

Ep #327: Boundaries = Freedom



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With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Stacey Brown Randall: I believe the right boundaries will give you freedom. Now, what I mean by freedom and what I mean by boundaries may not be what you think. So let's dive in, in this episode.

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Hey there, and welcome to episode 327 of the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, a show that proves you can generate referrals without asking or manipulation.

I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall. My journey from a business failure to a successful business now 10 years in, I know generating referrals naturally and consistently has made all the difference. Working with clients around the world, we leverage the science of referrals, protect relationships above all else, and help you build a referable business.

Okay, so today I want to talk about boundaries, specifically the boundaries that I have in place in my business that allows me to feel a lot of freedom.

Now, let me give you the backstory first about where this episode came from, and then I'm going to talk about what I mean by freedom, because I don't mean probably the blanket definition most people apply to it. I don't mean like sitting on a beach never working type of freedom. That's not what I'm talking about.

So the backstory to this is I did a social media post, I'm going to say maybe six months ago, where I talked about how I have more boundaries in my business than a US map. And it caught the attention of a few folks, and I was like, maybe I should do an episode on this. And a couple of folks were like, yes, yes, you should do an episode on this.

And so I added it to the list and then I didn't do it. So I was like, wait, I am not going to allow this year to get away from me without going back and doing an episode on boundaries, which had gotten some interest from folks earlier this year. I want to honor my promise to them. So that is this episode. So that's why we're doing that.

Now, when I say boundaries, I'm talking about the boundaries I put in place in my business. I think there's a lot of different types of boundaries, right? The boundaries of like the type of clients that you will work with or how you will allow your clients to communicate with you or even in some cases,

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what type of behavior you'll put up with from employees or clients or prospects or whatever.

There's a lot of ways to look at boundaries. But when I'm talking about boundaries for the purpose of this episode, I'm talking about the things I can control that I put in place in my business that allow me to have a business that I feel really good about and have energy around. And that has not always been the case.

There have been many, many seasons in my business, now I'm at 11 years. There has been many, many seasons in my business where I have felt like I was chained to this business. And I would walk into the house and be an exhausted mess.

Which means, let's be honest, you're not giving your best to anybody at that moment. You're not giving your best to your business and you're not giving your best to your family. And there were times where I'd be like, I am like the worst mother right now because I just took out all my exhaustion from my business on my children or my husband.

And so I've been on a quest over years to move in a direction to allow my business to have the right boundaries that allow me to get energy for my business and excitement for my business. And for me, ultimately, freedom.

But freedom doesn't mean I sit on a beach every day and log in for like one Zoom meeting. That's not what I mean. That's not I mean, I work. Like this isn't like I just wake up every morning and, you know, walk to the local Starbucks and sit there for three hours doing nothing, right?

Like, I don't mean freedom in terms of I then do nothing. I just mean freedom in terms of I feel in control, and I feel like I am spending the right amount of time in my business while having plenty of time to spend in other areas of my life, being a wife, being a mother, somebody who has decided, as I have recently, that I can DIY some projects in my house. Even if I don't know how to spackle, I can figure it out. So I wanted a lot of space to do a lot of different things.

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I have to say this, just an aside, I used my first power tool this year, and I loved it. I thought it would be more exciting, I'm gonna be honest, than it actually was, but our neighbor let us borrow some saw, I'm sure it has a name, and we were able to cut the wood for a deck table we built, and my husband was like, can we just go buy a deck table?

I'm like, no, we are building the table. So we did it and I got to use a power tool and it was really fun. So anyways, that kind of like, and I did it on Mother's Day because I do things on Mother's Day that they would never ever say yes to, but they have to on Mother's Day. So you moms out there, you hear me, you know me, you feel me.

So there's a lot of space that I want in my life to do a lot of different things. And I've talked about this before in the podcast. You know, I've got a kid who plays competitive baseball. He's on the high school team.

I've got another one who was very, very much into theater. A couple of kids are starting to have jobs and work and nobody's driving yet. So I am really needed most days of my life. So I'm sure that'll change when they start driving.

But for me, what I mean by freedom, I just want to be really clear, this is not like, oh, build this thing and then you can go sit on the beach and work on your laptop for an hour a day and spend the rest of the time splashing around in the ocean. It's not what I'm talking about because I don't think that's real.

I'm sure some people have experienced it and attained it. Great. Good for them. But that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the freedom where I feel energized by my business and not drained by it.

And that all comes down to the boundaries that I have. And there are three main ways that I create boundaries in my business. And I wanted to walk through them for you. Hopefully, this will be helpful.

