

# Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman



## **Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Hosts**

**Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**

**[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](http://www.DentistFreedomBlueprint.com) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

Chuck Blakeman: Any business can get to the point where, in three to five years, you can be taking Friday off and the business still operates on Friday without you, making money when you're not there. I haven't found a single business in any industry where that couldn't be true.

You are listening to the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast, with David Phelps and Evan Harris. Navigating you through the uncharted waters of a turbulent economy with straight-forward advice to, transform your practice into a self-sufficient cash machine, compound your net worth assets, and multiply, multiply, multiply your passive cash flow streams.

David Phelps: Good day everyone, this is Dr. David Phelps of the Freedom Founders Mastermind community, and today, the Dentist Freedom Blueprint podcast. Back to you today with what's really going to be an exciting and in-depth and I think very revealing interview with a gentleman who I have come to know through his writing, the books I've read, and through information provided on a very prolific website. This gentleman has quite a history, and I want you to know who he is before I just read the biography, so let me introduce our guest today, Mr. Chuck Blakeman. Chuck, how are you, sir?

Chuck Blakeman: I'm doing well. I'm so glad to be with you, David.

David Phelps: Well, thanks, Chuck. Thanks for taking the time. There's no way we could do justice to all that you do and all that you have to say, and that's not the point. The point today, in a relatively short time, is to let people know who you are and really, most importantly, the message you have. I told you earlier, Chuck, that when I read your books, which we're going to discuss here today, when I read your books and I took them to my team, my current team that

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

it's all about helping doctors and dentists and chiropractors and veterinarians with their exit strategy wealth building outside their practice, they all come with a practice, Chuck. They all come with a current business.

Because I was one of those in that business, that practice of dentistry, I know what it feels like to be on that treadmill. The old adage of just get your degrees, get your education, go out there start a career, start a practice, work hard for 30, 35, 40 years to that somewhere, someday, down the road when life's supposed to be good. You have done such a great job of taking, I think, the conversations we all have in our head ... Everybody has these conversations in our head, but we don't give ourselves permission, Chuck, to have them, and you've brought the subject out in the open now for open discussion. That's where we're going to go today is talk about really breaking the myths and the misconceptions of that Industrial Age work ethic that is not wrong, but we're doing it the wrong way.

Before we get into it, Chuck, I'm getting excited here already, because I love what you do, so I've got to tell people about you. Chuck Blakeman has a successful entrepreneur, best-selling business author, and world-renowned business advisor who built 10 businesses in seven industries on four continents, and he now uses his experience to advise others. His company, the Crankset Group, provides outcome-based measuring, I love that outcome-based, and peer advisory for business leaders worldwide. Chuck sold one of his businesses to the largest consumer fulfillment company in America and led three other 10 to 100 million dollar companies. He presently leads the Crankset Group and a for-profit

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

business based in Africa focused on developing local economies to solve poverty.

Mr. Blakeman is a results leader with decades of experience leading companies in marketing, import/export, fulfillment, call centers, website development, printing, and direct mail processing. Not much you haven't done, Chuck. Lot of experience there.

Chuck Blakeman: I sound like I'm dead.

David Phelps: Well, hardly. Hardly. It's just you've learned how to live your life, and that's what we're about here today. Some of your most known customers have included Microsoft, Apple, Eli Lilly, TAP Pharmaceuticals, Sun Microsystems, Tyco Healthcare, Johns Manville, and many other Fortune 5000s. He's a convention speaker, writer, nonprofit board member. Recent speaking appearances include Kenya, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and across the US. 100-plus times a year, he's speaking. Recent print and online appearances include Ink Magazine. He's a regular contributor there. Success Magazine, Entrepreneur Magazine, CNNMoney.com, NewYorkTimes.com, and recently sighted in Stephen Covey's most recent book, The 3rd Alternative. Obviously, the credentials are there, but most importantly is your message.

Chuck, I first found you through your writing. Someone recommended or somehow I tripped across your second book ... No, actually, it was your first book, Making Money Is Killing Your Business. Then I picked up what I call the companion guide, Why Employees Are Always a Bad Idea. Putting those two books together, Chuck, they just spoke to me so much, because that's where I feel like so much is missing. We're going to dive into both these

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

subjects today and really kind of break apart those old adages. So, Making Money Is Killing Your Business. That sounds like an oxymoron. Aren't we supposed to make money in our businesses?

