is the secret.

Robert: You have to do it, and that's -- you know that's sort of my second point of execution is it's one thing to have plan, it's another thing entirely to have an executable plan, if I could sit down and say my objectives this year is to rule the world, guess what, I can't create an executable plan for that, that involves a lot of violence, you know I'm not in to that.

Avish: (laughs) Yeah we're going to dig in to that because the subtitle or the kind to be attend them to the title of this program was not just creating an awesome plan but actually want you to follow because like you said, it's easy to make a great plan. Coming to a fact that you walk into a bookstore or going to the internet finding someone else's plan but it only matters if you follow it. So in a bit we're going to be talking about that. Let me take a pause here now. You've given us already a couple of great ideas. Let's pause a bit and just people got a sense of who you are, why don't you tell us a little bit about kind of what you do and how you got there, just a quick kind of high level version of it.

Robert: It's not a lot interesting like you've said, I -- you know:

Avish: Not to you because you lived it...

Robert: I've been doing this for about twenty five years. I started out in Wall Street and when I left Wall Street, my father had started a small seminar business and I bought that company started building it into a consulting firm right from the strength of the seminars, because we're getting in front of a lot of people and they kept asking. It's all strategy, it's all we're working. So people asking us for a strategic planning and so I built that up and now I have a number of professionals who are all former CEO's who do this, they present seminars for me and they also do consulting for a client and we work all over the world with companies with different sizes. I've worked yesterday with

company that has less than ten million dollars in sales or did when I started working with them and a week before I was working with a multi-national company that has over twelve billion dollars. So its huge range but the problems that I address is to saying how...with everybody wants to answer three basic questions: where are we, where do we want to go and how are we going to get there. That's the planning problem.

Avish: Okay, well awesome. That kind of leads me to a question. Let's get back to in a bit here. Because you're the expert, you know; you're like the leading expert in simplified strategic planning, but some people don't know what that is, is that all strategic planning is this where you are, where you want to go and how are you going to get there?

Robert: Yeah it's really setting your course or direction. In the company, it's what direction is the company going and where we going to get bigger, where are going to get smaller, what choices are we going to be. You know; for Apple, the choice to make a telephone, the choice to making an iPod, the choice to make the iPod is well strategic choice that they've made, it answers the question "what do we do?" you can also answer the question "for whom do we do it?" that maybe a strategic question for some people. And then the third question is "how are we going to be or better yet avoid competition" To me if it's address as those three questions or anyone of them, it's probably strategic question.

Avish: Okay, well got it, and...so goal in all about this is figuring out what you want, how to get and for those who don't know you Robert, which I'm assuming -- maybe you've talked to people from all over, you are one of...you know; the most genuinely happy people that I know, at least when I interact with you, maybe it's my influence on you but you know; you just seem like you just really enjoy what you do and enjoy life basically and your work. So when it comes to planning and with some of these strategic decisions, A. Am I correct in that assessment of you and B. How much of that you think related to doing what you love and having a plan that you're able to follow and implement to get your results?

Robert: Well there's no question that that strategy, any body individual can follow, is to do work very well, this is something Steve Jobs said just before he died, he did mention an address to Stanford. So one piece of advice I can give anyone is do something you love and find a way to make it valuable to people and get better and better out of it all the time. I think about strategy all the time, I do strategy also. I am never going to get bored with my work.

I wake up in the morning sometimes and I just have to pinch myself, when I was in, you know, I was in Dubai. I brought the wrong trousers for one of my suit that I was going to wear for a speech. When I told my client, he sent a guy over to take measure and on that afternoon there was two suits in my hotel room and I just had to pinch myself. You know it's like, you get treated like a rock star and it's wonderful.

But that's the result of loving my work. Because I love my work, I write about it all the time and I read all about it all the time, I talked about it with my friends. You know even though I'm talking to you, quite often we've talked about strategy because that's, you know, that's something I loved to do, we also talked about comedy because that's something you love to do. And you know; when it just infuses, every element of your thinking, you get so good at it that an amateur can't hold the candle. So I think that's really important, and for individuals in particular, if you're deeply into something, you can find someone who values, you got, I think you got the magic formula right there for having a great life and probably very successful.

Avish: I like it, find something you love to do and mythical valuables for others. So what about other than...a second piece to that, because there's a lot of people who have a goal, something that they really love to do and they love doing it like -- if you're using me for example like ten years ago, I loved improv comedy. I mean I still love it but back then that was my business was building an improv group and I love doing that. The challenge is I didn't particularly love any of the things I needed to do to build that improv business, and so how, so when we call it making a plan, to me a lot of it was in the reward, making of and implementing the plan is the kind of thing that gets you the rewards. So where does doing what you love, fitting in how you make your plans, if that makes sense.

