

Ep #369: Overcoming the Myths of Referrals Without Asking



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Stacey Brown Randall: Hey there, and welcome to the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, a show that proves you can generate referrals without asking or manipulation.

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I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall. I'm a card-carrying member of the Business Failure Club, have taught my referrals without asking methodology and strategy to clients in more than 14 countries around the globe. And my mission is to help you unleash a referral explosion by leveraging the science of referrals and respecting your relationships.

Okay, so today we are welcoming Marlon Griffith of the Griffith Law Firm and his podcast, Kicking Ass and Taking Names, a business empowerment podcast, to this show.

I gotta tell you up front, Marlon is like a hoot. He is just a treat to spend time with, whether that is virtually or in person, he is a treat and he is a hoot.

He is like the type of guy you want in your corner whether I'm sure for his clients, but for me as a client of mine, and of course, just somebody that I call a friend. He's awesome.

So as I said, Marlon is a client of mine. He actually attended our in-person referral accelerator a few months back in February.

And so at that time, he, after the accelerator ended, he asked me to be on his podcast, and we were able to dive into the myths about what people get wrong about generating referrals without asking. So you are going to enjoy this conversation. Look out for some laughter. Here we go.

Marlon Griffith: Hey, this is Marlon Griffith from the Kicking Ass and Taking Names Business Owner Empowerment Podcast. I'm doing a podcast takeover of the roadmap to referrals this week. Here's the episode where I interviewed Stacey over on my podcast.

Marlon Griffith: Welcome to the next episode of Kicking Ass and Taking Names with Marlon Griffith Esquire. My next guest, and must admit, I'm also a client, is Stacey Brown Randall. And she's going to talk about how to get referrals without asking. Welcome, Stacey.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Thank you so much. I'm excited to be here.

Marlon Griffith: Now, this is a big deal because Stacey, you know, this is my 14th podcast. And I remember when I got to five, I got a notice from the podcast folks saying, you have done something special. You made five podcasts.

Well, let me tell you about Stacey. Stacey just released her 354th podcast. I mean, she's like podcast emeritus or something like that, right? So my 14, I'm still proud of myself, but it does not compare at all to Stacey Brown Randall. Stacey, tell us about it, who are you?

Stacey Brown Randall: You know what's interesting about the podcast? There's like three milestones you have to make. The first one is getting to episode 10. So you're there, this is 14, right? You hit the first milestone; you survived to episode 10.

And I think that has something to do with it's almost like three months of releasing an episode kind of thing. The next one you're after right now is to hit episode 52. And that means you lasted a year. And that's if you release an episode weekly. If you don't release an episode weekly, obviously these numbers aren't the same thing.

But for me, my podcast, Roadmap to Referrals, it releases a new episode every Tuesday and has since it started. And so 52 is the next one. And then I feel like the next big milestone to make is when you hit that 200 to 300 mark, somewhere in between there.

Like you're kind of at that place where you're like, well, I guess I'm never stopping. It's kind of like that place you feel like you hit, so.

Marlon Griffith: Yes, yes.

Stacey Brown Randall: All right, well, you asked me to tell folks a little bit about myself. Well, I am a business owner who is just pleased that I get to

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have Marlon as a client. That's all people need to know about me, is that I have the opportunity to make sure you do what you're supposed to do.

So, I mean, that is joy in and of itself for me. But I work with small business owners, and I teach them that it is possible to generate referrals without asking, without compensation, without being gimmicky and promotional or without feeling like you have to network all the time.

And I do that by making sure that business owners understand the science behind referrals so they don't violate it and they can actually leverage it. And then, of course, by protecting relationships.

Because all referrals come from people who know you and a relationship with you. And protecting that is paramount, because most of the strategies out there tell you to do things that actually really put you at a disadvantage with your relationships and sometimes harms them.

So I help business owners understand that it doesn't have to be that way. You can generate referrals in a way that'll work and will work for you.

Marlon Griffith: So before we get into the nuts and bolts of getting referrals without asking, I really, you know, like I said, I listened to a number of your podcasts before I reached out to you. And one of the episodes that really struck me was the episode where you talked about business failure and how your first business failed.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes.

Marlon Griffith: And the lessons that you learned from that and how it's informed you going forward with this new business. And I use the word new loosely since you've been, this business has been 12 years and running. Right? So I'd like you to talk to us a little bit about that.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, you know, it was probably, I mean, now it feels like it was forever ago, right? I mean, it feels like another lifetime, but it was probably one of the hardest things that I have ever been through.

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The first thing that happens with a business failure is like, if you're not in total denial mode, which I totally was, is like coming to terms with the fact that, oh, wait, this is real. It's actually failing and I'm going to have to shut it down and I'm going to have to go get a job. That was probably the hardest thing.

You know, they say like when your business fails, obviously financially it's tough. It's emotionally tough, right? It's like all the things you would expect. But the hardest thing I think is the blow to your ego.

And just being able to decide you're going to pick yourself back up. And, you know, you're a grown up, you're an adult, you do what you got to do. For me, that was, OK, I got to go get a job. We are a two-income earner household and both of us are needed to make that work.

So I had to go get a job. And that was really hard coming from freedom. So my first business was an HR consulting firm. It made it to just past the four-year mark but did not make it to that elusive five-year mark.

You know, 85% of small businesses will fail before they hit the five-year mark. And I am a part of that club. I am a part of the 85% small business failure club. And I, so it was just over four years. It failed. I had to go back to corporate America.

I mean, I had to buy like, I had to get like suits and wear heels, like the whole thing. And then I had to go work for somebody and that was really hard, but I was always looking for that escape route.

I was always like, what is going to get me out of here? I know I'm meant to be an entrepreneur. One business failure and not trying again is not what's going to be a part of my obituary. So I got certified as a business coach, productivity and business coach when I was in corporate America, and that became my escape route.

But what was most beneficial to me was taking the time. And I didn't take the time like in the first couple of months, but about a year after my

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business failed, while I was still in corporate America is really taking stock of why, like, why did this happen?

Like why I do great work. My clients loved me. Why wasn't my business successful? And it really came down to understanding a few key things for me. And I think everyone's business journey is a little bit different.