Chuck Blakeman: Yes, we are, but it shouldn't be the objective. It should be a byproduct. I think that's one of the things you mentioned right upfront, that we've brought the discussion out in the open. It's been the 800-pound gorilla in the background. The assumption coming out of the Industrial Age, the Industrial Age lie that we were taught, is that if you make a buttload of money, you will somehow be happy. We all know that that's not true, and I know plenty of dentists who are making lots of money. Very proud of taking home \$500,000, \$1 million a year and aren't happy. They don't have a life. A business that appears to be great, but I would say that the business is not great, because it isn't serving them.

The lie is that if you focus on making money, at best all you'll do is making money. If you focus on making meaning, you're much more likely to make a bucketload more money. There's a lot of research on this. This is going to sound like a lot of woo-woo crap today, but I'm a hardcore capitalist and a recovering John Wayne rugged individualist. The fact of it is is that you take care of yourself, you take care of your family, you take care of your people, and the business should grow more without you than it did with you. Making money, the premise there is that people who chase money rarely make a lot of it, and if they do, they're still unhappy. People who have a reason to be in a business that's bigger than making money are much more likely to make a lot more money and be a lot happier.

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

We want people to stop chasing money and figure out how to chase meaning. The mantra here is let's make more money in less time, get off the treadmill, and get back to the passion that brought them into dentistry in the first place.

David Phelps: Chuck, you know, for dentists and doctors and other highly trained specialists, our training was to be all about us. It continues to be. The focus is on, well, get better at what you do, more education, bring more technology into the practice. We never learned, Chuck, how to empower, as you say and we'll get deeper into this, real leaders. We hire people and then we think someone has to manage those people, and that doesn't work because we can't wear all the hats, so we go back to hiring kind of minions and slugging it out, slugging it out, slugging it out. As you said, there's no meaning and there's no happiness, and we wonder what happened to that dream.

Chuck Blakeman: Yeah, well, dentistry is a technical pursuit. It's a scientific and technical, engineering oriented, detail systems oriented pursuit. We've made a vertical out of it. This is our major focus now is dentistry, because we just love dentists. The problems we're trying to solve, they actually want us to solve them, so we get the dental world. We've all been taught the lie, we call it the faster treadmill. If you get outside help too often, what you get is someone who helps you build a faster treadmill for yourself. The treadmill you were on wasn't all that attractive. Now you're making a lot more money and just going faster by having minions and having all these other things that you're taught to do. All of it's a dead end.

50% of businesses fail in five years, 80% in 10 years, and I would suggest that not a single one of those is actually



## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

failing. What happens is the business owner gets tired, and then they stop paying attention to something that matters because it's all on their plates. We've got to figure out how do we get off the treadmill? Let's not build a faster treadmill. Warren Buffett doesn't suffer from this disease. He had figured out how to make more money in less time, and nobody throws stones at Warren Buffett. He's very respected. There's a lot of ego in me saying, "I need to be the person who does all this stuff," but I guarantee you, I have a big ego.

When I go for a month to Tuscany and I'm there with a dentist who can only be there for four days because he has to go back to his practice, it's a huge ego booster for me to be able to say, "Yeah, you know, my business is actually run ... I have other people who are as smart as I am, and I don't have to be there as often as you do. I can be gone. I get a life as well as the money that you get." That's really the objective here. Let's figure out how to make more money in less time.

David Phelps: You know, Chuck, you're right. When we can finally let go of that ego and realize not only are there people as smart as we are in a lot of areas where we're not as competent, but there's people that are smarter than we are, and when we allow ourselves to bring those people into our mission-based or meaning-based business and build that culture, that's when things can take off. What I've seen so often in the typical practice management, good people, well-meaning people, don't get me wrong, but I see the same things. They're building that faster treadmill. They talk about, "Well, how do you get your productivity higher? How do you get your dollar-per-hour production higher? How do you put more people in or higher level techniques and procedures in?" You're cramming more and more

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

and more in. That used to drive me crazy, yet no one was telling me that that was wrong. No one.

Chuck Blakeman: We will tell you to do the very same things with one caveat. How do you get your production up, your efficiency up, your profitability up, your revenue up when you are not as important as you used to be? How do we do both? That's really the game. We teach self-management, and you find that when you actually believe that people are not stupid and lazy, that most of the people you have are smart and motivated and the few who aren't can find somewhere else to work. When you get that figured out, you find that those people really desperately want to figure out how to make this thing run better, faster, stronger, higher, and will do it because you've re-humanized the workplace by giving everybody their brain back and you're incentivizing them to take a piece of the pie.

We want to introduce capitalism at every level of a practice, and when you do that, you find out that everybody wants to be engaged. The practice makes more revenue, you take more money home, and you work less hours. We're going to teach you to do the same things. Get the revenue up, get the efficiency up, get all that up. How do you do that when you're not there? That's the priceless question. Get off that treadmill.