Robert: There are a couple of things involved in there that are really, really important, and sometimes we don't, we really hate doing the things that are necessary could make the business that is obvious to us. But the out steps I think for you building the improv troupe, that's a pretty good example and just think that you really didn't want to do that and I think that's part of why you gravitate in the speaking, was that speaking wasn't easier route to make money, still doing improv, I love improv too as you know and I find speaking is a great place to really apply in home those skills and it's not for saying playing a ball game in front of a drunk audience that I make of, but when I am speaking to most audiences, I get so interactive with the audience that I have to use improv skills to make the program work, and to make it enjoyable for everybody in the audience. So it's just a way of applying these skills for me. You know if I get paid directly for just doing improv all the time instead of doing strategic planning, yeah I might consider that and it's pretty...pretty fun stuff. But I grew up something else that I like to do, something else that I'm really good at, to the table and that makes it a lot easier.

Avish: Okay we're going to talk a little bit more about this with you in a moment when we get to the section on strengths but before that how do you -- what makes a good plan and how do you create one, you know for some people who are listening to this or when thinking about their own life or their own business. They really shy away from the concept of planning because they feel it's too rigid, it doesn't give them freedom. What is your kind of approach to that, planning -- I mean we both like improv comedy as performance. So what is your idea about having a good plan versus having a freedom and flexibility to just go with flow?

Robert: Well, you know, I think improv is a really good example of those because when you talk about during improv comedy, people think “oh you’re just making it up on the spot, and that’s it. You know; it’s the skill that you’re having and they don’t and to some extent that’s true. You’re far more skilled in improv than I am and some of that comes from practice, but a lot of it also comes from understanding that there’s a process, there are rules, there are some very simple rules that are pretty easy to teach people right out of the box. Like how to do “yes and,” how to give the gift of progressing your story to the other people in your troupe.

Those are things you can learn and that’s like having a plan. You’ve got these tools and it’s not that the tools tell you—you can’t do what you want to do. But the tools are going to tell you some things are going to work and some things aren’t going to work. And that’s what a plan should be it should not be a straight jacket. It should be a tool that helps you make the right choices every day.

Avish: Okay. That’s a good way of looking at it. And when it comes to planning, you know, some before about five and ten year old plans. And I know a lot of companies have that. Um, what’s a good time horizon for your plan because sometimes it seems like a plan you make today and in two months will be completely invalidated by changing, you know, conditions in the environment of the market and your own life. So, what’s a—when people are looking and making their plans, what’s a good time horizon they should be focusing on?

Robert: I have four basic time horizons that I work with. The first, I don’t spend a lot of time on it but I want to make sure my—my planning is consistent with that’s—I call the science fiction time horizon. It’s fifteen years from now and if you want to think about how big a change that is—think about fifteen years ago, you know, in nineteen ninety-six. You know, there were still people debating about whether the internet was really going to be a big thing. And, you know, you—the idea of a cell phone or a camera was still very strange to people, in 1996. So, that means there are a lot of their products that existed, there’s a rule that exists today that people were only dreaming of. That and the same thing will happen fifteen years from now. So, that’s one time horizon. And you want everything to be consistent with that.

The second time horizon is the foreseeable future which promotes people probably three to five years. Where you can—you can pretty much project the way things are going to work. And I want most of my directional thinking to be both where I am in. The third time horizon is the next twelve months. I like most of my—my execution thinking. What am I going to do? My—what most people think that as their plan should be done on that basis, in case you can manage to—you can—you can lay out milestones and you can get from and you can sit down and you know, you can say, “Yeah, I did—I did work and willing to do this.”

And then the third, or the fourth time horizon, is the instance change—in the moment and strategic planning should also drive you to something. I just had a course on

Strategic Teaching, you should be thinking strategically, you know, in the moment when opportunities to think strategically come up. So, when someone, you know, for example this year, you know someone called me up and said, “Listen I’ve got this deal would you like to go to the program in Malaysia.” You know, my strategic business, yes that gets with my strategy right now. And I’ve been asked to do these programs over and over again for the past two years. And I said, no. Because this year, and I said, yes. And very glad I did.

Avish: Okay. And the time horizon is going to apply whether you’re working with the multi-billion dollar corporation? Or would you suggest that even an individual look at this kind of different time lines when their making their plans?

Robert: Absolutely. I think, I think, for the individual you don’t—you don’t have to spend as much time on it. You need to match your resources. But you should spend a few ends thinking about the fifteen years. You spend a lot of your time thinking about the five years. You should probably spend it two hours thinking about it, “Okay, what am I going to do this year?” And I think you should also ask yourself as you’re doing those thought processes. How do I need to adapt my daily thinking in the moment? To make sure that I make choices that match up with the strategies I have. Because things are going to change in the moment, I mean, you need those—you need those kind of yes and rules in the moment to make the strategic choices because you’re going to have pop up fly balls, you know, you swing it at or not?