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Real quick, before I dive into the boundaries, I just want to give a quick happy anniversary shout out to my husband, Norm. Today, the day that you are listening to this episode that it launched, or that it dropped, we are celebrating 19 years of marriage. I seriously hope I have the year right. I'm pretty sure I do. I know I have the date right. We did marry on September 17th.

So if you're listening to this on September 17th, I just want to take a minute and give a quick shout out to my wonderful husband of 19 beautiful messy years. And I am so thankful to be married to him.

If you know my husband, if you wouldn't mind, if you know Norm, if you wouldn't mind maybe sending him an email or a direct message or a text message and be like, hey, happy anniversary. I want him to get enough random messages today, he's like, how do all these people know it's my wedding anniversary?

And then maybe he'll realize I mentioned it on the podcast. Cause guess what? I don't believe my husband listens very regularly to this podcast. So we'll see. Maybe he'll hear this and he'll catch me. Maybe not. He probably won't. Okay. Thank you for that personal moment.

Here are the three ways that I create boundaries. Number one, my calendar. It is my favorite tool to create boundaries with. Because when you're intentional about how you'll spend your time from your calendar perspective, it can dictate a lot of things, right?

So a couple of the ways that I use my calendar to create that boundary for me is when I will be available and when I will not. Now, if you've ever been a client of mine, you probably have said, wow, I can get on Stacey's calendar pretty much whenever I need to.

That doesn't mean like within 30 seconds, but there's usually availability within that week or the next week or the week after. And that's because of how I have the rolling calendar set up for my clients.

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So I want my clients to feel like I can get on her calendar whenever I need to, but the whenever I need to is actually a distinct time container. And that is, I allow people to schedule times, my clients to schedule like their one-on-one milestone calls with me, whether it's my VIP clients or my BRB coaching clients. I allow them to schedule time with me on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. And then there are set times in each of those days, and then the calendar just rolls.

So to them, they feel like, yeah, I go on the link. I can see what's available. I can pick what works for me. If this week doesn't work, I can do next week. But for me, I'm not seeing random meetings pop up on times outside of what I've set aside on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, and never on Mondays and Fridays.

So when I think about my calendar, I think about what container do I want to live within? Because let's be honest, I really do feel like the calendar is a container that we are beholden to and that we live in it. And so I want to make it a happy home, a happy calendar home.

So for me, It is really those boundaries that I create where I don't take calls. I mean, I will sometimes. Obviously, if something comes up and I need to do a call or something on a Monday or a client has an emergency, you bet. I'm going to be like, what do you need? I will talk to you on a Monday or Friday.

I've even talked to people on weekends before if needed, and sometimes traveling back from vacations. I will make myself available. But because my clients are so awesome and that it's so few and far between and nobody abuses it, I'm always happy to do it.

But for the most part, most days when I roll into work on a Monday morning, I know I've got the whole day to make decisions on how I'm going to spend it, which means that I can spend that time doing work stuff, and I can also spend that time doing non-work stuff. It just depends on what's happening that week.

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And that ability to decide and choose gives me great relief and happiness. And it's the same thing on Fridays. I may be more willing to like plow through work on a Monday, the things that don't take me, like talking to clients or, you know, leading a session or giving a podcast interview or anything like that.

I may be willing to plow through work on Mondays, but I also know come Friday, I may do very little with work. I may do a lot of work because I'm behind. I may be not doing hardly any. And that ability to choose in my mind is what makes me feel free.

Now, you may argue, you're not really free, Stacey, but that's the way I feel. I feel free. And that is great. And so I do that by the calendar. I use Calendly as the app that handles my scheduling. And because Calendly allows you to say what days and which times and all that kind of stuff, you can really set parameters.

And I have a number of links available within my calendar. So if you're a VIP client, there's different links for that. That has different availability. If you're a BRB coaching member, that has links for different availability.

If you're actually somebody who wants to talk to me, about working with me, like you're a prospect considering hiring me, there's a special link for folks who are going to do a referral audit with me so I can help figure out what's going on in their business and see if I could help them. That has a different link with different availability. But Calendly allows me to really control when people have access to my calendar.

I always cringe and feel bad for people when they send me their calendar link to book time, and I go in and do it and I see it's open Monday through Friday from like 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. I'm like, oh man, that gives you no structure because I could just book a call at 4 30 tomorrow when you really wanted to go do something else but because you made it available, I took it, right?

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So you can use apps like that, like Calendly, to really manage what people have access to. And that is the number one way that I create boundaries.

Personally, I believe that is one of the number one ways that I create ongoing boundaries in my business is by how I set up my calendar and what do I allow on my calendar and I don't allow on my calendar by what I can control, and I think that's really important.