David Phelps: Chuck, in the book Making Money Is Killing Your Business, you talk about a business maturity date. That sounds to me like the time when you're going to go ahead and sell your business. Is that what we're talking about?

Chuck Blakeman: No, it's not. It's actually just the opposite. It's when your business finally, for the first time, has all the



## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

elements of maturity and now you can rock it. Acquaint it more with a young, matured, laugh-out-loud adult crossing the stage at the age of 21. They have all the resources they need for adulthood, and now they can really take it to the next level. Most businesses, I would say 95% of practices in America, are not mature, even if they have 8 locations, 12 locations, and they're doing 10, 15, 20 million dollars a year. Most of them aren't mature, because they don't have all the elements of maturity.

The one that most dentists are missing is time. For the first 5 of my 10 businesses, I was on the treadmill. All I did, every single time, was create a faster treadmill for myself. The problem was that I built businesses that made me money, assuming, again, that if I had money, I would somehow enjoy life. The sixth business is when I decided to build a mature business, and that sixth business, I set a business maturity date four years out that said on this day, February 18th, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., this business, I don't know how it's going to happen, but this business is going to be producing both time and money. I'm going to require that it does both. By that day, I'm going to be getting at least a minimum of both from the business.

What I found was that it was much harder to get the business to produce time than it is to produce money, but we did it. On February 18th, 2011 at 10:00 a.m., we walked out of that business, four years after we started it, and we spent a month in New Zealand. The people who were in that business ran it with us while we were gone, and the business actually created more revenue while we were gone than when we were there. That's the key. We call that a mature business. Now, really, the reality was we talk about the seven stages of business, and that was

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

just a barely brand-new stage five, sort of a stage four/five business. Since then, we're just continuing to grow it, because it's producing both elements. A mature business simply has the ability to produce, on a regular, reliable basis, time as well as money.

David Phelps: I know in the book, you do a great job of really giving clarity to what that means. I assume with your consulting, you'll help a business owner really define, with their parameters, what does a business maturity date mean to him or her. Then, you set that date. You put it in stone, and then you work backwards. Okay, if we're going to get there and we're very specific and we know what that really looks like, now we know how to get there versus some foggy idea of someday I want to, quote, "be free," right?

Chuck Blakeman: Yeah, you're right. Stephen Covey was the genius on that one.

David Phelps: That's for sure.

Chuck Blakeman: That's what he had in mind. That's exactly what we do. What does this look like 10 years from now or five years from now? Paint that picture. Then, what does it look like one year from now? What does it look like three months from now? What should we do this week? We get them to get a sense of urgency about the important. The problem is that we're driven ... In the book, we talk about the tyranny of the urgent and how the life gets sucked out of us by things that won't actually move us forward. We have to figure out how to get a sense of urgency about the important stuff that will incrementally, over time, change our business, change our lives, and get us where we want to go. We bring those things, instead of looking

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

at something that's three or four or five years out and saying, "Eh, I've got plenty of time to do that," no you don't. You have something you need to do this week, and if you don't do it this week, you have pushed out that three-year objective by another week. Every week you don't do something, you're pushing it out.

We're manic about helping them see what are the two or three big things they need to do this year to get them to where they need to be three or four or five years from now, and we keep them focused on those things. That's the not-so-dirty little secret. Focus on the big stuff. The little stuff will come.

David Phelps: Now, your experience, really what you say, is that any business can reach a business maturity date in three to five years. That seems relatively short-term goal, but you've seen it done. How do you back that up?

Chuck Blakeman: Again, remember, how we define a mature business isn't one that's done, but it has all the elements of maturity and now you can grow it from there. Any business can get to the point where, in three to five years, you can be taking Friday off and the business still operates on Friday without you, making money when you're not there. I haven't found a single business in any industry where that couldn't be true. I had a dog walker walk up to me after a seminar once. "I walk dogs. I've been walking dogs for 18 years. I make \$35,000 a year. How in the heck is this going to work for me?" I went on the Internet, and in about 15 minutes, I'd found a dog walking company that had gone from zero to \$10 million a year in two years walking dogs. I showed it to her the next week, and I expected the craftsman's response, "Yeah, but I don't want to build a business. I love walking dogs." I looked at her and said,

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

"What are you, crazy? If you own a \$10 million business, you can walk dogs any time you want. The difference is do you have to walk dogs?" She hung her head and said, "Yeah, I have to walk dogs." Wouldn't you like to just walk the ones you love to walk and be involved in the strategic business of walking dogs? We get the whole thing wrong.

