Andrew: This session is about how to build a business you love and actually have a life too. This session is led by Chuck Blakeman. He is the founder of Crankset Group, which provides business advisory for leaders and companies worldwide. What we'll be talking about is based on his book, "Making Money is Killing Your Business: How to Build a Business You Love and Have a Life Too." I'll help facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner. I'm the founder of Mixergy, where proven founders teach.

First of all, thanks for being here, Chuck, being here again. We did an interview about how you built your business and today we're going to cover some of the ideas in your book. One of the people you talk about is a guy named Jim Baylor of Pacifica Automotive Repair. He's a guy who was a mechanic. He thought that there was no one as good as him.

Can you talk a little bit about the problem that he has because I think we entrepreneurs will see ourselves in him even though I'm not mechanical at all and most of us aren't automotive repair shop owners. What was his problem?

Chuck: Yeah. You know, it's interesting, Andrew. He typifies what I call the "problem of nobody's." Jim had a list of nobody's. "Nobody's as good as I am. Nobody's as important. Nobody's as experienced. Nobody's as invested. Nobody's as committed." We all have this list of nobody's in our head. Jim had this.

So, when you have that mindset that you're indispensable like that, one of the problems that can come from that is you decide that people working for you or with you is a bad idea. So, he really did have a bad taste for employees. He was great at doing all this stuff himself. He really was good.

So, it was hard for him to find anybody that could do it as well. It was sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy. When you believe you can't find other people as good as you, you make that come true. He was making it come true in spades.

But he finally came to the end of himself. You burned through one mechanic after another and you realize that you just don't have the chops to do this on your own. You finally get to the end of yourself. So, we prodded him and prodded him and finally he grudgingly decided to--and he called it wasting a few valuable afternoons over a couple of months to find the right people.

To him, that was wasting time because he had what I would call in income producer's mindset instead of a business owner's mindset. An income producer says, "If I'm not making chairs, I'm not making money." For him, of he didn't have his head buried under the hood of somebody's car, he wasn't making money. So, he saw it as a waste of time, but he decided he had to do it because he knew there was no way off the treadmill otherwise.

He wrote down just a few of his simple processes. That was one of the problems he had was when he hired people, he basically said, "Well, go do stuff. You're on your own." He got the stuff out of his head, through his heart, out through his hands onto a piece of paper. "Here's what I want and here are the standards for how I want it done." He wasted a few hours doing that. That was really helpful to him because this stuff comes second nature to him. So, for him, it was just like breathing. But putting it down was really revolutionary for him.

So, he put it down. Then he had to go find people and hire those people and then he had to train those people. All of that was sort of grudging work based on the fact that he knew that he had to do it in order to get off the treadmill. The end result was that when I wrote the book, rather than stumbling along doing this all himself, he was up to eight mechanics working for him. The business is really well-regarded for the quality of the work.

Nothing slipped. That was the thing that really surprised him more than anything was that his clients still loved him. His clients still felt like they did great work. And then not surprisingly over time, Jim got to where he trusted every one of his mechanics to get the job done well and he kind of kicked in and started asking them for ways to do things better. Not surprising, these guys knew things he didn't. They improved his shop.

So, it's really an important principle on the road to building a mature business. You need to be able to get to let go. It's one of the major issues with all business owners. You have to have the confidence that you can make money when you're not around. In order to do that, you have to have confidence that other people will be as smart and motivated as you are. So now today he gets to enjoy his kids. He gets to enjoy his mature business and his mature kids and he's a lot better off.

Andrew: You know, that's a challenge that I have. I just want to get right down to work and start doing the work myself. But one of the things that I'm noticing here since I've moved to San Francisco is there's an emphasis on onboarding new employees. Where I might just think about, "How do I do this?" often I see entrepreneurs here will say, "Let's lay out the process for a new hire.

What is that person going to experience when they come in to work the very first day? What is the process that we have for making sure that they are in Quip if that's the software we use to do project management and chat? What's the process we have to make sure that they can start actively participating right from the beginning?