But the first one that I learned, which I think has been, I would say, most impactful to the business I have today from the very beginning, is that you've got to touch business development every day. And you've got to be open and willing to figuring out what that looks like for you.

And it's not just touching business development, which I don't mean like every single day, but you're doing something weekly. You're not getting away without doing something like once a quarter, but you're focused on that weekly or monthly.

And it really does come down to doing the things that you'll do. And not only that, that will work. So for me, there's a lot of things you can do to grow a business. There's a lot of things I don't want to do. And that was a big one for me.

The other big lesson I learned from my business failure was how critical it was to protect my mindset. And I would say as this business I'm in now is hitting the 12-year mark later this year, it's really that's even more important than I think anything else that I learned in my business failure.

I feel like it's come full circle of how important it is to continually work on your mindset. And I've probably been on that journey for about the last four years, like always knew it early on. But really, I think as I've matured as a business owner, that has been a main point for me.

It's like focusing on my mindset and what I believe and what I allow to go into my head and take root into my heart and really focused on what's possible and what's possible for what I want.

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So there's been I mean, there's a lot of lessons learned. There's a lot of like things that you understand and see differently when you've been through a business failure.

But I mean, I wouldn't change it for anything, no matter how painful it was. I wouldn't change it, but it definitely taught me some very hard lessons. I could have preferred maybe not to learn all of them, but it is what it is.

Marlon Griffith: Right, right, right. No doubt. No doubt. You know, I think it says a lot about a person who's trying to help people better their business to not always act like they had it all figured out and just, you know, especially when you're in a coaching field, more or less.

I got it all figured out. I knew how to do it. This is my, you know, this is, no impediments to my success. I never stepped back. I always kept going.

You know, those, those, you know, those, those days can be very, you know, when you hear people talk like that, it can sometimes make you feel like, what the hell am I doing wrong?

Because I had a tough quarter or I had a tough month or maybe even had a tough year and people just keep growing a hundred percent over a hundred percent all the time. Right?

So now you are an author as well. So I want to get to this referrals without asking. And you kind of mentioned it earlier, but what struck me about what you're doing, that you actually believe that it's more science.

It's a science to referrals, right? I think you just briefly just mentioned that. First, tell me about what is the science? What are you talking about when there's a science to get referrals?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, I think that for the longest time, people looked at referrals as just one more marketing strategy or just one more prospecting strategy to bring in business.

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And above all of the different sales strategies, whether it's marketing or prospecting activities that you can do, there isn't one that I think is more, I mean, the way that I look at it is I just think referrals is the one because it's reliant on somebody else being willing to put their reputation on the line to send a client to you.

That there's just a lot more happening there from a psychology perspective and what's going on in their brain and what they're thinking and like the relationship you have with them. I think when you understand like it's not like running an ad. Right? Running an ad, you're trying to get the attention of that prospect.

Going to a networking event, you're hoping to get the attention of that prospect who's going to see you, see your name tag and be like, I need to hire you. Right?

Like there's this most of what we do in sales and marketing is talking to the prospect or trying to get the prospect's attention. But when it comes to referrals, the person you're talking to, the person's attention that you're trying to be able to hold is never the prospect.

It's a person, which I call the referral source, but it's a person who knows the prospect. So there is like a gatekeeper, right? And not a gatekeeper, because that's a terrible word, but there's like a person in front of the prospect.

And so when you understand that, you start realizing, oh, well, then it's not like running an ad and it's not like sending a newsletter and it's not like giving a sales pitch. That isn't what's going to actually get someone to think to refer me because they're not buying me themselves.

They don't need sales language. They need a relationship. Well, then once you look at it that way, you're like, right, they need a relationship.

And so that forces you to unpack, well, what actually is happening here? And when I started to dig into why my strategies were working. So I will tell

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you this. This was like the strategy started working and I was like, why are they working? This is amazing. But why are they working?

And then I started to dig into the science behind them. And there's three main parts that always bubbled up.

The first one is, is like what's going on in the brain of the person who's referring you. So your referral source. So there's something happening in the brain when they make the decision to refer you.

And that is actually what scientists call the happiness trifecta. When we do something that feels good, we have chemicals in our brain that is released, that kind of regulates that feel good feeling, right?

And when I am making the decision to help you, Marlon, by referring you to somebody else, right? In the moment that I'm like, wait, you have a problem? I can help you solve that. Like I can't solve it myself, but I know who can.

That lights up, okay, it doesn't actually work like that in the brain, but it's how I talk about it. That lights up and triggers our happiness trifecta because it's feeling good to help somebody and who I'm helping is you who has a problem.

So you have to understand that from what's going on in your referral sources, the person referring to you, what's going on in their brain is them feeling good because they're not helping you, they're helping somebody else who has a problem by connecting them and referring them to you.

So that happiness trifecta of what's going on in the brain of the referral source is really important. It's why it's so important for people like you and me who want more referrals to understand and know your place.

You're not the most important person when a referral is happening. Yes, you get a new client and that will always feel amazing, but you're not the most important person.

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The referral source is, then the prospect, then you. You're like the third most important person of three people, right?

So you're still important. But it's understanding that and putting that in its proper place and positioning yourself and acting from that place and understanding, hey, when I get a referral, it may be amazing for me, but it's the referral source helping someone else. And I have to understand that. So that's the brain science.

The second piece is the piece most people understand when it comes to referrals, which is the trust factor, right? The psychology of trust.

But what people think really builds that trust is that people believe that trust is built from you knowing how amazing I am, and you knowing all the awards I've won, and you knowing all the things that I've done that makes me so awesome and how I help my clients and all the things.

And the truth is, like, yeah, it's important for me to know what you do. Like, I need to know. Right. You're an attorney, not a dentist. That is actually kind of important on some level, of course.

But my willingness to refer to you isn't because I think you're amazing at what you do. That's actually what I expect. I expect if you've been in business for any length of time, you probably know what you're doing until you lose my trust. It's just already there.

