

Hi, this is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*. Quick heads-up, our Dallas Boot Camp is full, but we are creating a waiting list just in case. That is November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. And our next Boot Camp will be here in Raleigh, and that's going to be February 9 and 10, 2023. As you see, Boot Camp sells out pretty quickly. So, might as well go ahead and sign up now versus waiting and getting shut out.

This week, I want to talk about fight or flight, how stone age emotional reactions may be hindering your business success. Now, what about this is important to you? Construction is a go-fast business. It's thankless, it's relentless, every day is something new, and emotions can run really high as you discuss projects, challenges, people, customers, and all kinds of other things. So, think about these questions.

And I'm thinking about the emotion in the workplace. Do you avoid other people in the workplace because of frequent emotional blowups? Do other people avoid you in the workplace for emotional reasons? When you're around certain people, do you have to weigh every word you say? Do you really have to think about what you're going to say, or can you be genuine and open with these people? Do your important meetings end in no decisions taken, or maybe worse, shouting matches where people are really emotional, and they really leave the meetings unhappy and unsettled? Well, if the answer to any of those questions is yes, people in your organization are experiencing fight or flight. That's this basic limbic brain reaction that we have, this reaction that kept us alive eons ago when the world was a very dangerous place. We needed emotion. We needed this driver to take action, so that we would be safe from harm, safe from danger.

And this limbic brain is still there and still controlling if you let it, a great deal of our actions. Now, what about this is important to you? All of us want harmony in our personal lives, in our family lives, and in the workplace. We don't always get it. So, what I want to talk about today is five steps that you can take to draw the emotion out of these interactions and make better, more rational decisions than otherwise you might be making. These emotional reactions are some of the most basic and some of the most primitive reactions that we can have in business situations. And they're about the least enlightened reactions that we can have, too. So that's the part about harming or hindering your business. These emotions get in the way of great decision-making. Okay. So, five post-stone age, non-gut, non-reactive strategies to this feeling that we might need to take flight from people or situations.

The first thing is have an agenda. Know what you're going to be talking about in the meeting and also what you're not going to be talking about. Non-agenda items get placed on a future agenda or they get put in a parking lot for future address. Think about how much time you're going to allow for the discussion. Is it a 30-minute meeting? Is it a 15-minute meeting? Is it a 5-minute standup meeting? Or is it something bigger or different from that? What decisions, every meeting should result in some kind of decisions made, even if they're little decisions, even if it's a decision to have another meeting, that's okay. Every meeting should result in some decisions. But you need to know going into the meeting, what decisions you need. What achievements do you need to come out of this meeting to advance the ball, advance the project, advance the whatever?

And then you need to know also when these actions need to take place. So, I need to know not only what, but when. Because golly, schedule is so critical in constructions. So that's the first tip, begin with the end in mind, have an agenda, et cetera. Second tip. If you feel this flight emotion, you feel like you just need to get out of this situation, deep breath and do what your mom told you way back when, count to 10. It really does provide a little bit of a breather. No pun intended. If things get really hot or really uncomfortable, take a timeout for 60 seconds. Go out in the hallway, go get a drink of water, cool off. If it's really, really hot and things are out of hand, just cut the meeting off and reschedule it. But the thing about these uncomfortable emotions is we do want to flee from them. And you say, "Oh, gosh. We just had a blowup. We just had a big disagreement. We just had a situation with which I'm really uncomfortable. And now I have to reschedule that meeting."

Yes, you do. As a leader, that is your responsibility. You've got to put on your big boy, big girl pants, and you've got to dive into these things headlong. The five tips, I think, will help with that. The fourth thing, you've got to be introspective with yourself. Why do I feel this way? If I do flee, if I do run away from this uncomfortable situation, what am I accomplishing? What if I stay? What could I accomplish if I stayed and fought through this discomfort? Am I the problem? Is my reluctance to deal with this uncomfortable situation causing barriers or hindering our progress somehow? You've got to be introspective, and you've got to be willing to say, "Holy moly. I'm the problem here, not this other guy that I've been blaming for all this time."

And then the fifth thing is end the conversation on schedule. Again, if you need to, schedule another meeting. And so now why would you engage in these five strategies? So let me tell you what a psychologist told me. This will help you slow the process, diminish reactivity, and increase thoughtfulness, all good things. That's why you would engage in this process. Now, what about the fight side of it? Same thing. These five steps will help you if you're feeling on the fight side of it, as well as the flight side of it.

So, I'd like to know from you in the comment section, what strategies work for you? Any emotions run high in construction, when you're feeling fight or flight, what strategies have you successfully employed in your companies to push through and to make great decisions and to bring the team back together? This is Wayne Rivers at FBI, and *We Build Better Contractors*.