Meanwhile, entrepreneurs like me think, "How do I just get this done?" And then when I hire someone else, he's got to think just like me and get things done just like me from day one. I see the problem in that thinking. What we're going to be covering today is how to not think that way and how to be more organized even if we've started down the path of doing it all ourselves.

Here are the big topics we're going to cover with the very first topic already outlined or highlighted. The first thing you say is, "Look, just start questioning the rules that people make for you." You know this guy. Who is this guy who I'm putting up on the screen?

Chuck: That's my friend Eddie, Eddie Drescher.

Andrew: What does Eddie do with you? He's more than a friend for you now, right?

Chuck: Yeah. He is. He works with us. He's a facilitator with 3 to 5 Clubs in Virgina. We have 3 to 5 Clubs all over the US. He runs 3 to 5 Clubs in Virginia Beach.

Andrew: Okay. And he had a client there who owned a fitness franchise.

Chuck: Yeah.

Andrew: Okay.

Chuck: Yeah. He had a client there that owned a fitness franchise. The interesting part of this story was that this guy had been Eddie's 3 to 5 Club for a year or year and a half learning how to get off the treadmill and was doing a great job with it. He decided to open a second fitness franchise.

He casually in his group one day mentioned he was opening a second franchise and that it's going to take 24 months to be profitable or whatever it was. It was somewhere in that arena. Somebody in the group, I don't know if it was Eddie--I don't think it was--somebody else in the group had the presence of mind to ask him, "Why do you think it's going to take 24 months to get this thing figured out?"

And he said, "Well, because that's what the franchise owners tell us. Really, when I did the first one, it took like 21, 22, 23 months. I didn't beat it by much. Just about the time I was supposed to be profitable, I was profitable. So, they proved that they're smart. They proved that they were right when that came through. So, I'm just assuming that will work again."

And the interesting thing was we say this all the time. We have this across the top of our Business Transformation Center wall, the front wall here in Denver. In giant letters it says, "Make your own business rules." The reason we tell people to do that obviously is because he who makes the rules wins. Most business owners do not understand that they actually can make the rules. They let the economy make the rules. They let their customer make the rules, the vendors, their employees. Everybody gets to make the rules but them.

So, we had that as one of our rules and one of our principles. Eddie challenged this guy on this and said, "You're going to make this come true. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Let's do something else." So, when he found out who made the rule, he said, "Let's decide something else."

So, the group got together and spent a few minutes on that and they challenged the guy to a really wild idea. They challenged the guy to be profitable in three months. That's really way outside the pyramid. So, then they backed into it and said, "Forget the rule. I'm going to make my own rule. I'm going to be profitable in three months and if that's true, then what do I have to do to be profitable in three months instead of 12 to 18 to 24?"

So, with that rule in mind, he created different parameters around what he had to do to be profitable in three months. The guy was profitable, I think, in the first month. The second month he wasn't profitable. The third month he broke even and by the fourth month he was profitable.

They put him on the stage, I remember, at this national franchise meeting six or eight months later and said, "How in the world did you do that?" He just turned to the audience and said, "I didn't believe what the franchise owners told me. I broke the rules." So, it's a real important principle for us as business owners. Make your own business rules.

Andrew: Alright. Let's go on to the big board here. The next big thing that we're going to cover is a topic that's really important for you, which is pick a business maturity date and make it public. Now, you did that. Let me go over to the browser here. Here's Chrome. If I scroll down here, I see that you wrote in March, 2009, you said, "Two years ago..." Actually, what did you write? Instead of me reading your text here, what did you decide in March, 2009?

Chuck: Well, I decided in March of 2009--and it was really I decided it in 2008 but I wrote it in March of 2009--I wrote a blog that said that basically four years to the start of business, I was going to have what I call a business maturity date. That doesn't mean

I'm done. Actually, it's almost like a commencement ceremony when a young adult crosses the stage in college. We call them a young adult that's matured or we laugh at that. But the fact is they have all the tools.