But where the psychology of trust actually comes into play when it comes to referrals is not so much that I know you're amazing, but it's that we have a relationship. And I can trust you because we have a relationship and it's not like I've gone three years without talking to you or hearing from you.

So it's that fostering of that relationship that really solidifies that psychology of trust. I mean, yes, you can lose my trust by really messing up with people that I refer to you. Of course, it can be lost, but people feel like they have to earn it by educating their referral sources about how amazing they are and how they do their work.

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And I'm like, no, you just need to maintain a relationship with them. They do need to understand what you do but it's not the same way.

And then that relationship piece kind of bleeds into the third part of the science that I teach, and that's behavioral economics. How you're going to maintain that relationship with me should be based on the things that are actually going to have me remember you, right?

Trigger you in my brain from a subconscious perspective when I see an opportunity to refer to you. And so how you maintain that relationship with me, we look at the framework or the pieces of behavioral economics like variety.

You can't just take me to coffee every month and think that's going to generate referrals. Actually, I don't know anybody who has time to go to coffee every month with the same people over and over and over again.

I guess maybe not very busy people. That's not me and you. Most business owners don't fall into that category, but there's got to be variety. There's got to be a surprise and a delight factor to it.

There's got to be, I didn't see that coming. And my gosh, Marlon really cares, right? You've got to show up differently. You've got to impact how they feel about you. Because once you impact how your referral sources feel about you, then you've earned the right to direct how they think about you.

And that's when our language piece comes into play as well. But when you're thinking about behavioral economics, I always say we look at the positive side, the good side of behavioral economics.

There are lots of people out there that will teach you how to leverage and take advantage of the negative side of behavioral economics, specifically one is reciprocity.

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So we've all heard, hey, you're having a meeting with a client and they're like, this is amazing. Marlon, you are incredible. Thank you so much for your help.

And then the evil side of reciprocity, right? People will teach you like, well, then pounce on them in that moment and be like, I'm so glad you're so happy with the work that I'm doing for you. Now, can you give me the names of three people just like you that I should start working with?

That is taking advantage of reciprocity. The client feels amazing and you're twisting it into making it about yourself. And what people don't realize is actually, psychologically, how that negatively impacts.

So a lot of the strategies we've been taught for decades, the asking, the paying, the being gimmicky and promotional, or the networking all the time, not only do they waste time, they don't actually trigger the referrals that we want on an ongoing, consistent basis.

Marlon Griffith: Right. I think it's important what you just said. One, as far as triggering the referral that you want and consistently, I guess, triggering the referrals that you want, right? Because you get plenty of calls, plenty of folks reaching out if you're in the space long enough, but they may not be your ideal client.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah.

Marlon Griffith: And it's really about you, the referrals in this process that you teach, it's about really how to get more of the ideal clients.

Stacey Brown Randall: It is. It's more of the ideal clients. And when you are getting non-ideal or non-qualified prospects referred to you, it's knowing how to fix that, right? It's both of it.

Like, yes, we want to make sure that our referral sources are referring us who we want, but when they're not, it's knowing how to fix that while protecting the relationship that we have with our referral source.

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Like lots of people ask me all the time, they're like, how do I train my referral sources to send me the right types of clients? And my response is always, well, first of all, your referral sources are not dogs, and they do not need to be trained.

Like most people just like, I just want to have the script and I want to go into like, I want to bark orders at them. That's not what they mean, but that is exactly how it feels to a referral source.

And as you know, because you're a client of mine, when I teach having a conversation with a referral source that is not sending you quality referrals, this is about you cannot let them get defensive.

If your language takes them to a place of getting defensive, they're going to think they've done something wrong, and then they just shut down and they probably won't refer you anymore.

So how you manage that conversation is important, while also getting your point across, which is who your ideal clients are. And there's just, and you know this, right? But there's an art and a science to everything we do and everything we say.

Marlon Griffith: Yes. Yes. So let me take you back a moment, right? So, because we just spoke about ideal client. And one of the things that, when we spoke, you are very specific about what industries that you help.

And I want to know what those industries are. I want to know why. And it's actually one of the topics of one of your 354 episodes where you talk about how to create your niche.

Because again, referrals, this whole idea of really getting referrals of your ideal client means that you're not just throwing everything up against the wall and anything that comes, you're taking. So let's talk about that.

Stacey Brown Randall: Which sometimes you do in the beginning of having a business.

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Marlon Griffith: In the beginning, of course.

Stacey Brown Randall: Right. You shouldn't be doing it once you're a little bit further along. Yeah, so here's the thing. I think you can create a niche in a lot of different ways. Some people, when you say niche, they think industry.

Oh, I only work with attorneys. Oh, I only work with interior designers. Oh, I only work with CPAs, right? So you can go very like vertically deep into a niche by industry. For me, my niche is built around what people believe and what people have been taught.

And so when I look at who I work with, who my strategies work with, the reality of it is, and you know this, the strategies I teach, they take some time. They're not like hundreds of hours, I'm not talking about that kind of time, but there is an investment of resources, of capacity and time to have them work.

Which means when I look at the time someone's gonna take, if it's gonna take you a couple of hours a month, or maybe more depending on what you're working on at that time, You know, a client can't be worth a few hundred dollars to you. A client needs to be worth thousands of dollars to you.

So when I look at my niche, being part of that for me is looking at clients that are working, my clients are working with other clients where it's not a small amount of money that they're spending with you, which means when they pay you that money, they don't want to make a mistake and they want to get it right.

Which means in some cases that means they would really rather be referred to you. So they have a confidence and a trust factor going into it. So when I look at who I work with in the professional services and creative industries, where it's not just attorneys, they all kind of have that mentality together.

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They all kind of have that, that demographic piece together, but it is going to be like in professional services firms. It's going to be like attorneys. It's going to be B2B business to business consultants and coaches.

It's going to be CPAs and bookkeepers and then financial advisors from that perspective. And then really understanding like, what they have in common, as well as when I work with folks in more of my creative industries.

Creative industries are like my interior designers and my architects, right? And then I also work with real estate agents.

So most people would be like, wait, that's like seven people and that's not a niche. Like by definition, that's not supposed to be a niche.