So lots of boundaries, and specifically who can access, when can they access, and like when I say I do, like my clients can get on my calendar Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, that doesn't mean they can get on my calendar starting at 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Even on those days, there's actually buckets of time, like they're hours of buckets of time, but I also don't have a thousand clients, so it's not like I'm trying to manage a whole bunch of people, right, or even like a hundred clients. I don't even have a hundred clients trying to get on my calendar.

Like I do half a dozen or maybe a little more half a dozen, I don't know, six, seven, eight VIP clients a year. That's kind of like max for me because it's so intensive. And I have about 30 to 35 people in my coaching program.

And so from that perspective, it does look, you know, it's not like I've got like hundreds or even a hundred clients trying to like clamor for time on my calendar. So that's really cool. And that works out really well from a boundary perspective with the calendar. Okay, but there's two more ways I create boundaries as well.

Stacey Brown Randall: Hey there. Pardon the interruption. If you're a longtime listener to this podcast, then you've heard me mention my Building a Referable Business Coaching Program. I mean, I was just talking about it in this episode. But did you know the coaching program is only one of the three ways to work with me?

You can dip your toe in and get started with my starter online course, which is called Your Next Five Referrals. It's the things I wish you'd put in place

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before you started working with me. Or if you have a small team and you want me to build your strategy for you, then my VIP Referrals in a Day program is right for you.

Link to all three ways to work with me are in the show notes page for this episode. And those three ways again are Your Next Five Referrals, the Building a Referable Business, BRB coaching program, and the VIP Referrals in a Day experience. Now back to the episode.

Stacey Brown Randall: Okay, so let's talk about the second way I create boundaries. And that for me is automations.

Now, I am a big believer that there's a time and a place for automations. And some people take it to like the nth degree, and they remove all engagement and all relationship and personality, personally, from their business. So I think there's a way to make automations work versus not work.

Now, remember, I'm not talking about automations like I am an e-commerce site, and you never talk to us unless you have a problem with your order, right? I think the ability to build automations within an e-commerce site that is selling products and is shipping things out, your automations look entirely different than my automations, where I'm a service provider, right?

So I operate more like my clients. With my coaching programs and my VIP experience, there are ways that I am in communication with my clients. I get to know my clients. I build relationships with my clients.

Just like my attorneys that I work with do, or my interior designers, or the CPAs and bookkeepers, or business coaches and consultants and financial advisors. I operate a business the way the people who work with me as my clients operate a business too.

And so there's a time and a place for automations, and you can underdo it, creating more work for yourself, and you can overdo it. And I think that just

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kind of removes the relationship and personality out of your business and that personal interaction and connection out of your business as well.

For me, automations are the things that I don't have to touch. I make sure they're automated. So when people submit applications for my coaching program or my VIP experience, they submit the application, it comes to me.

But when I approve it or decline it and I click the button, yes, I'm approving it or no, I'm declining it, the series of emails that go out telling them, hey, we've accepted your application, we've approved it, or we've declined it and here's why, all that goes out on the back end and it's all automated.

And so that stuff is like, It's like conditional automation. It's like, if I click this button, then this happens. And if I click this button, then these things happen. But communicating about someone's accepted or declined application can certainly be done through automation, through emails that are already crafted and created.

And so there's many things in my business that are automated in that way. And then there's some things that have to be done, like set up manually for each client, and then it continues to be automated. So that's really important in terms of how I look at and how I use automations.

Now, my business runs on a, I would say, I mean, I should probably actually map this out, but I feel like I run my business on about 75% tech, which is funny because I'm not a tech lover. I'm afraid I'm always going to push a button and the whole thing is going to break.

But if you think about it, with my business, I probably should go through, I've done this in the past. I just haven't done it in a while. I've mapped out my tech stack. If you don't know what a tech stack is, it's like, I don't know, it makes you feel fancy when you're like, oh, I have a tech stack.

It's like basically just all the technology you use, right? And they just call it a tech stack. And so whereas I know all the technology I use, I can rattle it off for the most part, off the top of my head. There's a lot of it.

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So it's not just my WordPress website and it's not just my email provider and then what we use to run our password-protected online portal where all the trainings are located for my clients and where we keep all the things like recordings to coaching calls and things like that.

And then we have Zapier that's going to connect things between and make things happen. And then when people join a program, we use SignsNow, which I think they just changed their name. But that's how we send out the coaching agreement for people to sign.

I have a pretty intensive tech stack. I already told you about Calendly, using it as the calendar link that I use for scheduling. And so I have a pretty robust tech stack in my business. And that does allow for a lot of boundaries.

And every time I find myself doing something and I'm like, could this be done differently, is usually the question I ask. Could someone else do this? Which, of course, that would be Kathy, my assistant. Or is there some kind of automation I can bring into doing this?