I wanted to have a business that had all the tools of maturity four years from the day I started. That was March 6th, 2007 when I started. So, in 2008, I developed this concept a little better. In 2009, I wrote about it.

Andrew: What do you mean by mature business? What does a mature business have to have?

Chuck: Great question. For me, it's not about, "It's giant and I'm done." That's old. Mature is like, again, the 21-year old crossing the stage. It has the tools. Here are the tools of a mature business. I always think in terms of what helps the business owner. So, it's really the tools that provide for the business owner.

You need two things that come out of your business in order for you to call it a mature business. It needs to be providing both time and money, very simply. Most businesses never get to where they provide time. They only provide money.

I have a friend, an acquaintance who makes $12 million a year and I can call her on a Saturday afternoon and she is on the second floor of her office building working. She tells me that if she's not there six days a week, this thing is going to fall apart with out here. That is an immature, very wealthy business.

I have another friend who takes home $120,000 a year. He takes every Friday off. He takes the last week of the month off. He has a mature business because it provides both time and money. You get to decide how much time and how much money. You make your own business rule on that. But that's what we mean by a mature business--time and money.

Andrew: I see. Where some of us might say, "A few years from now, three years from now I'd like have a $1 million business or $10 million business." I interviewed an entrepreneur and he said his next goal is a $100 million. You say it's not enough to have that kind of financial goal. You should also have a time goal. For you, how did you articulate what your time goal was?

Chuck: Yeah. Andrew, I went through six businesses where I did this wrong. Every time I assumed that if I made a bucket load of money, I would somehow magically get a life. All I got was a faster treadmill. The more money I made, the faster my treadmill went.

So, in this business, when I started the Crankset Group, March 6th, 2007, I said, "I don't know how I'm going to do this, but I'm deciding that this business is going to give me both time and money." That was a mindset shift for me that would give me both time and money. I've learned just a few years earlier--I'm a really slow learner. About my fifth business, I've learned that a decision has three parts to it. It's integral to this idea of a business maturity day. Part number one is make a decision. That's not a decision.

Part number two is put a date on it. You're getting closer. But you can say, "I'm going to buy a copier by Friday at noon," but you can still violate that. The third piece is what makes it a decision--go public. When you tell other people that, "I'm going to buy a copier and I will have it here by Friday at noon for you to us," that's a decision. Now, you can still violate it. But you can definitely mean it when you're willing to make a decision, put a date on it and go public.

That's what I did with my business maturity date. I decided that I needed to have a date. I couldn't just say, "I'm going to have a business that gives me time and money." That's not a decision. So, I decided--and I pulled this out of midair--that I believe that every business in the world can do this in three to five years. So, I decided that in four years from the date that I started my business, I would be able to have a business that I could walk away from for a month, go to New Zealand and the thing would make money while I'm gone. It would provide me both time and money.

Andrew: And New Zealand is a really good place to go because you're pretty out of touch there. Times are upside down from the US. The distance is so far you can't ever run back. Were you able to do it?

Chuck: Yeah. We said February 18th, which is actually four years to the exact date we started the business, February 18th, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. I made that commitment three and a half years earlier that we were going to walk away. At 10 a.m. on that day, we walked across the threshold of our business that evening, got on an airplane, went to New Zealand for four weeks and we checked in twice and the only thing we checked in with was the bank account to see if the thing was making money when we were not there. That was from the printing of the business card.

I can tell you this. Eleven months before we left, we still did not have our first employees. When we left, we had four full-time and four part-time and the thing ran without us. The idea here is you get what you intend, not what you hope for. And for six businesses I had hoped it would work. On the seventh business, I intended for it to work.

Andrew: Alright. Let's go back to the big board. The next thing we're going to talk about is satisfying both the urgent and the important with dual-track thinking. Give me an example of how you do that. What do you mean?