Three to five years, absolutely. I haven't found a business yet that couldn't get to where they have regular, whether it's even just Friday afternoons off or some other time, regular time off, and the business continues to work when they're not there as a basis for, then, building something much better and much stronger over the years. When we left on our business maturity date, we were getting every Friday off. Now, I get every Monday, I get every Friday, I get the entire last week of the month off, and we take a month in the summers. We call it two days a week, a week a month, and a month a year. That's 73% of the work year that we've gotten to. When I took my business maturity date, we were probably at 15 to 20% of the work year, but we were regularly getting time. Any business can do that in three to five years.

I pride myself on this one, because all my other business were product and service oriented in ways that it seemed like it would be easier to get there. This thing, this is me. It's all about me. People say, "How do you get a mature business when you're a business advisor and everybody wants to buy you?" Well, we did it, in a business that's much harder to do it in than a lot of others. I see that in dentistry a lot, because our vertical, again, is in dentists. We have dentists all over America who are chasing this and getting it. To begin with, it was, "Well, dentistry's unique. This'll never work in dentistry." Now that it works in dentistry, "Well, pediatric, pedo is unique, so it can't

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

work there." Now we knocked that straw man down. We all think that what we're doing is unique. The reality of it is there isn't a business in America that can't get to at least a minimum healthy revenue and a minimum healthy time allotment for the business owner in three to five years and then begin to build on that for years to come to build what we call an ideal lifestyle.

David Phelps: It's really a mindset, isn't it, Chuck? It's a self-learning belief that we think that, as you said, our business or what we do is so unique that nobody else can do it, and so it's got to be on my back for the duration, for the eternity, and it doesn't. Your analogy about the dog walker to a dog walking business translates very well to dentistry. Same thing. Most dentists I know who are still relatively young or mid-career, maybe they're in their 40s or 50s, and they've elevated themselves to be really highly competent and really changing lives with the services they provide. The problem for them, Chuck, as we both know, is they're doing 80% of the other things they shouldn't be doing, and they still would like to do dentistry, but on their own terms. The patients, the procedures they want to do, yet they can't see that there's an opportunity to do that. That's what you're showing so many of my colleagues how to do today.

Chuck Blakeman: In our seven stages of business, between stage four and stage five is what we call the big mindset shift. Every business owner has to go through a very radical mindset shift between stage four, where you're making money, and stage five, where the business is now producing both time and money. Unless you go through that mindset shift, it ain't going to happen. We call it the problem of maxi me. Most of this, you've seen those movies Dr. Evil and what's the name of that movie? Austin Powers

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

movies. Dr. Evil has this little guy called Mini Me, and Mini Me's sort of a third the size of Dr. Evil and he's sort of useless. He carries him around in a pouch. He's very cute, but he really can't do anything. Very subtly, most of us are assuming that nobody could possibly be as good as I am, so you go hunting for Mini Me, and you find him. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. We're very focused on helping dentists find maxi me. In every other area of the practice, there are people who are much better than you. Find them. Set them free to be better than you and be your maxi me and carry you around in those things.

It's not about getting rid of your ego. It's about placing it in a different place. I don't have to be all things to all people, because I've built something that actually runs without me. There's a number of things we help people deal with to get through that. We call it the number one tool, device we use, is the Da Vinci principle. My wife and I spent our month in Tuscany last year, and I rode my bicycle all over the place. We visited Da Vinci's hometown and supposedly the place where he was born, and I learned that there's two Mona Lisas. Didn't know that. One in the Louvre and another in the Prado Museum in Spain. For 500 years, they assumed that Da Vinci had painted both of them. Just in the last couple years, through a lot of radio technology and micro technologies, they figured out that there was somebody sitting right beside Da Vinci painting a second Mona Lisa as he painted the first one, stroke by stroke by stroke.

The interesting thing about that is if you know medieval Tuscany, 10 miles was a whole day's ride or walk, and yet, somehow this guy, who lived in such a limited universe, was able to find somebody who was so good they could fool the world for 500 years on this Mona Lisa.

**[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**



## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

Translate that into dentistry. There isn't a thing that we do that is harder than painting the Mona Lisa, and yet we're pretty sure we can't find anybody who can do it. Our universe is so much bigger than his was. We need to apply the Da Vinci principle to our own world and realize I need to go find other people. I need to believe they're out there, and if I believe they're out there, I'll see the world differently and I'll begin to find maxi me. That sets you free in a way to be able to lead your practice instead of manage it.

David Phelps: Chuck, you really call us out on the whole concept of retirement, but you call it a bankrupt, Industrial Age idea. Isn't that what we're all shooting for, is to have that retirement, that golden age?