Avish: Uhm, uhm. Cool. Well, that’s great. So, we have our time horizon now. We kind a have an objective in mind which is one of things work on the left to calls. So, we know where we more or less want to get to and we’ve gone through our time horizons, I say. So, now, we’re going to start putting our plan together which—I mean, obviously steps are part of it. So, what are the elements that make for a really great implement able plan?

Robert: Numbers of things. First of all, an implement able plan is going to be one that has some specifics things you’re going to do in the short term. I think for most people in the coming year. So, you want to have a set of I would call them the objectives. The second thing that’s really important is that those objectives need to be stated in a way that you know, a lot of people referred to as SMART. And SMART means specific, measurable, achievable, it’s a result and it is time related. Those last two items, the result and it’s a critical one. A lot of people don’t—don’t do well and they—part of it because they don’t remember you. You don’t plan an action, you plan what you want to achieve this year. So, I don’t plan or write a bunch of articles and submit them to publishers. I plan that I want to have a bunch of articles, published in the business magazine this year for instance. And then the time related means you have to put a deadline on it. You have to say by such and such a point in time. Because without that it’s just an idea, it’s just a something you want to do.

The third thing that you want to do is, you want to have very specific actions identified, really an action plan that will support in achieving that result. And you know, I simplify strategic plan but I detail how to do that. That's a process that's useful for individuals and I've used it for individuals as well as companies.

And the last thing, well actually, there are two things. One is you want to make sure that you paid for the particular attention to the resources required—money, but for most people time. How much time we have to spend to do these things?

And then finally you want to monitor that. You want to set yourself a dates for each of the actions you're going to do and your action plan. And then you want to monitor and make sure that you're on track with that. So, sit down and look at it. And an hour looking at your action plans. You're every long term or even every week or two, just to make sure that you're on track and you're not falling behind and if you do start falling behind, you really need to make some adjustments. So, if you do all those things you're going to accomplish a lot more than most people do.

Avish: Okay, well. Let me ask you. Let's say—this is going to be a weird sort of question but, you know, there are going to be people listening who like that. Okay, so those five steps are great. But then, they're going to look at their objective and they're going to feel clueless as to what steps they should take to get there.

Robert: Right.

Avish: So, how about starting that process and saying. Okay, here's—here's where, you know, what I need you to do first and what not.

Robert: Well, you know, the best strategic objectives whether it's for individual or company. Always going to be things you don't know how to do. And I always tell people, you need to accept that sometimes, you have to have agents that a few steps in the beginning of the action plan—we're just figuring out how to do what you need to do and accept that you may need to rewrite the action plan. It's the result of what you learn, you know, part of this process is a learning process. It's an education and how we learn about these things is we research them, we try things, one of its trial and error. So that, you know, looking at what the best, you know, the experts—people have done similar things before they have done. There are a lot of different ways to do this. But they are, you know, the key thing is when you write the action plan make sure that you understand it. If you don't know how to do it, that's the first set of exception you need to really take into account. And write down the steps, you think you need to do and understand that rewriting the action plan okay, down the road.

Avish: Okay, I'm going to ask you repeat something because you kind of said it quickly but I think it—it may have a lot of impact. You said the best—you tell people the best objectives are things they don't know how to do already?

Robert: The most—the best strategic objectives are things you don't know how to do. Yeah, because if you already know how to do it, you know,--what's that?

Avish: I was about to say, you explain—what do you mean by that why that's important?

Robert: Well, I give you an example of each. I mean, you know how to do impromptu comedy already; you don't need an action plan for that. An action plan for that would be boring and have no effect on your life. But, do you know how to sell that to a market that's going to pay you a lot of money for, well, we've done a lot of talking about this over the years. You know, an action plan to figure out how to put your material, you know, have videos of each working with the company or something, like, that. And get that in front of a bunch of HR directors or CEOs. You know, that involves doing things perhaps that you haven't done before. And I know that you've been doing some of this. As you have done that you've learned from it and you learned how to do things differently. You know, doing these projects, when you start doing this it was something you've never done before. You didn't know how to do it, so, you went out and you know, figure it out first. And that's probably more useful than just keeping on, you know, you just keep doing this stuff you know how to do you'll be comfortable but you're not going to get anywhere.

Avish: Well, yeah that sounds like a really interesting and powerful point. Because I'm sure a lot of people when they plan, they think the best plan would be to do something you already doing because they know how to do it. And therefore its kind of easier. It makes it easier, but is not necessarily getting you the result you want.