But here's what they have in common. Other than the fact that it costs money to work with them and their clients should be coming through referrals. That's one piece of it.

The other piece of it is that when you look at my attorneys, my CPAs, my bookkeepers, my consultants, my interior designers and my architects, they become a business owner because they're excellent at what they do.

And there is typically alphabet soup after their name or it takes additional certification and schooling to get to where they are. They want to be seen as the expert. Which means they don't want to be feeling like they're peddling for business at the end of the day.

But I'm an amazing attorney, so I become a business owner that has a law firm. I'm an amazing interior designer, so I become a business owner that does interior design.

At that moment, you've got to learn how to sell. And that is not necessarily something they teach you at law school or an interior design school or your certification program you go through to become a consultant or whatever.

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So at that point, you want to learn how to sell in a way that's going to feel normal. And referrals without asking will feel normal and won't have that ick factor.

On the flip side of that, when I look at my real estate agents in particular and my financial advisors, those two poor industries have been overtaught how to sell, overtaught how to generate referrals.

And they've been told you got to ask or pay or be gimmicky. And they're like, that is not how I want to show up in the marketplace. I want to show up more than a professional expert level.

So I sound like referrals without asking is like a breath of fresh air. They're like, yes. So I think how you define it and the importance of it is really critical.

But it is one of the things, let's be honest. I say to anybody, I teach business owners how to get referrals without asking. Everybody in the room raises their hand and is like, I want that.

But I don't work in certain industries. I don't work in home services. I don't work with highly transactional type of businesses. I don't work with retail or hospitality or medical.

I don't work with e-commerce and online businesses, or SaaS based businesses. Because what they're looking for, my strategies aren't going to fulfill the same way it will for the folks I do work with.

Marlon Griffith: I mean, people, I'm sure people in the professional field is on, you know, what we call it, they probably part of some type of networking group. They're part of a Chamber of Commerce.

You know, they play at golf tournaments and do all those things. And then they all have their business card. They stick their business card, give their business card to someone. And that's kind of, either you learn that or that's kind of the practice of how things are done.

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But you say many of us don't like, we see asking for referrals or asking for business. It's like an always hustling salesperson, right?

And I know my reaction to a salesperson. Like I always feel like a salesperson is someone trying to sell me something I don't need. I'm being honest with you, right? Or trying to get me to pay more for something that I do want.

Stacey Brown Randall: Right.

Marlon Griffith: And I imagine that many people share that same view. So that's really been my issue. I'm not a salesperson. I do a good job and see how I do a good job and just find me, I guess. And that clearly does not really work for consistency.

So now what I wanted to get into is, break it down a little bit, the psychology of me, right?

Stacey Brown Randall: Oh. How long do we have?

Marlon Griffith: Meaning not me necessarily Marlon, but the psychology of the clients who come to you. What is driving them to you?

Stacey Brown Randall: I think that at the end of the day, okay, so here's the thing. I think there's what I like to call, there's like the surface stuff you can see, and then there's all the things we think and feel but don't speak.

So it's like the tip of the iceberg versus everything below it. I think when people talk about referrals at a very general level, it kind of gets grouped into sales and business development and marketing.

So there's this idea that referrals is a piece of that. And I just got to apply some marketing strategies because it's all marketing. It's all sales or whatever. And so there's a generalization that I think happens with referrals and a generalization of what it looks like to get them.

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And that's what you kind of see at the tip of the iceberg. And you see a lot of strategies out there that people don't want to do, like asking and paying.

But when you get below the iceberg, what I have found with my clients, what they're ultimately after as you kind of get down is, number one, they want referrals. Nobody comes to me and was like, I want to learn your strategies, but I don't care if I get any referrals.

There is a metric that drives people. But it's not the number of referrals, it's what referrals says to them about their business.

And what referrals say to people about their business is number one, I deliver quality and people need me. Number two, it says that I don't have to go out and feel like the always hustling salesperson, constantly networking that business. I can attract business to me.

It's like it's like the pulling of it in versus the pushing for it and trying to go out there and getting it, right?

And so it's the idea that when people come to me, yes, they want more referrals. But what they're really after is what more referrals says to them about their business and how they get to feel and then how their business grows.

I don't have anybody that I've ever worked with that isn't tracking the numbers. And you know this, Marlon, because we have a dashboard. We track everything. It matters. We have to know what's happening. We have to know it's working.

But ultimately, what I find is when I talk to people about the success they've had with me and they talk about the numbers first, right, they're like, OK, yeah, I got these referrals. It was great. I had this I doubled my goal or whatever. It was awesome. Then they talk about what it means to them.

And it means that you get to have this level of this unshakable business confidence, that no matter what's going on in the marketplace, no matter

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what's going on in the economy, no matter what's going on in your local region or your national area, that you have a strategy that is based on relationships that aren't going away like an algorithm.

And so it gives you this unshakable confidence to know that your business can survive things. That doesn't mean you're guaranteed X number of referrals every single month, but it does mean when you're generating referrals consistently and you're getting what you're looking for, it allows you to have some confidence in your business.

It's hard to get any other way because you don't know when the spigot's going to turn off from the Facebook ad, right? Or you can't go to a networking event for a couple of months. What does that mean? That you don't have to worry about.

And so I think that's an important piece for people to understand when someone comes to me and they're like, I want more referrals. I know it's so much more than that. Yes, we've got to get you more referrals or you're not going to think this is valuable.

Marlon Griffith: Sure.

Stacey Brown Randall: But I know what more referrals actually means to you. And it means having a system you can count on, having a system that you can trust. And it means bringing in business easier than ever before and allowing that consistency to build that unshakable business confidence.

Marlon Griffith: Right. So we've kind of been on the higher level of the psychological part of this, but let's get to like the practical part.

And, you know, as I stated a little bit earlier, you are an author and you wrote the book *Generating Referrals Without Asking, Simple Five-Step Plan to Referral Explosion*. Well, what's the five steps? Are you're going to share?

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Stacey Brown Randall: You know, it's really interesting. Yes. So it's funny because most people ask me, they're like, okay, if I read your book, *Generating Business Referrals Without Asking*, will I get all the referrals.