Chuck Blakeman: Yeah, that was the working title for my second book, when we changed it to Why Employees Are Always a Bad Idea. No, there's so many things we got out of the Industrial Age that are just bald-faced lies, and retirement is one of those. People don't realize since we were born into this retirement society, we think it's normal. Otto von Bismarck invented retirement in, like, 1871 or something to get old Germans off the machines so that young, cheaper Germans could run them, and the old people rioted. Imagine 50-, 60-, 70-year-olds in the streets rioting, because they knew this was wrong. Don't put me out to pasture. I wasn't made to be fruitful the first two-thirds of my life and then play golf the last third.

One of the sub-chapters in my second book is called Death By Golf, because the research shows that people who retire at 50 are more likely to die at 60 than people who retire at 60 are even to die at 70. You don't stick a fork in yourself and you're done. Doesn't mean you have

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

to go into the office and practice dentistry every day, but boy, don't retire in the sense that you think you're going to replace work with play. Play is something you do in-between work that makes work more meaningful. Work should never feel like work. Find something, put your hand to it, and do it your whole life. I don't plan on retiring ever. I see myself at 120 being propped up in front of 50 cutout cardboard things that I think are people, and I'm going to do a workshop, and I'm going to be happy.

David Phelps: That's the whole idea from changing our goal from success, whatever people think success is, to significance, and that's what keeps us alive. That's what keeps us alive. We want to keep giving back and being significant to the people we care about or people we want to serve. It never has to stop, does it, Chuck?

Chuck Blakeman: The Industrial Age taught us that success was money. The 1980s and '90s bumper sticker, "He who dies with the most toys wins." Well, we had a couple generations to figure that out. 70-plus percent of people who are over the age of 65 are going back to work, and only 18% of them because they think they need more money. They realize we're not made to be put out to pasture like that.

David Phelps: All right, Chuck, I'm going to dig into your second book a little bit, *Why Employees Are Always a Bad Idea*. Again, when I first saw that title, I thought, "Well, here's a guy that just works by himself. He's never built a team or he just uses subcontractors for everything." But no, when you dig into it, you realize that's just a great title. It grabs you. We all tend to think about the old mantra that we really can't stand our employees. They're a necessary evil. We've got to have them, but dog gone it, yeah, I can't

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

really stand them. I know you built a team, so talk about the real meaning of the title of that book.

Chuck Blakeman: A few of my companies have had well over 100 people on the payroll, so I don't mean that we shouldn't have people, but I do mean we shouldn't have employees. The reason I say that is if you study the history of the word and the whole concept of the factory system employee, it was bankrupt from the very get-go. There's no way to rehabilitate it. We've got to do something different. I don't care if you call them stakeholders or staff members or associates. I don't care, call them anything but employee, because employee is a four-letter word. The history of that word is nothing but corrupt and bad for people.

We start in the 1780s putting orphans and poor children into factories under the age of nine. 100% of people were under the age of 16, 50% were under the age of nine, because no self-respecting adult would work in a factory. It was dehumanizing. The very first employees were orphans who had to work six days a week and got a hot bed and porridge and no pay. That system continued through 1859 in Europe, for 70-plus more years. It was because, very gradually, they forced people out of their shops, into the factories, but people knew this was a bad idea. We want people to come to work who are radically different than the traditional employee. The traditional employee was taught to be stupid and lazy. They were treated with mistrust. Probably one of the first consultants in the modern factory system was a guy named Taylor, and he defined a modern employee as being stupid and lazy. That gives us a right to treat them in a way that we wouldn't have to treat them if they were smart and motivated.

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

It's just not true. The average employee is not acting like an employee. They're acting like a stakeholder, and they want to be smart and motivated. We make them stupid and lazy. We assume they're stupid and lazy, and that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We want stakeholders. Stakeholders are people who bring their whole messy, creative person to work, who ask hard questions, who put a stake in the ground and say, "I own this practice. I show up as if I own this thing every day. I have a brain. I get to make decisions. I'm required to make decisions. I'm going to be the same adult at work that I am at home." Radically different than the factory system employee.

David Phelps: The book goes into great detail about how to actually go through the process, 11-step process by the way, that helps you ensure that you only bring onboard real stakeholders. Then, when you have them there, with the culture, you empower them to take ownership in what you call today the Participation Age. You want to talk a little bit about participation?

Chuck Blakeman: We think we left the Industrial Age in the 1970s. Not true. The back office looks very different. There's no smokestacks or assembly lines. We've replaced that with nanotechnology and digital clean rooms and all that stuff, but the front office looks exactly like it did in 1905 with guys in ties making decisions for all the people, a top-down command and control hierarchy that uses the people at the bottom to supposedly help the people at the top. It all looks like it did in 1905. The factory system and the Industrial Age are still very much with us in the front office in the way we organize.