Robert: There is an element of truth to that, at least, that, you know, I noticed I did not say that the best strategic plan for you would be to take up ballet dancing.

Avish: You're right.

Robert: That you might be a great ballet dancer but, you know, it's to take the thing you already know how to do and apply it in a way that makes you more successful. So, I think if you abandon anything how you do well. Then you're not going to succeed in this new thing you're trying but if you don't try new things, you're just going to stay where you are. So, I think, you know, there's a moment of truth to what people say and you should stay focus on the things you're good at. I believe that a hundred percent. But I think good strategic objectives are about how to take that and add something to it be learning about how to apply in a new way for new people.

Avish: Got it. So, let's go back to say a weight loss for example. To kind of take out of the business realm just to, you know to, throw a curve ball here. Could you apply this idea to something like, like, some of it says, okay, my goal is to lose fifty pounds and I'll be like, you said, everyone knows what they need to do but this time they'll implement it. So, how could we apply either this, you know, setting objectives to something that you

don't know or even the five steps you said about a great plan or five elements of a great plan. To someone maybe who is in that position. How would you do that if you had to?

Robert: Well, I think the problem most people run into profit loss. And this, I mean this is getting very specific but it's probably a useful example. The problem most people get into is we know what to do; you write an exercise and even right involves something most people don't like to do which is not eating stuff they want to it and maybe eating stuff they don't want to eat. An exercise a lot of people just don't like it, because it's work and it's boring. So, in both of the—let's take an example of exercises that's really easy you want to do. If I know that, if I know how to exercise but there's a thing I need to learn how to do which is how to get over my objections to exercise.

Because everybody who doesn't exercise enough had some reason they don't like it. I don't—you know, it takes too much time, it's too boring or I don't like the way I feel when I exercise. Well, you don't like the way you feel when you exercise, there's a discipline thing and after you've done it for a couple of weeks usually you get over that. At least I do, I find that—I feel better when I exercise. But, you know, the thing about being too boring there's steps you can take for that. You know, I started running by, you know, by listening to pod test that would, you know, it made it kind of interesting to me because I almost turned it into a game. And that's made it cool and that's how I got over the boredom objection. Now, I listen to audio books when I'm running. So...

Avish: Well that's interesting because it seems like—well, it seems like when ever people, and I know, I speak from personal experience. You research on the five steps to get it, and then it seems like the people apply the brute force method which is—are not going to force result to do this, even though it's boring or like, you know, there's appear round to cold calling and I was like, alright, well, I just don't want to do it and it sounds like what you're saying is that there's certain amount of discipline or maybe that is the best approach but it's also worth making a part of your strategic objective is to attack the activity and say, how can I—are they more enjoyable? Or how can I minimize the parts that I don't like? Or how can I make it easier for me to do?

Robert: Yes. Make it something you want to do. I—I think that's the biggest challenge for a lot of people when we talk about individual plans is, find the things you don't want to do and ask, what can I do to make this something that either A. I want to do or—B. I don't have to do because I'm doing something else that I want to do that will—that will access as substitute for. So, for example for me, I'm not very good at selling. I'm not very good at making cold calls and so, I substitute a lot of writing and speaking activity which gets me in front of audiences who will call me up rather than me having to call them. And that works very well as a substitute for cold call. So, that means I have to spend time on it.

Avish: Oh, yeah and that a transition that the next section I was going to talk about. I was going to say that you probably admit that as a business owner there are definitely some areas that you're weak at. That you're going to about this in public. But you still

manage to turn into a build of very successful business and it sounds like this is how you did by identifying your strengths, looking at the thing you felt you needed to do and finding ways of either making them play to your strengths or finding ways of eliminating them all together.

Robert: Absolutely. And you know, I think, you know, for the entrepreneurs in the audience. It's very important thing to understand is that—you need to quickly as possible to reach a point where you are generating the kind of business you're kind of generating the resources but you can have—you know you can have an employee who does and loves to do the things that you're not good at. And I think ultimately, every—every ten million dollar business is made up of a team of people. And the entrepreneur or the CEO is just one of those people but that person is not good at that. There are some things that person doesn't want to do. And you need to figure out a way to get that stuff off your plate as quickly as possible. Otherwise, it becomes the thing that defines our plateau and a lot of people reach that plateau if they're individual careers.

Avish: Now, how soon for a business person—how soon should that delegation outsource process because there's one school taught which that you can't grow until you—you know, get some dust off your plate. You mentioned like a ten million business but you know, if they're value in getting rid that off your plate much earlier?

Robert: Well, this is—this is one of those areas where you can be trying too big, too fast, you know, if you only bringing in twenty thousand dollars of revenue. It doesn't make sense to be going to spend fifty grand to hire someone and all that benefits and all that stuff, right?