And I'm like, what most people don't know, but you've seen behind the curtain. So, you know, Marlon, I actually teach 20 different strategies. Nobody needs them all. And so it's not like you need all of them on day one or anything like that.

But the reality of it is, is when you're looking at generating referrals, that book is based on one of my foundational strategies.

And the one foundational strategy that the book is based on is you have people referring you now, what we call referral sources, you have existing referral sources. What are you doing to cultivate more referrals from them? And that's what the five steps are based on.

But again, there's 19 other strategies, like maybe a few of them are actually sprinkled throughout the book too. But there's a whole bunch of other strategies that it's not even a part of that book.

Like when my second book comes out later this fall, it's going to be on the referable client experience, which is another one of our three foundational strategies.

And so, cause I'm like, it's not like there's so much to learn you can never understand it. You just got to boil it down to what matters.

But with those five steps, if you have people referring you, the first thing you got to do and home, you know this, I'm not surprised.

I used to be always surprised, but I'm not really surprised when people tell me, I don't know who my referral sources are, or I think I have between like 15 and 50. I'm like, a range is not a known factor. You've got to know, right?

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Marlon Griffith: That's part of my first conversation, right? When that was one of the questions, referral sources I have, and I was one of those people. I didn't know.

Stacey Brown Randall: I didn't know. So the first, yeah, that first step, and it's something obviously you remember because you were in my referral accelerator, the pre-work to do to come to the referral accelerator was this first step. It's that critical.

Like it's, I tell folks, I'm like, it's the first thing, no matter how you work with me, no matter the three ways you can work with me, it's the first thing you will do. And it's so important. It's the one thing that's like in the book that I teach everybody. I talk about it. I've got podcast episodes on it.

I cannot, I could not impress upon people enough how important this step is, and that is understanding who's referring you now, because that is your low-hanging fruit to more referrals faster.

And so if you can identify who's referring you now, and not just because you think you remember a recency bias, or the last couple of people were referred to you by these seven people, so it must be those seven.

But digging into your data and knowing where are my clients, my prospects are actually coming from. So the first step is identifying your referral sources, those existing people already referring you.

The second step, and this is kind of a baseline is like, hey, you know what, you are gonna get more referrals if you do things to generate more referrals, So you need to know how to write a thank you card. You need to have a thank you process.

And I know that sounds so basic. They're like, okay, write a thank you card. Got it. Most people don't. Most people fight it. Most people think about doing it and then don't and think that their good intentions matter. They don't.

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Like it only matters if you do it, but it answers this question. Why should I refer you again if you can't thank me for the referral I just sent to you? Right?

Marlon Griffith: Can we get to the thank you card?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, you wanna talk about it?

Marlon Griffith: Just a little bit, because I know we're gonna get to the other steps. Because there's a psychology with that, that that's the purpose on a referral source.

Most of us, we may call, we may text someone and say, hey, thank you for the referral, or we may send an email, say thank you.

So it's not that people don't necessarily say thank you to the referral source, but you think it's something even that the handwritten note that's sent in the mail has even more of an impact.

Stacey Brown Randall: It does, because here's the thing. Yes, most people will send a quick email, or a quick text message and they'll think that that suffices for the thank you.

The reality of it is, is you're probably one of like, I don't know, 100 to 200 emails I'm going to get in a day. I may see your thank you, but I don't remember it.

And a text thread, it only takes like five more texts to push you down off my page. And I don't even know that your text is there anymore. There's no like memory of it, unfortunately.

So a thank you card does two things. One, it's guaranteed to more likely that they're going to see it, recognize it and acknowledge that, wow, that was really cool. They thanked me.

And the second thing is, is it tells them one thing that an email and a text can never tell somebody, and that is that they're worth your time.

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You're worth the time it took for me to get the note card and the envelope and to write this note and to put your address on it and a stamp and to walk it to the mailbox, right? To get off my bum and go walk it to the mailbox. Like you're worth all that time.

You can't do that in a text and an email. And when you write the thank you card correctly and you use the right language, you actually have the opportunity to help them to remember what they just did.

So as you know, and for your listeners, I want them to know this, you can say a lot of things in your thank you card. But the number one line I want to be in there is, thank you for referring so and so to me. And then where I say so and so, you insert the name of the prospect.

Because in that moment, it's not just, thanks for the referral. I'm like, oh, yeah, right. Who'd I refer? It's like, thank you for referring Marlon to me.

And then I instantly see Marlon in my mind's eye. I'm like, oh, that's right, I did send Marlon. That's right. And now you're cementing yourself in my subconscious more because now I can put a face to an action I took. And it's more likely I'm going to remember it.

Marlon Griffith: And the key, and I want to make sure my audience understands this, you said prospect that was referred, not client.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes.

Marlon Griffith: Remember, you are working on a referral source, right? You are nurturing your referral source relationship.

So it does not matter as much for this purpose, whether the prospect turns into a client. Obviously, we want prospects turning into clients, but that doesn't matter. So you don't, it's more about thanking them for even sending that person or company to you, right?

Stacey Brown Randall: Marlon, it is like watching the grasshopper become the master. I'm so glad that you're like, you're listening and

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applying and now you're teaching. You're like, this is what I learned. This is what matters. You're so right. This is about thanking them for what they did, not thanking them from an outcome they have no control over.

Marlon Griffith: That's right.

Stacey Brown Randall: We want to encourage them to keep referring. If they don't refer the right quality, we'll solve that later. But we want them to keep referring. We want to thank them for the act of referring. So yes, very, very important point.

But here's the thing. You can't unleash a referral explosion with just writing a bunch of thank you cards. It's not going to work. You'll get some. You'll get appreciation. You'll get some. Thank you cards matter. And written cards matter. But that's not going to unleash a referral explosion.

So step three in the process is making sure, okay, you've identified your referral sources, you know how to thank them when they do refer to you, but what do you do in between receiving referrals from them, right?

You've gotta have what we call the referral plan of touch points. But for your audience who isn't like on the inside with our language, we'll just call it outreach. You've gotta have outreach that you are doing to your existing referral sources that kind of, it has a cadence all throughout the year.