The Participation Age really was ushered in with the Internet and Web 2.0, when we got to the first point where

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

we could actually participate in the discussion on the Internet. It created things like the Arab Spring, Airbnb, Uber, unimaginable things we could not have imagined 25 years ago, because we're in a Participation Age where everybody gets to participate. That flows over into the workplace. In a modern, healthy dental practice, the Participation Age is defined by two things: participation and sharing. That's where we mostly fall down. Everybody wants to participate in the building of a great practice, but the key is they also want to share in the rewards. If you don't let them share in the rewards, they will not participate. The participation is built on those two things. You've got to ask people to participate. Then, you have to give them the capitalistic reason to share in the rewards, and they'll do it.

David Phelps: Chuck, here's one that really kind of makes dentists' heads explode, and that is never do another business plan. In fact, you say that planning, in general, is a disease and speed of execution is what's so important. Are you saying should we just make this stuff up as we go along? As dentists, we were taught to analyze and measure five times before we cut and we're really going to look things over. Blow up that model. I know where you're going. I love this one, by the way.

Chuck Blakeman: My next book's called *Bad Plans Carried Out Violently*.

David Phelps: There you go. Good.

Chuck Blakeman: How real leaders lead and succeed in the real world. You look at any business that grew. Hewlett-Packaged. Bill Hewlett stopped getting invited to MBA programs. I have his quote. "We stopped getting invited to

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

Harvard or to MBA programs, because we didn't have a business plan. We told them we never had a plan. We made this up as we went along." That's how great businesses all are started. There isn't a single Fortune 500 or a single Fortune 5000 company that was started with a business plan. Not one. Let's just start there. If business plans were such a good idea, you would think that at least 5, 10, 15, if not 90% of them would have been started with one. Not one. I'm not against planning. I'm against wasting time with a lot of pre-planning.

Here's a great analogy that's in my next book on this on bad plans. By the way, the word violent isn't about beating people up. In the Latin, the word violent, violentus, means with utmost conviction and utter commitment. I am sold out to making this happen. That's what violence means. A bad plan that you're sold out to is much better than a good plan that you're weaseling around on. Here's a great analogy. Think of planning as a rudder that goes on your nice little boat. It would be suicide to put a boat in the water without a rudder. It's also ridiculous to build a 400-foot-tall, gold inlaid, silver encrusted, carved, beautiful mahogany rudder for a 10-foot dinghy. It'll just sink the dinghy. That's exactly what we do with our practices. We plan and we plan and we plan, and we do nothing. We're building rudders. Get a nice, simple, little piece of metal off the back of your boat and get the heck out of the harbor.

Here's the proof of that. There's an intuitive way to run your business and there's a logical way, and the logical way is usually not the way that works. The logical answer to this question is going to be wrong. It's the intuitive answer that's right. Here's the question: how do you steer a ship or how do you steer a boat? The logical answer is

**[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris**



## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

with the rudder. That's wrong. The intuitive answer is get it moving. A boat that's sitting in the water cannot be steered, and the faster the boat is moving, the easier it is to steer, the less planning you will actually have to do. The mantra here is most people will do this, and dentists were taught this one, perfect now, implement later. There's a scientific principle called the precautionary principle, and it comes out of hardcore science, where you're putting a man on the moon. It says, hey, if you can think of anything that might go wrong, don't do anything until you have a contingency for everything you could possibly think of that could go wrong. Worst possible thing you can do in business.

The mantra should not be perfect now, implement later, because later never comes. The mantra is this: implement now, perfect as you go. I am not against planning. I am against a lot of planning before you leave the dock. You're not going to find the sand bars by sitting on the dock postulating where the sand bars are, theorizing, looking at the wind and the currents. No, you have to get in your boat and leave the dock, but as soon as you leave, start taking soundings, and you will not run into the sand bars. Get moving and you'll get there.

Here's the principle, planning doesn't create movement, movement creates the plan. You see this in every successful business throughout history. It was the movement that created the perfect plan. The rest of them were just bad plans.

David Phelps: That's such a huge one, Chuck, and it took me many, many years to understand and believe that principle and actually put it into place.

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

Chuck Blakeman: It's so counter-logical for us. The educational system just wrecks us on this one.

David Phelps: It does. It does. Talk to me a little bit about, and to our listeners, what you mean by shelf-help books and why they really aren't feasible for us.