But there are some times where automation cannot be used. And that's just my personal opinion. And I think when you're building a business where you get to know your clients and there's a relationship there, sometimes you need to do things. Right?

It's usually very clear to my clients when they are getting an email direct from me or when they are getting an email that has been automated that may be going out to say like all the coaching members. I don't hide behind that stuff and pretend something isn't. Like pretend something is what it isn't. I just think that's wrong.

So there's a time and a place for automation. But I would challenge you to kind of consider what's one thing you're doing manually now that if you may be involved some tech, you could create automation around that.

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Now that's not a challenge to go out and get technology you'll only use like one or twice a year to automate one manual task. I mean things that you can consistently automate in your business using technology. Okay.

And then the third way is I am constantly looking for ways to simplify my business. It's almost like a problem because I'm constantly saying, can I do that easier? How do I do this easier? And this all started back in 2021.

And I've talked about this before on the podcast, but it all started back in 2020, 2021. And it wasn't really COVID-driven. I mean, I think COVID probably gave time and space to think about things differently, but it was more so about, me figuring out what exhausted me in my business and what energized me in my business.

And then layering that onto, when I look back at all my clients who actually have success, what do they have in common? And then looking at what keeps me in my sweet spot of what I do and what I teach.

And so looking at what gives me energy and what drains me, coupled with where my clients have their best success, coupled with my sweet spot of my expertise, in 2021, I actually ended up retiring five different offers or programs that I had. It was hard.

If you knew me pre-2021, you know that, yes, I would talk about referrals, but I would also talk about goals. And I did that for a number of years. I even had a program called the Goal Finishers Club. Oh, I kind of miss that a little bit.

But the reality of that is, is that I had a lot of things outside of referrals and I made the decision to like, no, my sweet spot, my zone of expertise, my zone of genius, where I show up and I get excited and I know how to solve your problems and I have 1000% confidence in my ability and my process's ability to do that is referrals. So I went all in on referrals and I shed a bunch of things that had nothing to do with referrals.

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The other thing is when I noticed where my clients were having their greatest success is when they had access to me. So when I used to just have my strategies available as a la carte, hey, you can get this strategy and go through an online course, or get this strategy and go through an online course.

And I did a 180. I was like, nope, you can't actually access any of my trainings until you're going to get access to me for when we're diving into the strategies.

Now, a little bit different from my starter course, Your Next Five Referrals, those things you don't really need access to me to be able to put in place. And they're the basic things you should have in place. So that's why that program is still online and it's a great starter course.

I mean, I even do a monthly Q&A call with those folks too. But I wanted to build things where people got access to me because when you get access to me and you will show up, it actually doesn't matter that you have access to me if you're not going to show up.

But if you have access to me and you will show up, we can move forward faster. And I noticed the clients that were having greater success and faster success had access to me. So I changed everything I offered to be where you got to do it with access to me.

And in that case, my coaching program has access to me, ongoing access to me, and same with my VIP experience as well. It's ongoing, consistent access. The trick, of course, is having people actually use the access.

So when I looked at that, and then I looked at what energized me, was answering people's questions and helping them move forward, but not necessarily training them on something that was already recorded in a video they could go watch on the portal.

That's when I realized that was what energizes me and what drains me. That's when I figured out how to simplify my business.

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And now there are three ways to work with me. You can go through my starter course, my online course. You can come into my 12-month coaching program. And of course, you'll have my VIP experience.

Now, we are starting to launch something called cohorts that are the coaching program, but in a different time container and handled in a different way. But it's still my coaching program. It still follows the same strategies and everything within my coaching program, but it is just delivered differently. So it's called a BRB cohort.

If you're on my email list, you may start seeing information about that. Cohorts are by industry. So if you haven't heard about it, it's just because we don't offer a cohort in your industry. If you want me to, then you should shoot me an email and be like, hey, I'm in XYZ industry. Have you considered doing a cohort in this industry?

But it's still those three ways. Online starter course, BRB coaching program, whether it's the coaching program or the cohort, and the VIP experience. And that's it.

Now, granted, I do do speaking engagements and things like that, but outside of that, that's it. And that simplification has allowed me to create boundaries in my business of how and when I'm actually available.

So recap, the way that we do boundaries, or the way that I do boundaries in my world. Number one, my calendar, and creating the container of when people can access me versus when they cannot and allowing that to create the space on my calendar that makes me feel free and happy.

Automation, but recognizing when to use it and when not to. And of course, constantly looking for ways to simplify my business, simplify what I offer, simplify how I work with clients. So I hope that you have found this helpful.

The show notes page for this episode can be found at StaceyBrownRandall.com/327. We're back with another great episode next week created with you and your needs in mind. Until then, you know what

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to do, my friends. Take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.