Avish: Right.

Robert: So, the answer really depends a lot upon your resources and it depends a lot upon how weak you are at the things you get to get off your plate. You know, I'm pretty darn weak at some of the stuff I need to get off my plate. So, I, you know, I can barely function in the solo environment. So, I needed to get into a situation where, you know, we're having an assistant as quickly as I could. That's just you know, that's just me.

There are other people who—who, you know, for good or for ill, they can function very well trying to do everything on their own. And I think that holds some people back though, because they do try and do everything because, you know that, you know the cost of having an assistant, the cost of having a marketing personnel and IT personnel is—is a fight they don't want to take. But you should always be aware of that that there's a point where it's appropriate where what you do is something only you can do and doing more of it is something that we'll go to your business. Where as you just try and do your own IT work which is something I used to do. It just waste your time and holds you back from doing the things that you're actually really spell at.

Avish: What you know, it's only just will apply beyond, I mean, at last weeks call with Phil we also talk about how—and this calls because you know, you and I are both entrepreneurial. We have our own businesses and a lot of people we taught to do—that's the direction of discussions go. But the people listening—who maybe want a different career or maybe they just want to apply their passion in their office. Like, they have a decent job but they really want to apply their passion. They might be so overwhelmed, but time outside of their job that they don't have the time to do what they love. But even in that situation you—they could potentially fund some of their money towards hiring someone to clean their house or mow their lawn to give them freedom to pursue what they love, correct?

Robert: Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, it's—it's always a trade off and you just have to ask, you know, if you're going to spend twenty buck an hour for some one to clean your house. You got to be using that time for something that's worth more than twenty dollars. And if you don't have something that's worth more than twenty dollars, to spend the time on, it's not worth it to pay someone to clean the house. And I think that—

Avish: Pay someone to clean the house so you can watch T.V. is maybe not the best thing but paying some one twenty dollars so you can—what ever is you spend time with your kids or go you know, just be fully immersed in your hobby—you want to spend more time to like, what ever it is. As long as it's worth it to you, it's not—doesn't have to pay you twenty dollars back as long as it's worth twenty dollars, you know.

Robert: Absolutely, I think that it's a meta objecting that almost everyone in the society today should have which ask yourself, how can I be so valuable to someone that it's worthwhile for me to pay other people to do other things for. And ideally it's not just to pay them, you know, junk wages but to pay them a really good amount of money to do something for me well. So, I want to pay someone twenty bucks an hour to clean my house not ten bucks an hour. I want to pay someone a lot of money to fix my car. I want to pay someone a lot of money to take care of my insurance or whatever it is. You know, just to wait around one me on the restaurant. I want—you know, I don't want someone who stinks at that. And so, my objective is always to be valuable enough that I can pay other people to do the things I, you know, I don't want to do or I'm not that good at.

Avish: Right. Alright, I want to ask one more question but at first, I want to pause for a moment here and just—people may have join the call late or just want a reminder, Robert, our time with Robert Bradford and if you want to learn more about him, the expert on Simplified Strategic Planning. If you want to learn more about him, reads some of his writings find his book, go to SimplifiedStrategy.com. That's correct, right Robert?

Robert: Yeah.

Avish: Okay, go to SimplifiedStrategy.com it's got a lot of great stuff out there. It's a lot geared towards business, so if you're business that will be very helpful to you but as you're seen from this call you can apply a lot of these in a lot of different areas. And if you're listening to this call on the free version, if you're listening to this live, then you want to download this and own it so that you can listen to over, over and over again. As well as to get the transcript of it plus some bonuses, you can still sign up for the paid version at SmartSSuccessTeleseminar.com visit there, you get all the recordings of all seven calls as well as transcripts plus bonuses if you listen to it, over and over again. Okay, enough advertising there. Let's go back.

I want to go back to a moment about what we were just talking about and this all starts it seems with really understanding what your strengths are and understanding what your weaknesses are. And I was wondering, you know, it seems obvious but some people struggle really identifying those things. That you have any advise on how people can really identify what their strengths are and what their weaknesses are.

Robert: Sure, I—you know, you have some ideas these yourself, first of all. The problem that I always encounter when people only lie to themselves because that we can fantasize that we're great, you know. I know for example we sure, you know, pretty good at martial arts and the, you know. So, you could fantasize that you're Chuck Norris but you're not. Okay?

Avish: Right.

Robert: And it's important to be realistic about it, to say, is it a strength that I have? Is it—is it something that set me apart from everybody in the planet? No, it doesn't—it doesn't set me apart from a lot of people in my line of work, it might. And that, you know, that's worth—it's worth the understanding. So, where can you get that sort of reality check? There's, I think that's—that's what people need if they're—if they're relying too much on their own self assessment. I, reality check can come from people you work with. It can come from if you have customers, your customers. It can come from your friends; you can go outside if you work with a coach or have a network of people or master mind group or something like that. They can help you figure it out.