Chuck: Very quickly, when I setup this business, the very first thing I did in this business sine it's a business advisory business, we wanted to get business owners to think we had something to say. So, I recruited people for a lunch. I started a business lunch called the Business Leaders Insight Lunch. We did it every Tuesday for five years. We now do it every other Tuesday.

Andrew: I've got a screenshot of it. It's Meetup that you use to connect with all these business owners.

Chuck: Yeah. So, we've been doing that. So, I started that up front. In my book, I talk about dual tracking. One of the things that keeps businesses from growing up, they don't want to dual track. Dual tracking means you have to take care of today and you have to take care of tomorrow.

Most of us are too busy taking care of today. "I have to pay my mortgage." The problem with that is if you don't take care of tomorrow, you'll be stuck in today the rest of your business life and you'll be on the treadmill. So, long-term decision making and short-term decision making have to go together.

So, here's how that impacted my very first thing I did in my business. I could have just developed a topic and done some notes for that and copied those notes and dropped them on the lunch tables and talked about it and walked away. Then I could have done that again. I could have done that again. For 50 weeks of the year, five years in a row, I could simply just develop the business topic and talk about it.

But dual tracking required that I think about the next guy who I wanted to hire to do this. We have 3 to 5 Clubs all over the world now. Many of them were doing Business Leader Insight Lunches. I thought, "I need to dual track this." So, I simply went one step farther. I came up with the topic. I wrote the notes for a simple outline for the attendees and then I did a leader's guide. Then I did one more thing. I did a recording.

So, from the beginning, you can go all the way back to March, 2007, we have a handout, a leader's guide and a recording and we've got about 125 of these in the can.

Andrew: What's a leader's guide?

Chuck: So, a leader's guide to actually how to do this topic--

Andrew: So, if you're doing a topic, there's a recording of you having done the topic. There's a handout of it and there's a leader's guide so the next person who wants to do the similar topic at another lunch can do it too. So, you're thinking business today and growing the company for the future and growing the movement.

Chuck: Training others from the get-go, putting down the process together right from the beginning so that when I hire somebody else, the process is already in place.

Andrew: Even though it was just you? Why wouldn't you just say, "You know what? I'm going to do this today and when I bring in the next person, he'll give me some input or she'll help create this based on what she watches me do."

Chuck: Well, it is both. I want them to create as well. But that's one of the failings in business. When we wait until it's too late, it's too late. It was one of the things that allowed me to attract other facilitators. You've got, at that point in time, like 75 lunches in the can and I can pick from those. I said, "You can pick from those. You can look at the leader's guide and then add your own juice."

Andrew: I see. What's another thing that you do that gets done today so the business is taken care of today but you're also designing for the future or architecting so that the next person who does it can do it to?

Chuck: Yeah. We do these things called freedom maps. Everybody who comes into our business has to do a freedom map. So, we hired Krista. We told Krista, "Here's the result we want." And we had her write a process for her result and then a year later, we had her take that same freedom map and say, "Okay, what are you good at and what are you not good at?"

We had her do that right away. But later on we identified the things that she was not good at. In the process of doing all that, we had her put together a process training for the next person so when we hired the next person, Krista just dropped that map on her and off she went and we had the next person do the same thing. She developed her own process map. She developed her own training for those process maps.

So, she was prepared for when the next person comes through. We went through four iterations of people as we've grown and they've all had that ability to come in running.

Andrew: I get why you'd want to do it and why you'd feel comfortable and excited about writing this leader's guide for the future so you can hire someone else and grow your business. But when you ask someone different--let's take it away from Krista because I think Krista feels really confident in her position.

But imagine you hand it to someone else and you tell someone else, "I'm hiring you. I want you to do this job but also document it so that we can bring in the next person and have that person do the job." Many people would think, "That could really mean that Chuck is thinking that at some point he can hire someone different to do this--his niece, his nephew, his uncle or a new person from India who's cheaper than me." I see you're smiling. You recognize that.