Chuck Blakeman: Too many of the books that we read are by people who sat in an office and say, "What could I write that people would buy?" They're incredible writers and they're incredibly creative people, and they can just burp content. So they come up with really great stuff, and they put it in the book, and people read it and say, "That's really great stuff." Then they put it on their shelf and it's a shelf-help book. It helps their shelf look good. That's all it does for them. We do the same things with business plans, by the way. They go on our shelf with our shelf-help books, and they help our shelf look good. Hey, look, he wrote a business plan. I always say that the second worst thing that a practice owner can do is a business plan. The worst thing they can do is actually follow it.

By the way, we teach people to do two-page strategic plans that are rolling, dynamic. They look at them every month, and they actually run their practice from them. I'm not against planning. I'm against planning in a vacuum. Shelf-help books are sort of the same kind of thing. It was creating help in a vacuum where I don't actually do this stuff. I don't want to give the author, but probably one of the most famous small business shelf-help books in history, I have it on good authority the writer of this book that has sold millions of copies has never done anything that he's said to do. I have yet to find a single human being on the face of this Earth that actually did what this

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

guy told people to do, because it's so impractical. It's so hard to do. That's a shelf-help book.

When you said, at the beginning of this or before we went on the air, you read my book and you felt like I was talking to you, the simple reason for that is because we bled over all this stuff. I was talking to me. This is real-life bullets. This isn't a book I wrote. This is a life I lived. We bled it out on the pages. When people respond to me about Making Money's Killing Your Business, they say, "I went through that book. I read it. I re-read it. I did the stuff. My life and my business are different as a result." There's a course being taught at a very well-known college here in the US, and the professor said to me, "There's probably only five books I've ever read twice in my life. I've read yours three," and he teaches it as a course now. It's not because I'm that smart. It's just because I bled over this for 40 or 50 years, and then I wrote down stuff that actually worked. Shelf-help books don't do that.

David Phelps: What about education in general? Is there education that's good? Is there education that is not so good? Chuck, how would you partition that?

Chuck Blakeman: I think education, in general, has really gone astray. If you look at the parallels between the factory system and education, the first time in history that more stuff was made in a factory than at home was in 1850. The first education act was written in 1850 to take kids away from their parents and force them to go to public schools, because the assumption there was that parents were stupid and lazy and couldn't do this. In 1850, 94% of people in Massachusetts were literate when they wrote that act and took the kids away from their parents. 94%. Today, I think it's around 60%. There's some aspects of

## **Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman**

education that really haven't worked, and the problem is that we've turned education around. We don't know what it is anymore.

The Ancient Greek word for education, it actually means to pull out, to extract, to pull out. The Socratic method, you already know what you need to know. You're smart. You can figure this out. All I'm going to do is I'm going to ask you questions. I'm going to pull out of you the answer. What is our education system today? It's to fill up. They assume that you have an empty head, that you're a vacuum, you know nothing, you can't understand anything, you're stupid and lazy, and our job is to tell you what the truth is so that when you walk away, you have all the facts and you don't know how to think. We've lost learning for the sake of education.

In the business world, it's pandemically bad. I get that as a dentist you have to go to a certain school and get credentialed or you can't do dentistry. They've got a monopoly on that education. Even with law school. Didn't always used to be that. Abe Lincoln had six weeks of formal education. He seemed to be a pretty good lawyer. But I get it. That's the way the system's run. In terms of a business, I warn people away from business schools all the time, because they're teaching theoretically what you should be learning in real life, and the only way to learn business is to get out there and do it. I had one guy pay me. He was going to spend \$70,000 getting an MBA. I challenged him pay me 40,000 for a year of education and just come work with me and come be beside me. He took the bait and learned from me. I believe he got a much better education learning from me than he would have ever gotten in an education system.

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

I can tell you this. No matter what the education, there is zero correlation between education and success. None. The correlation is between a desire to learn and being motivated and having goals set. There's a number of other intrinsic personal things that you need to develop that will make you successful, whether you went to school or not, which is why about one-third of all the billionaires in the world never finished college.

David Phelps: That's right. Chuck, you're speaking my language. I'm so much in agreement. This is a message that really has to go out, not only to help maybe the more mature business owners, practice owners, doctors, but we have younger generations that are coming out, and many of them are just taking that traditional pathway into higher education and to college and graduate school without any direction. I've told many of them the same thing. Unless you really know that you need to go get a certain set of credentials to get a license in something you really know you want to do, your best bet is to take some time off and go find a great mentor, as you said, and apprentice with them. Spend a year, spend two years, and learn from them. Whether that's the direction you want to go or not, you will have seen a different side of the world, a different side of business. Now, whatever you decide to do, you should have much better clarity instead of just going off downhill and accumulating all this debt and then no job, because we're being trained just to be worker bees in a society where there are no jobs anymore.