Now, not daily, not weekly, and not even monthly. I teach between five, six, or seven outreaches over the course of a 12-month period is what we're aiming for.

But that means, and this is a lot where the behavioral economics framework comes in, to the, like what I like to call, it's like a part of my secret sauce of what I teach is the what you do and how you build that.

This is not your newsletter. This is not taking people to coffee four times a year or five times a year. There's got to be variety. That's got to be a surprise and delight factor. And there's a whole science-based framework

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to what those five, six or seven outreaches are going to be. But the cadence matters.

But you have to have that plan in place because we're trying to impact how the referral source feels about you showing up in unexpected ways they didn't see coming while you're extending your gratitude for the fact that they are referring to you.

But that outreach with that surprise and delight factor and being awesome, gives us the opportunity to do step four, which is to deliver on the language. It's what we say. And as you know, Marlon, that really is my secret sauce.

Like if the outreach plan, those five to seven outreaches is the meat and potatoes of a meal. The language is the special sauce that makes it taste good, makes that meal taste good and makes it work. And so that's the piece I think people overlook.

It's like it's not just doing some nice things. It's what we get to say while we're doing those nice things, because if I can impact how you feel about me, if you're my referral source and if I can impact how you feel about me, I then earn the right to direct how you think about me.

But doing it in a way that protects our relationships and puts the relationship first, not the outcome I want, which is more referrals. So there is definitely an art to what the language looks like.

And then when you're thinking about all that, it's just step five is like, OK, you know who your referral sources are. You know how to thank them. You have a plan to put into place outreaches throughout the year.

You're going to have the right language that you're going to use within those outreaches where we're all very, very busy business owners. So you better be able to process-itize it. Which I recognize is not a word. It's just one I use, right?

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It's like taking this thing you built and creating it as a workflow or a process within your business. Because if you are supposed to do six outreaches a year, and then all of a sudden you forget to do a couple over six months. You're not delivering on that referral source experience that we want for them ultimately.

Marlon Griffith: Right. Because there's touch points. And the way that you teach this is that you put this on your calendar.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes.

Marlon Griffith: Yes. It's like everything else in your life. If your calendar, your children's soccer game, basketball game, baseball game, you know, the vacations, you calendar this.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yep.

Marlon Griffith: Right? So it's not just left up to, oh, I have a busy week or this week I got some free time. It's, you know, it's that tickler that tells you this is what I need to do, and this is who I need to do it for.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. And I think if once it's on our calendar, right, we're more likely to recognize it. And then also sometimes it's about putting it into whatever your workflows, like database project management software is too, so that you can get reminders that it's coming.

Marlon Griffith: So let's talk about that.

Stacey Brown Randall: Right.

Marlon Griffith: Right. It's just that in my prior podcast we talked about CRMs and that's what you're talking about. Some people have CRMs, some people may use Excel spreadsheet, but you have to have something.

But really, you know, it's enough technology out here that exists. So you can create that CRM that kind of does this for you. It kind of helps you, you know, with the flow and everything else.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, and you know, I would say like, I think every business needs a CRM on some level, even if your CRM is an Excel spreadsheet, right? You need to be tracking everything that's happening in your business with your prospects and clients and things.

But sometimes I find with folks that it's actually more helpful if they have like a project management software as well, which a lot of CRMs have that now built in. It wasn't this way 10 years ago, but a lot of CRMs have like the project management software like built in.

And in some cases, you may need like a standalone separate project management software, just so that you can remember that sometimes, depending on what you're doing as part of your outreach, there may be some steps involved.

And those steps involved may be very simple, like, oh, I need to order cards, right? Like, that's what I got to do. Or maybe you're doing an event or whatever it is, right? Maybe I'm sending a gift, right? There's a variety of things that you can choose from.

But the idea there is, is making sure that it happens. So I always tell folks, I'm software agnostic. I don't care what CRM you use. I don't care what project management software you use if you decide you need one, but I need you using something. And at a minimum, I need you putting things in your calendar.

Marlon Griffith: Right. So I didn't warn you about this question.

Stacey Brown Randall: Oh boy. These are the best.

Marlon Griffith: You know, this is something that I've been personally experiencing since I got a little bit more active on social media with postings and stuff. I now tend to get a lot of LinkedIn requests from people I don't know.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah.

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Marlon Griffith: How do you think that should be handled?

Stacey Brown Randall: In terms of if you should do it?

Marlon Griffith: One, should I say yes? Or should people say yes? And then how does that eventually play into, you know, increasing your referral network?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so here's the first thing. I think every business owner has to make a decision for themselves as to what they're going to tolerate in their business.

I think the newer you are in business you tolerate a lot more because you just don't know and don't have the discernment to figure out where opportunities may be hiding and versus where it's not.

I think the longer you're in business, you realize that your time is way more precious than anything else.

So when somebody reaches out to me and so here's the thing I always kind of look at when people reach out to me to connect on, let's just use LinkedIn as our example, because really on like Instagram, you're not asking to follow me. You can just follow me.

Now, granted, on LinkedIn, you can follow me, too. But if you actually want to connect, you've got to ask my permission.

If you reach out to connect with me and I don't know who you are and you don't give me a note as to why you want to connect, I'm probably going to ignore it. Because I just, I don't know you, right?

And some people want to connect because they then want to be able to check out who your connections are. And I'm not interested in you going through my network for yourself, right?

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So the second thing is, is when people do send a note or they send an in-mail message, you can tell the pitches from a mile away. You can tell the people who reach out and you're like, Oh, a pitch is coming.

I don't mind when people reach out to me and they're like, hey, I just want to connect. I want, like, I just want to make sure that your stuff gets into my feed and I can see it. Great. Right. Or, hey, I just listened to your, uh, your podcast. I'm listening to your book. I'd love to, even if they're one down one day down the road, they're planning on pitching me like that's fine.

But you gotta extend value before you're going to get my attention. So. But when people reach out to me that I don't know, and then they pitch me immediately, they're always dropped, like they're always not happening, not accepted on my end, right? I'm like dropping them at hit the X.