Chuck: Sure. I hear it all the time from business owners who haven't done this yet because their fear is that everyone wants to hoard knowledge and, "The way I make myself irreplaceable is nobody knows how to do what I do. So, I don't want to get this out of my head because you might fire me."

But business is built on trust. If you communicate this right, a) "I want you to be able to go on vacation for a week, have someone else do your job and you don't have to work like mad before you leave, work like mad when you get back. I want you to actually enjoy your vacation." And b) "I do want you to be replaceable. We're expecting that you want to do something else someday, six months, a year, two years from now, and so, we want you to be prepared to be kicked upstairs. We want you to kick yourself upstairs. In order for you to do that, you're not going upstairs until you find your replacement and you train them."

That's very motivating to people. We brought somebody in to carry groceries and put up our refreshments and put up our spaces, very simple stuff. We told her the same thing. She's got her maps done. A year from now, she's already thinking about what she can do in our business to help us grow. She's already thinking about how she can get the system designed for the next person in--very motivated.

Andrew: Alright. Onto the big board--the next big thing is to find a balance between production, systems and vision. You worked with Gary Keeny, had a great business concept, should have been easy to do that business concept. But for some reason, it wasn't. What was the problem that Gary had?

Chuck: Well, Gary was really highly systems-focused.

Andrew: That sounds like a good thing.

Chuck: It does? In one way. But what you find out is we're all imbalanced. There are three different prototypes for business owners. There are systems-focused people. There are product-focused people. And there are market-focused people. And then, of course, we're all a mix of those three, just like an psychometric profile. I'm highly market-focused, secondarily product and I'm very little systems. I can design them, but do not make me run them. I'll kill the system and everybody in them.

Gary was highly systems-focused. So, he had this problem of doing things the same way over and over and over again and not seeing any growth. Because he had a system, it worked, he was comfortable with it, it was predictable. But when you get into that kind of environment, sometimes there's no room for growth. There's no room for you to take it to the next level. So, any time somebody brought him a good idea, it didn't make sense because it didn't fit into the system he already had in place.

So, he had to develop a new way to go about things. It was really him getting out of the mindset of having to always do things the way he'd done them. The seven last words of a dying business are, "We've never done it that way before," or, "We've always done it that way before." They're both seven.

Gary had to get out of that. What we did to get him out of that was we put him in a visionary mode because that's what market-focused people are. He's systems-focused. He's very in the trenches running the system. We got him out of that by helping him develop what we call a two-page strategic plan--very simple. "Here's my vision for where I want the business to be three years from now. Here's my vision. Here's how I'm going to make money doing that."

The context of that just got him out of the rut and moved him very intentionally forward towards his business maturity date. He had numbers now. As a result, he grew the business by hundreds of thousands of dollars. I think he went from like $400,000-something to $800,000 in the next year and then $1.4 million the next year after that. He had gotten out of the rut. He changed his system. It was a real stretch for him. But we got him into visionary mode as a market-focused person.

Part of the lesson in that really is that you can't do this stuff on your own. You've got to have the balance of others around you. So, I was the visionary guy, the market-focused guy influencing Gary. Every one of us has one of those three profiles. We have to figure out which one we are and then we have to ask ourselves, "Where do I find the next person who can help me?"

If I'm really product-focused, that means I'm in the trenches, task-oriented, making the chairs. You need somebody around you who's a market-focused person to keep the big picture going and you need a systems-focused person to smooth things out. I'm a market-focused person with a little bit of product. I need product-focused people who can carry out my crazy ideas and I desperately need systems-focused people to make sure that I don't run off the rails.

Most of us are really strong at one of those and that keeps us stuck. Gary was stuck because he was the systems guy. When we got him the balance of market and product, he took off.

