

Hello. This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thanks as always for tuning in. Please give us the benefit of your thinking in the comments. We appreciate that.

This week I want to talk about a positive planning process. Today I was on a call with my... Well, a zoom meeting with my peer group of figurate providers. It was so refreshing to hear positive messages and positive thinking in the context of that call. This subject actually comes from one of my peer group Arlin Sorenson and he got some of this information from a blog by Jim Bakker.

So, what about this is important to you? What's important about being positive right now? Well, we're in this unprecedented time of uncertainty when the analogy we use here is it's like driving through a blinding snowstorm. You can only see just a little bit out maybe to the end of your headlights and you can't see anything else. So, we're all stuck in this planning, 30 and 60 day planning versus three year or five year planning which is what we much prefer.

So, there's all this predictability in the marketplace and it's frustrating. So, this is what Jim Bakker had to say about it. Behavior research has shown that when groups focus on solving problems, they soon become depressed and anxious. But when they formulate plans by working backwards from a positive future, they want to create, they develop energy, enthusiasm, optimism and high commitment. That's what we all want, right. That's what we all want for our teams and our employees to have.

But if you think about it and we're guilty of this too, most planning focuses on the negative part. So, when you think about a SWOT analysis you're thinking about weaknesses and threats and those kinds of things and that's really where in business our minds go, what gaps do we have? What problems must we overcome? Where do we have weaknesses? Where are people weak? It's negative stuff.

It's important to understand all those things but what if you came at it from a positive point of view and think about these questions as opposed to the previous ones. What do we do well? What can we do more of? How can we build on our strengths? What are the possibilities that we have here? What advantages do we have? What unique advantages that we can build on? What opportunities do we have and how can we maximize and create more opportunities? So, it's kind of a different perspective. You're getting at some of the same things but it's from a different perspective.

So, I remember... Now you think about this, always it's two sides of the same coin but it's not. When I was a kid, there was a guy that played for the New York Yankees in center field. Some of you my age remember his name was Mickey Rivers, no relation. The manager of that time of the Yankees was the volatile Billy Martin. Mickey Rivers and Billy Martin got into a philosophical discussion, probably the only philosophical discussion in either of their lives up to that point. But anyway, Mickey River said, "I'm at spring training to maximize my strengths, to improve on my strengths." And Billy Martin said, "No, you're not buddy. You're here to improve your weaknesses." They actually got into a fist fight over the... Back then Billy Martin... Say no more.

Who was right? Who was right? Mickey Rivers was right. Business research has shown that companies get more traction, they get more improvement, they get more benefit by focusing on their strengths not their weaknesses. Individuals get better, improve faster by focusing on their strengths not their weaknesses, okay.

So, in this case bringing a new positive approach to your planning will create more energy, enthusiasm, commitment from your team members and take you to a brighter future. I'd love to hear your comments on this.

This is Wayne Rivers at The Family Business Institute. Thank you.