So I think you have to think about how people respond to those. How do you respond to those messages? And then do you want to turn around and do that?

And so for most people, I always tell them, I do have people who reach out to me and they're like, does cold like if I do cold outreach, can I get referrals? And I'm like, no, that's just not how it works.

People aren't going to put the reputation on the line and refer you to somebody who actually is looking to spend money unless they know you.

Or you can meet somebody and then they can introduce you to a bunch of people. But my guess is it is not introducing you because any of those people are going to spend money with you. It may be the other way around. Right?

And so when I have found that to be true, I have found that where I've had people like introduce me to a ton of people and I'm like, oh, my gosh, that's a ton of referrals. And then every single call I get on, I'm like, wait, I'm getting pitched.

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They were referring the other people to me, not for me. And so just recognizing that. But I don't use I mean, I think that you need to spend the time developing relationships.

And most people are like, well, what if I don't have any? I'm like, well, then you're not looking hard enough because you probably do have relationships that you could start to nurture and cultivate for referrals before you feel the need to go after cold.

Because taking someone who doesn't know you and then getting them to the place of having trust to be able to refer to you takes a lot longer than you think. And it's not the initial conversation.

Some people are like, if I can just get them on a conversation with me, I'm really personable and people like me and I can always connect. I'm like, that's like step one of eight steps.

Connecting with you and getting you on a call is like one thing. It's the hardest thing. But even after we've connected, what kind of follow up are you doing so that I don't forget six weeks ago we connected over a lovely virtual coffee?

So I mean, for me, I just think there's a lot of easier ways to get to referrals than ever trying to do it from a cold perspective, no matter what that cold perspective is, even if it's social media. I know there are people who do it. I just don't think that it works in the way that you want it to for your output of energy and your logistical lift.

Marlon Griffith: Right. So let us let's be clear. You teach strategies that also help us create referrals from people we already know but who may not have referred business to us as of yet.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, it's both.

Marlon Griffith: There's some distinction obviously between those who have referred business and those who you know but have not.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Right.

Marlon Griffith: I don't want you to give away the store obviously. This is beyond the five in your book, but can you give my audience just a little bit about what does that look like?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, so you're right. What we talked about those five steps are identifying your existing referral sources.

The other type of referral sources are potential, right? They're like the people you wish were referring to you. Those amazing clients who seem to love you, but they've never referred you or that really well-connected center of influence that you see at networking events, but it's actually never referred to you.

There is a strategy that I teach, it's called referring machines, but there's a strategy I teach of how you take somebody that you know and that you want to refer or that you know of. You don't always know them very well, but you know of them, and you want them to refer to you, but they've never done it.

That strategy is different from the five steps we just went through for existing referral sources because it's easier with those folks if they've referred you before.

With the strategy with the potential referral sources, it starts with a first conversation. It starts with the ability to connect over virtually or in person to establish the beginning of a relationship.

And so the strategy that I teach on the inside is what we call, just so people can remember it, the running five, keeping warm.

And so it's determining, hey, I need to have a handful of conversations like every month or every other month for the purpose of connecting with them because long term, I do want referrals from them.

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But the first thing you have to do when you've identified people you want to refer to you and you're having first conversations with them is you then have to remove the expectation of referrals, which is really hard for people to do.

Because the minute you go in thinking I want referrals from this person, it's like you've shot yourself in the foot. And so you're like forcing something that needs to happen naturally and organically.

So in those first conversations, I always tell folks, I'm like, you have to focus on how you can help the other person. Make them know that you care long before you ever have an expectation they're going to do anything for you.

And then once you've had that first conversation, nobody refers after one conversation. I mean, sometimes they do, but usually they don't.

Then you have what we call the keeping warm part of the process, which is how you continually do the follow up. So you keep showing up in a way that is focused on them and helping them and has released the expectation of referrals.

And that's really hard for people to do, particularly if they have been overtaught sales training. They're taught to address what I want and tell you what I want and see if you can give it to me.

This is the complete opposite of that. It's like if I'm asking people to start referring you as going in the front door like a bull in the China shop, we're like, we're going to tiptoe in the side door.

We're going to stay as far away from that front door as we can. We're going to tiptoe in the side door. And we really want people to understand that we are capable of caring about them first and helping them first.

And then obviously you're going to learn the language to plant referral seeds so that it starts percolating in their mind to refer you. But that is not

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the focal point. The focal point is helping others because eventually it does come back around to help us.

Marlon Griffith: Yeah. And I do want people to understand is you're not criticizing the sales aspect of things.

It's really that referrals, the key part, is unlike sales, sales you are, you're trying to close the prospect. There's a prospect is your target, right? It's the future client is your target. Referrals is not the client, right?

You're not targeting the client. That's why these strategies are not strategies you use necessarily. I mean, you can use some of them for clients, right? For future clients.

These are strategies you use for referral sources. I just want to make sure people kind of get that distinction and understand that.

Stacey Brown Randall: It's funny that you mentioned that because people will say to me, okay, so I can't ask for referrals. And then they apply that to things I never said.

They'll be like, so then I don't ask for the prospect to work with me. I'm like, no, you need to know how to ask the prospect to become a client.

Or I'll hear them say, okay, so I'm not asking for referrals. I'm also not asking for testimonials and reviews from my clients. And I'm like, no, you should be asking for testimonials and reviews.

I don't want you asking other people to refer to you. But there's a lot of other things as a business owner you've got to figure out how to get comfortable asking for. It's just not referrals.

Marlon Griffith: Exactly. Alright. So, we're almost at the end. And I'm shocked, Stacey, that you're on camera and you're not wearing green.

Stacey Brown Randall: I have my green cup.

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Marlon Griffith: There you go. Because if anyone knows Stacey, or her podcast, seen her podcast, so Stacey always wears green.

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, in fairness, I can't, cause I'm standing and you can't see it. My pants are green, but you just can't see it.

Marlon Griffith: Okay. Okay. And then your pen is green too. I just saw your pen. I asked you this before, but I just want to ask it again for my audience. Why green? What's that all about?