I know that this is something, you know, I know people that, you know we have acquaintances and common where, you know, we sat around and we've all told each other. These are the things that I think you're really good at. Robert, these are the thing I think you're good at. And that's been valuable definitely one of the benefits of really good networking that people don't get into because they're so focus on just getting business for the network that actually getting fruit to these baskets, it's worth a lot. I would also pay attention to where your succeed in and where you failed because a lot of people just want to focus on how it's unfair or of course I failed because this is that and the staff is against me. But the reality is when you fail. You learned a lot about what you're not good at and when you succeed you may learn things about what you're good at. And if you don't pay attention to it after the fact you can kid yourself. And

that's probably the most dangerous thing in strategy to just kidding your self up about that.

Avish: Okay, so pay attention to where you fail and don't kid your self about it because that's where you're going to be weak at. And you know, at twenty it's almost like, banging your head against the wall because they're people, my self included who—we just keep sailing at the same thing over and over again but then, like a week later, alright, this time I'm going to do it well.

Robert: Right.

Avish: Okay, so then we've got to strengths and weaknesses. The next piece, you know, you mentioned that at the top of the call—you mentioned execution and that's really ultimately what's going to separate people is whether or not they execute. So, if we've got a plan how do we—how do we execute—how do we make sure we executing or is that more of if we've got the right plan and we will execute it. And then it's more about monitoring whether we are not.

Robert: Well, having the right plan is I think one of the first secrets of good execution but there's a lot more to it. I think for most people one of the most important things to do is to make sure that a part of your plan is to have actual specific concrete actions that you're going to take. In bite size chunks that you can sit down and say, hey, what am I suppose to do this week? And you can have something that you do and you can do it and get it done. I think that's a really critical item.

The other critical item is you need to be very realistic about the resources part. I don't like to set out, you know, the bite size chunks—I don't want to set out a chunk that says, oh, and this one I need to spend twenty days doing X Y or Z because I know personally that when I look at something like that, I'm so overwhelmed by the prospect of spending twenty days on something, that I find any excuse I can to put it off. And that's where you know, execution really breaks down when people to start to look at accepting excuses for not getting things done.

So, the more you break things down, the more specifics you make them, the easier to not have that excuse. And I just don't—a word about specificity when you are creating your plans part of what you are doing is communicating with your self in the future. It is slightly harder work to be—to force yourself to be more specific in your plans today but what you're doing is you're moving an excuse for postponement and poor execution in the future by saying specifically in March I want to do X, Y, or Z. You know, if I say specifically in March—I for example want to sell a business articles to a magazine. I want to send a packet of twelve propose articles to the editors from five different magazines. That's better than just saying, hey, I want to sell articles. So being specifically your self is really important.

Avish: Okay. A couple of questions on to what you just said. So, you know, we talked and this idea kind a setting realistic—being realistic about resources. What about people who are anxious or you know, or they feel like, you know, shrinking that objective so it's realistic almost make them feel like my god at this rate I'm not going to get there. You know, where's the balance there? Because that's, you know, people want to jump in with both feet because they feel like alright this will get me what I want in the next month. And so, how do you respond to people if someone who would say, well, that's you know, that's going to take me so long. Like, saying twenty days more than twenty days on this project this month or really make progress, you know, but if I only say five days this month—well, I'm not going to get anywhere there at that rate.

Robert: Well, you know, that will take years to achieve your objective.

Avish: Yeah, exactly.

Robert: The first thing I will say to people is, sometimes that's true, sometimes, you—I mean part of being realistic with yourself and your planning is understanding that some things that people want to accomplish are going to take some time. You know people—somebody last year said, “Robert it's just amazing what an overnight success you are in the speaking business.” And I always had to point out that you know that twenty-five years does not feel like overnight to me, by any stretch of the imagination. There were a lot of steps along the way. And I'm not saying that you always have to pay your dues. In fact if you try to pay your dues the way people tell you—you should pay your dues. You probably not going to get there because you're doing the same thing that everyone else is.

But I also want people to understand that if you do—try to set out to do something unrealistic like spending twenty days on something in a month. Some people can do that, for me, I have enough experience attempting to do that to know that is a show stopper for me. I will—my action plan, my execution, will stop dead in the water anytime I get to step that says, ten-twenty days on a month.

And knowing that about myself I know I have to break up my objectives in these smaller steps. This and you know, does that mean that's going to take longer to get certain things done? Yes, it does. But my experience of trying to do it the other way is, I didn't get anything done that way either. And in fact, it took me longer because for example, writing my first book. I said, I have to write a book, I have to write a book, I have to write a book and I spend five years saying that to myself. And it was when I broke it down to about a hundred different steps that I actually, you know, came to fruition.