Andrew: You know what? It's interesting. I've seen that on your site and other things that you guys produce. There's just such a simple elegance to it. The website works. It understands modern tools and design concepts. I just kept saying to myself, "That's not Chuck designing this." There's someone who's a production person that says, "I'm so obsessed with making sure the button has this design, with making sure that when we do something on Meetup even that there's a contact person there." That's not you. That's someone else. I'm on your site now on my other computer.

Chuck: Andrew, that's a great example of how we do this right. I did it wrong for so many businesses. The right way to do it is, "What result do I want?" Communicate the result to that person and then give the ownership to come up with the process to design it. That's the thrill they get.

Here's the result--make a great washing machine. Make a great website that communicates these things. "I don't know this stuff. I'm not the smartest guy in the room. You are. So, I'm going to give you the result and you come up with how to get there. I'll work with you. I still need to get feedback, but it's your baby."

People run with that and they dive in and they take ownership in ways that you could never imagine. This goes right back to our first example where the guy just couldn't get his head out of from underneath the hood. You've got to believe other people want this. Once you do that a few times, you realize how really great people are at taking ownership.

Andrew: Alright. Back to the big board--next we're going to talk about mapping out the processes for your business and then assign these processes an hourly value. You talked about how Bill Weston is a guy who was in the landscaping business. Obviously we're reaching outside of tech a lot here to just pull in the concepts but the concepts apply to any business. Bill Weston was in the landscaping business. He couldn't get himself off the treadmill. What was his problem and how did making out the processes for his business and setting an hourly value allow him to do that?

Chuck: By the way, we do this in tech businesses all day long. Biotechnology businesses, high technology businesses, software businesses--I can give you stories on them. This just happens to be one of my favorites because it's really hard for a guy who's a crafts person to get past this stuff. Bill is a crafts person. He loved landscaping.

He loved designing. He loved sticking the plant in the hole. He loved doing all that. He had the whole list of nobody's.

So, he couldn't see himself getting off the treadmill because there were too many things that he had to do himself. So, what we did is we had him sit down. We had him create what we call a macro process map. This will take you 30-45 minutes. I can map IBM on one side of one piece of paper in less than an hour, everything they do from sales on through to putting money in the bank. You can do this. It's a very simple process.

So, we did this with him. We had him map his process. "Here's my marketing. Here's my advertising. Here are my sales. Then I get a proposal. Then I go buy the plants."

Andrew: Let me take a look at this. This is a pretty intricate design. This is what we're talking about, right?

Chuck: Yeah.

Andrew: I can make this available to people in the tool box for this session. What are we looking at? Can you walk us through this and then help us understand how this allowed him to map out--

Chuck: It's a step-by-step macro map of this guy's entire landscape business. So, it's at a very high level. Obviously, what does advertising mean? Well, there's a lot of detail behind that. He advertises and then somebody gives them an inquiry and then he has a sales process and does the approval process, goes through the whole operations process of picking the designs and getting those approved and doing the designs.

Andrew: I see. This is every step that goes into doing what he does, even the steps that he might forget about because he's so busy doing it and it's second nature. He had to put it all together. Then the next thing you wanted him to do is--what do we see different on this one?

Chuck: What's radically different here--the one before is a before and the one there is an after--the one before shows--

Andrew: Here's before. Here's the after.

Chuck: You can see that on the one before, he's responsible for everything. We colored things based on who's responsible. He was responsible for everything. Here's the after. Here's what he wants it to look like at his business maturity date. He wanted to own four boxes. When he got there, he actually owned two. He owned like 15 boxes. He wanted to go down to four. He had two years to figure that out. So, he had to get rid of a box every month and a half, two months. So, it was a step-by-step, very linear process.

One of the shock values that we put on here--you see these little dollar amounts--what we did was we had him figure out what is he worth per hour? Let's turn him into an hourly employee. He wanted to make $150,000-$200,000 a year. So, he's worth at least $150 an hour. So, that's what we put on him as an hourly employee. And then we asked him on all those things--go back to the other map where it was just him. If you look at just him--

Andrew: There it is.

Chuck: There you go.

Andrew: All the orange is him.