Chuck Blakeman: That's great, David. I refer people to one motivational book, and it's because it wasn't written by motivational people who tend to write shelf-help books. It was written by a guy who built hair salons in Texas. The book is called *Self-Made in America*. John McCormack,

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

Self-Made in America. In that book, he said one of the first things he did is he looked around New York, where he lived, and he found a business that he deeply respected, and he went and he begged the president of that business, the owner of that business, to let him work for him for a year for free. I think he might have even done it for two years. That was the best education the guy ever got, and he's a multi, multimillionaire. Highly successful guy, doing all kinds of crazy stuff that everyone would find motivational. Anyone starting building a business should read Self-Made in America.

David Phelps: I've already written that one down. Thanks for that reference. All right, let me ask you one more thing. There's a very obscure word that you use, and you think it's the most important word in business, and that word in conation. Tell us what that means and why it's so important.

Chuck Blakeman: That's the most important, least-used word in business, to connate. To connate or conation means the will to succeed that shows up in single-minded pursuit of a goal. Another way to say it, committed movement in a purposeful direction. Or a third way, get the heck out of my way, I've got somewhere I need to be. You know people like this. We've all met them. They're going somewhere. They don't even have to tell you to get out of their way. You just step aside, because you're in the way. That's conation. Conation goes with that idea of planning. Get a little rudder and get moving. A conative person is always moving. Even when the sand bar gets close, they don't stop. They just turn directions and experiment with getting away from the sand bar by movement rather than theory. Conation is the most important business word we've ever uncovered. It's one of the thousand most



## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

obscure words in the English language. I'm on a one-man campaign, Dave, to bring it back. I actually found a woman who spent her whole life studying it, Kathy Kolbe, so I guess there's two of us.

David Phelps: Ah, there you go. Yes, Kathy Kolbe.

Chuck Blakeman: Where conation is at the basis of everything that she does is that word connate. I say there's three things that fundamentally make people successful. Number one, get moving. Number two, stay moving, be relentless. Number three, be willing to adapt and flex at every turn. Number one is get moving. That's conation. If you're not moving, you are not conating. We've all seen this. David, you've probably experienced it. I know I have. Two of us get an idea. One guy goes back and researches it and the other guy goes back with a bad plan and starts doing it. A year later, which one knows more, has more success? It's the guy who got moving. That's conation. Let's connate. If I could get business owners to do one thing, I'd tell them to get moving, because planning doesn't create the movement. Movement creates the plan.

David Phelps: Excellent, excellent. Chuck, this has been really, really fun for me, just because I've gotten to know you through your writings and now we had a chance to talk today. I know that what you talked about today has no doubt intrigued and hopefully got some people that want to go further, dig deeper. First and foremost, I just recommend people jump on and grab your books. Making Money Is Killing Your Business. Number two, Why Employees Are Always a Bad Idea. Great books. I love them both. You can find Chuck Blakeman all over social media, Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, just by his name, Chuck Blakeman.

## Ep #102: Making Money is Killing Your Business with Chuck Blakeman

Then, I'm going to give a couple of your key websites, Chuck, that people can find you and learn more about you. First one would just be, again, your name, ChuckBlakeman.com. Then, the company name CranksetGroup.com to find out a lot more information about Chuck. You've got a lot of writing, a lot of blogs going back 7, 8, 9, 10 years on there.

Chuck Blakeman: David, very quickly, one other one specific to dentists, since that's our major vertical, we are doing a quarterly summit, Get Off The Treadmill Summit, for dentists only. The next one is in March. I believe it's in Dallas. March 29th or something like that. We have a website for that. GOTT Summit, GOTT with two Ts. Get Off The Treadmill, GOTT. GOTTSummit.com. They can visit that if they want more information on getting that. We keep these very small and personal so that everybody gets a full two days of real intention on how they get off the treadmill. GOTTSummit.com.

David Phelps: Excellent. Chuck Blakeman, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure, and I look forward to staying in contact and doing some work with you and helping our mutual colleagues in business.

Chuck Blakeman: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it, David, thanks for having me on.

David Phelps: You bet.

You've been listening to another episode of the *Dentist Freedom Blueprint* podcast with David Phelps and Evan Harris. The place to be to create your freedom lifestyle with more time off, security and peace of mind. Please subscribe, download the podcast, and share it with others who want to create real freedom in their lives and practices.

[Dentist Freedom Blueprint](#) with Dr. David Phelps and Evan Harris