Avish: Well, so, let me ask you the other question. Let see you've got this plan laid out, you've got concrete, specific objectives and you've done your best to make them realistic. And yet, you still find yourself not executing. You know, what do you do at that point?

Robert: You will always have to ask the question, “Why?” Why am I not succeeding and it’s— there are two basic reasons. The first is you actually don’t want to do some of the steps necessary. And the second is you can’t do some of the steps. It usually boils down to one of those two things. Occasionally it turns out that the steps that I’m doing are not really the steps that are needed, that I’ve written a bad action. But that happens maybe 10% of the time. 90% of the time it’s I don’t want to do the steps or I can’t. If you can’t do the steps, you need to be able to be realistic with yourself and face that. Say, okay if I can’t do the steps and these are the steps necessary, then I have to take a step back and say, “Can I get someone else to get the steps for me? Can I learn how to do the steps? Or can I be effective with a different set of steps?”

If it’s I don’t want to, you know there’s a more fundamental, philosophical question being answered there. I think that goes back to our discussion about, you know, if it’s not fun, you need to make it fun. Or you have to find a way to get where you want to go without doing the things that aren’t fun for you.

Avish: Okay. Well that -- I mean it’s straightforward but it makes a lot of sense.

Robert: Yeah.

Avish: We are coming close to the end here. I want to shift the discussion to, you know, you’ve got some great business idea that I found really helpful over the years. I just want to talk about a couple of them pretty briefly, but just to share with them because I think they’re really powerful. And maybe see how we can apply it to people who aren’t just trying to build their own business. The first, I think one of the most useful things I ever learned from you is the whole concept of The Island of Profitability. And I think there are a lot of applications to that. So can you share with listeners what exactly The Island of Profitability is?

Robert: Sure. The Island of Profit is just a place where you are doing something that really sets you apart from anybody that competes with you in services and it also creates value for people. You know, in a business sense, Apple has an Island of Profit around product design, for example. In a personal sense, I’ve made, you know, I’ve made the Simplified Strategic Planning Model my Island of Profit. You know, I do it over and over again and I’ve done it over 1,500 plans using this process. Nobody else can claim that so it sets me apart from people. And it’s valuable for people. I make it valuable by pointing out, would you rather have someone come in who’s just studied strategy or just ran a company in your industry? Or would you rather have someone who has seen it so many different times that we can look at a strategy and I can say, “You know, that smells like the right thing to do.” I have a strong intuitive sense of what’s going to work with a given company, a given team, in a given situation regardless of how much experience I have in the industry.

So that’s what the Island of Profit is. And I think that’s really important for individuals to have that sense of there’s something I’m so good at that I’m going to do it over and over

and over again. And develop an almost supernatural instinct for how to do it exactly the right way that exceeds what anybody else can bring to the table.

Avish: And certainly anyone who's, again this whole course is about figuring out what you want and then getting you a plan to go get it. For a lot of people, maybe not at first, but that's what it's going to be about, how do I monetize my passion? And this is really the key to that, right? Because you have to – because the Island of Profitability is about not only about getting your depth of knowledge and experience, but also making that to such a degree that the competition can't touch you, right?

Robert: Yeah, and you know one of the key problems a lot of people have is that they have a passion that is just way too generic. I think an awful lot of people like to sit on the couch, play video games, and watch TV, and eat Doritos. Those are not passions that are easy to make valuable because a lot of people want to do that. A lot of people – there are people who have tremendous practice eating Doritos on the couch. How do you make that valuable to anybody who would ever pay for it?

So that's why finding something that is valuable to others, that you love to do, is one of the key things. Because if you love to do it, it's no problem for you to do it over and over again. I would do what I do for free if I didn't have the ability to charge for it because I enjoy it so much. That brings that practice effect into play, which is so important when we're talking about the Island of Profits because again, it's a learning thing. The more you learn, the more you do it. The more you learn, the easier it gets and the more it sets you apart.

Avish: Well, it's really funny you mention the video game thing because last week Bill talked about, if you love video games, that's your passion. Pursue that, but he talked about kind of the next step. You're talking about there are people who have taken that passion for video games and turned it into value for others. So that's kind of the critical step, I think you're saying.

Robert: Absolutely.

Avish: One of the other ideas that I really like that you talk about, and I'm not sure if this is related to The Island of Profitability or not, but you talk about the importance of identifying your strategic competencies.

Robert: Yes.

Avish: And, you know, that is something that, when I heard it, when I kind of went and re-listened to your stuff, it seems really effective for me, especially for someone who's looking to monetize their passion. Could you explain a little bit about what you mean by strategic competency?