Chuck: So, if you look at advertising, he was responsible for advertising. And then go back to the other map. This is an old illustration. But if you go to the new map, you'll see that he decided that he could pay somebody $8 an hour if he pretended that was a 40 hour a week job, he could pay somebody $8 an hour to do the simple things he did to throw little things out on the internet. I think it's more today, but five or six years ago that's what he said. And then you ask yourself, "What are you doing this for, Bill? You're worth $150 an hour and you're doing an $8 an hour job?"

Andrew: This one right here, this first box. $8, why is he doing that if that's all it's worth?

Chuck: So, everybody is going to laugh when you hear this because they're going to find themselves in this because this happens all the time. He said, "The reason I'm doing the $8 an hour job is I can't afford that person right now. So, I'll just do it myself." And the problem is a math problem. We're doing the wrong math. He's saying, "I can't afford $8 an hour."

But I said, "Now, if you got that on somebody else's plate and you went and did a $150 an hour job and you landed another client for $150, you just saved $142. In this case, you're losing $142 because you're worth $150 an hour and you're doing an $8 an hour job. You're losing $142 an hour doing this. You could give somebody 10 of those and that's $80 for 10 hours and you go do $150 an hour work for 10 hours. You make up $1,500. You give $80 of it to the employees and you keep the other $1,300. This is a no-brainer."

So, that's one of the shock values of putting the hourly wage on this. The guy literally laid down in his office. He said, "No wonder I'm so tired. I'm doing everything and I'm doing stuff that's not the highest and best use of my time." So, we got him past that. He got to where he got off the treadmill. He built a business he loved and he got a life too. That's the subtitle of the book, "Build a Business You Love and Get a Life Too."

Andrew: Alright. Two more points--the first of those two points is to put strategic time on your calendar and then make that time sacred. You worked with a guy named Thomas Hartman. Did you work with him directly?

Chuck: Yeah.

Andrew: He built a construction company in South Carolina and then he decided to do what?

Chuck: Well, he wanted to semi-retire and go fishing. I worked with him a little bit and Eddie worked with him a lot more. But I did meet the guy and did talk with him. We created some strategies together. But I'd say this is more Eddie than me. But he wanted to semi-retire and go fishing a few days a week instead of beating his head against the wall with all his work. He'd done the classic thing. He'd never really got off the treadmill. He couldn't figure out how to do it. He wanted to build this bigger business so that he could get off the treadmill.

So, he just got tired and decided, "Well, I'll just go fishing a couple days a week. That's all I can afford to do." He went deep sea fishing a couple days a week. Within two years, his company had become almost a national company. He went back, Eddie asked him later, "What happened here?" He said, "I figured it out while I was fishing."

And this is the idea of thinking strategically. Most of us are so deep in the trenches in our business. We don't have time to think about how to solve the big problems. He said, "When I got away and got out on the water and I did this repeatedly for week after week for a couple weeks, three or four weeks it became clear to me how we could solve this problem." I do this on a bicycle. I get on a bicycle for three to four hours. I just ruminate over a problem because bicycling is brain deaf.

Andrew: I'm much more of a cyclist too. I love it. But you know what? It's so hard to do it when other people are demanding your time. If I say, for example, I've wanted to go to the gym in the middle of the day for a long time. If I say, "I can't go now. I can't have this meeting. I can't have this call, I'm going to the gym," especially now that everyone in this team can see my calendar, I think that people would be hurt that I'm going to the gym instead of handling their very important, truly urgent issue.

Chuck: Yeah. Well, we've got to change your mindset as well.

Andrew: I see. It's not them. They're not the ones at fault?

Chuck: No. Once again it's us. It's always us.

Andrew: Alright. That's true. I take responsibility as a business owner. It always has to be my responsibility.