Stacey Brown Randall: You know, it's so funny. Like when most people start paying attention to me, that's always something like, oh my gosh, green is your color. It's your color.

Like I was wearing green yesterday and I showed it to my son's baseball game and the opposing team's color was green. And I got ragged on by all the parents. They're like, why are you wearing the other team's colors? I'm like, I didn't know. It's my brand color, right?

But when people get to know me, they're like, OK, green's her thing. There's got to be a story behind it. Marlon, there is not a story behind it.

When I was picking out the colors of my logo of my brand for that very first business that failed forever ago, I was told you can't pick red. And I was like, okay. And they're like, and you can't pick these colors. It was more like what you shouldn't pick versus what you should pick.

And I was like, well, fine. I'll just pick green. And so I picked green. I was like, it represents money. It represents, you know, abundance. Well, I'll just go with green.

It's not even my favorite color, but the reality is it's just the color I picked. And then I've just been consistent with it. And I've made it part of my brain. I like the color a lot. I think I kind of look good in it too, so that kind of helps as well.

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But like, you know, it's just one of those things I pick the color and then I've been running with it since that business failure. And then, of course, the last 12 years, like coming up on 12 years running this business as green's just become my color.

And I do, you know, I have a whole section in my closet that's just green clothes. I don't know if that's sad or impressive, but it's one or the other.

Marlon Griffith: Well, it's consistent. How about that?

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah.

Marlon Griffith: Alright, Stacey, we've now come to the end of this podcast, and I want to ask you what I particularly ask most of my guests. If there's three pieces of advice you would give business owners, what would it be?

Stacey Brown Randall: You really need to take the time to identify who your referral sources are. It is a critical way for you to know instantly what your low-hanging fruit is. That's your list of gold. And the fastest way to get more referrals is to get them from people who have actually already given them.

So taking the time to go through the process to identify your existing referral sources is critical. We talk about it on my podcast, Roadmap to Referrals. It's actually an entire chapter in my first book, Generating Business Referrals Without Asking. Just go straight to Chapter 8.

I mean, maybe read the other chapters. That would probably be helpful too. But it's right there laid out for you in Chapter 8. Sometimes my books for sale for like \$10, \$12, \$15 on Amazon. So it is the best way to know what is reality in your business.

And I will tell you, when people can tell me how many referral sources they have, and I can get a viewpoint of what that looks like, I can pretty much tell them exactly the strategies they need and in what order to start getting

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more referrals. So that's the one thing that I would say, and that's a business perspective.

Another business one that I would say is, it is really critical that you are continually working on your mindset. I used to think that when people were like, oh, you should focus on your mindset, and you should be mentally healthy.

And then people talk about affirmations and manifesting and all that stuff. I used to be like, OK, like somebody just stepped off the pot bus and they're just high as a kite. Like that sounds crazy, right?

But the reality of this is when I, and it took me eight years of this business to open up to it in the way that I do it now. And everything is drastically different in my business.

I'm the type of person, and most business owners are like this, you're going to white knuckle your success. You're going to hang on tight. You're going to do what needs and you're going to grind and you're going to make it happen because you need to make it happen.

But it is amazing what happens when you really work on your mindset, and you really focus on what is possible. that everything can ultimately change for your good.

That doesn't mean everything's perfect, but it means things can change for your good. So that mindset thing, growing your mindset, abundance mindset is very, very critical.

And then I would say the third thing is really figure out if you want to be a business owner, what kind of business owner do you want to be?

This is not my terminology. I don't remember where I heard it. It's like somebody was writing a book and it was like the title of the book. And I was like, that's brilliant. That's me.

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And I'm a family first entrepreneur. So I love being a business owner. I love making as much money as possible. I'm no different than most people out there. I love helping my clients. I love seeing their success.

But I won't sacrifice being a family and having a family, and that pursuit of success and the dollars and all the things. So whereas I am a successful business owner, I probably could be very much more successful if I was willing to sacrifice things in my personal life. And I'm just not.

So when I look at being a family first entrepreneur, I have three kids, they're all in high school. Praise Jesus, we hope they're all gonna leave one day and go off to college.

They may not, but they're gonna get out of my house at some point. And I am looking forward to being an empty nester with my husband. Thank goodness we still like each other.

But the reality of it is, is that I only have so much time with them. And now I'm really getting like my both of my boys are in their junior year of high school. My daughter is in her freshman year of high school.

Like we're getting to the end of the childhood period. And I think knowing that my husband and I are very committed to that. Like my son plays high school baseball. We had like four games this week. We had five games last week and I shut my day down and I am at that ball field at four o'clock wherever he is watching him play because I know it's gonna end, right?

My daughter has a play next week. I'll be at every performance, and I will make sure that that happens and I will be available.

And so building my business in a way that allows me to put my family first while also still being successful is really critical. And it took me a long time to figure out the model for that and the boundaries and my willingness to say no to things and what I say yes to.

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And you may not do that in your first couple of years of being a business owner, but as you develop and grow and you've been doing this for a long time, you realize that some things aren't worth sacrificing in the pursuit of success.

And some things are just more important. So for me, it's family first. And knowing that drives all my decisions. That's probably the most important thing and the thing I'm most proud of.

Marlon Griffith: This was awesome. Thank you so much. I think my audience is going to love and learn a lot from this conversation with you.

Stacey Brown Randall: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Marlon Griffith: Thanks for joining me on my podcast takeover on the Roadmap to Referrals podcast. I hope you visit my podcast, Kicking Ass and Taking Names, business empowerment podcasts and connect with me on all social media channels.

All the links to connect with me can be found below on this video or on the show notes page for this episode. Now back to Stacey.

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, I hope you enjoyed this episode with Marlon and I, and please don't forget to show our guest podcast host some love by checking them out on the links that are either on the show notes page for this episode, StaceyBrownRandall.com/369 or of course, his links are also available if you're watching this on YouTube below the video.

So please check out their podcast and more information on their business and show them a little bit of love.

Alright, we are back with another great episode next week, created with you and your needs in mind. Until then, you know what to do, my friend. Take control of your referrals and build a referral business. Bye for now.