Robert: Yeah, and then really, the Island of Profit is just another way of describing strategic competency. The thing I like people to think about is that the competency is know-how, it's the stuff that's inside your head. So that practice effect, where you learn about it, when you practice it, is why competency is really important. And the idea of the strategic competency is it does have to create that value. But also, and this is something a lot of people miss, it has to set you apart. It has to make you really different. And most people, on an individual level, are not different enough.

I mean, there's the people who can really write their own ticket in the world, are people that have something that's valuable to other people, where they're the only person in the world who has that competence. And if you can do that, if you can be the only person or the best person in the world at a specific thing and know that you're the best. Can be able to convince other people that you're the best at that thing, then you can write your own ticket.

Even if it's playing video games, there are people who are that good at playing video games. But that requires, and it always does require sacrifices that are perhaps beyond what most people are willing to do. So you have to look for a match between the sacrifices that are called for and the sacrifices that you want to make to be the best in the world at whatever you want to make competency.

Avish: That's funny because I can relate to that, too. Well that's great, that's funny. That comes back to the very first thing that you said about people, you know, not willing to execute, not willing to make those sacrifices. So it kind of came through.

Robert: Absolutely. For me, the way I think about it is, when I look at my work, there are sacrifices I have to make. Most of them aren't big sacrifices. For me, it's not a big sacrifice to sit down and write an article every once in a while. It's not a big sacrifice to have to give a speech. You know, it's not a big sacrifice to have to travel. But, for some people it would be. It's not a big sacrifice for me to have to learn and pay attention to what's going on in the business world. But I chose sacrifices that I like making. And I think for most people, a good way of looking at how to be more successful is to ask, "What are the things other people hate to do that I actually don't mind doing when I'm off?"

Avish: And I can see the answer to that applying to not only building your business but to a lot of different areas.

Robert: Absolutely. So you know, strategic thinking is often studying things on their head and saying, what do I like to do that other people don't like to do. That 's a really good starting point.

Avish: Wow, that's great. We're just about at the end of our hour here. I am going to make a couple announcements and then Robert, I am going to ask you for any kind of final thoughts you might have to send people on their way that will allow them to create a

great plan that they'll actually implement and keep them on track to getting what they want.

Before we get to that, just remember this is a seven part tele-seminar series. This is week number three. Next week, is week number four and we're going to be talking a little bit about what we talked about in this call, which is execution. And we're going to be talking with Neen James, who's going to be giving you techniques on being really productive, maximizing the limited time that you have. To work towards these goals you're developing in this series. She is an awesome productivity expert. She's got a lot of great tips. So after that call, you really won't have the excuse of, "Oh, well I don't have time to do this," because she's going to show you how to make the most of your time.

Robert: Boy, Neen's awesome. People don't want to miss that. That's going to be great.

Avish: Yeah, I was really happy when she agreed to do it, too. She's going to be great. If you want more information about Robert, go to simplifiedstrategy.com. Read his articles. Find out more about what he does. Check out his book. It's all great, great, information, simplifiedstrategy.com.

And again, if you're listening to the free version of this and you want to get this mp3 along with mp3 of the other 6 calls, plus the transcriptions, plus the bonuses, go to smartasssuccessteleseminar.com, T-E-L-E-S-E-M-I-N-A-R dot com. Get the paid version. Once the seventh week is over, we're going to take down the offer, the price is going to go up, you're not going to be able to get it. So definitely sign up before then. Spread the word if you're enjoying these calls, let your friends know. So Robert thank you so much. What – do you have any final thoughts you'd like to share with people for how they can create and execute a great plan?

Robert: I think the most important thing is to have something you lean into that does set you apart and does create value. And understand how you create value in the world and how you are different from other people. Really be ready, willing, and able to lean into that as hard as you can in your life. You know, just learn as much as you can about it and push yourself ahead to the point where you stand out against the rest of the pack. Whether you are talking about a company or an individual, I think the same rule applies. If you can find a way to do that, you're going to be wildly successful beyond what you think is possible in the next five or ten years. Just be willing to do what it takes to do that.

Avish: Well that is awesome and if I may give one final plug, the first two calls with Scott Ginsburg and Bill O'Hanlon talked a lot about how do you figure out what those things are as well. So it all fits together. Robert, thank you so much. You have given me, as I was going through this, you have given me two pages of notes. Stuff I am going to apply in my own life, which is awesome. That's why I love doing these because not only am I sharing your knowledge with others, but I'm learning a lot from it. So thank you so

much. Thank you everyone and be sure to be on next week when we'll have Neen James talking about making the most of your time and being productive. Thanks, Robert!

Robert: Alright, thank you!