Chuck: Who said you're that important? They think you're that important because that's the business rule you made, "I am important." So, you need to have a stream outside my door. Marissa Mayer is legendary, the CEO of Yahoo, she's got 30 or 40 people at any given time outside her door. She has 70 meetings a week to solve and decide for people. I don't solve and decide for people. I train other people to solve and decide and then I get the heck out of the way so that they can grow.

So, you don't actually have this problem. People ask me, "Are you still here? Don't you have somewhere to go? Can't you go get on your bicycle or something? Can you get out of my way? I've got things to do." I've been fired from meetings because people very gently have said to me, "I know you started this meeting, but you don't really add much value anymore. We don't get a lot done while you're here."

So, it's just the opposite. When you start giving people ownership, you require that they do it, then they find out they actually want to do it and then they start firing you. So, nobody bothers me when I go on a bicycle ride. They're glad I do it. They also know that I work at 8:00 at night and sometimes on Saturday mornings. I live an integrated life and I work when it works for me. But they also know that part of my value to the organization is to be strategic. If I'm in the tactical stuff all day long, I don't get there.

I recommend every business owner, they can't do this right away, but over a few years, one of the goals of every business owner is to get to where 50 percent of their time is unscheduled. That's the easy part. The second one is the hard part--unavailable to solve crises. I'm at 73 percent. I don't have anything on Fridays or Mondays, the last week of every month or a month in the summer. That adds up to 73 percent of the year I'm unavailable, unscheduled and unavailable to solve your crises for you. Figure it out.

Andrew: Back to the big board--final point is to get outside eyes on your business to gain a new perspective. Jerry is a business owner who was starting to get--well, actually, what was going on with Jerry? I'm trying to articulate his whole issue here in a second.

Chuck: Yeah. Well, I don't even remember the exact problem, but he had a road block in his business. At our 3 to 5 Clubs, we have people share what we call bottlenecks. So, Jerry shared, "This is an issue I have with my business and I cannot figure out how to solve it." Alex, I'll never forget this, Alex from across the room, the guy just went ballistic in a really positive way. He said, "Oh, man, Jerry, here are three things you can do boom to boom to boom," and he just solved the guy's problem in like five minutes straight.

It came around to Alex 20 or 30 minutes later and Alex says, "Here's my bottleneck." And it was almost identical. Everybody was looking around like, "Who's going to say it first?" Jerry finally was one who piped up and said, "You know, you realize the problem you just identified was the one that you solved for me?" And Alex says, "No, no, it's different." And we finally convinced him it was the same problem.

The point I'm trying to make there is that we desperately need outside eyes. One of my friends, Dr. Tasha Eurich, she's going to be the next Dr. Phil. She's like 32 years old, already has a New York Times Bestseller. One of the things she's keying in on is we really are really bad at self-awareness. We don't have a real good clue. We need outside eyes. We call that one of the four fundamental building blocks of a business--get outside eyes.

I wish I would have learned this earlier. I was John Wayne, rugged individualist for five or six straight businesses. I printed a business card and, "I got this." It took me getting beat up multiple times before I realized, "I will get there so much faster if I get somebody else besides me who can call BS on my life and BS on my business and help me get this right." So, outside eyes are absolutely critical if you want to get there and you want to get there fast.

The old adage, the Chinese adage is if you want to get somewhere fast, go alone. If you want to get somewhere long, if you want to go long, go together. We need outside eyes.

Andrew: That's a great place to end it. The book, of course, as we've mentioned a few times here, is called "Making Money is Killing Your Business." If people want to come to one of your meetings, how do they find it?

Chuck: They can go to 3to5Club.com and look there. They can go to ChuckBlakemanSpeaker.com and find me there. They can email us Grow@CranksetGroup.com and we'll hook them up.

Andrew: Who does that go to, Grow@CranksetGroup.com?

Chuck: That goes to Krista. If she's not there, Donna sees it. So, one of the two of them. Usually it's Krista and then she disseminates it where it needs to go.

Andrew: I'm really always curious about how your operation works. Thank you so much for doing this. Thank you all for being a part of it. Bye, everyone.