

074 Planning In An Unpredictable World



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With Your Host

Rachel Rodgers

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How do you plan for the future when the future feels so uncertain? How do you set goals in an unpredictable world? In times like these when all the big social structures like our government, educational systems, and healthcare feel so frail and fragile how can you feel steady and secure?

Today's episode is called Planning In An Unpredictable World. All throughout the last year my team and I got so many messages from our clients, and readers, and listeners, and other people in our community. People that are really hurting and feeling really anxious. People wondering things like, how can I set financial goals when the world might look completely different six months from now? How can I hire new employees when the economy feels so shaky? Is it smart or responsible to do that? Should I be saving every penny I possibly can right now just in case things get worse in the future? What if I lose clients, lose my job, or lose another major source of income? Is everyone going to be working virtually for the next year? Should I just plan on that?

We've been seeing lots of questions like those, and look, I don't have a crystal ball, right? And I can't predict the future, just like you can't, right? But I do have some thoughts and recommendations for you. My stance is you can set exciting goals, you can succeed, you can win, you can move your life in the direction that you desire, even now. Even when the world feels unpredictable some things can be predicted. You can set goals, make a plan, work the plan and win.

I want to go deeper into this topic and share some stories and share some suggestions with you. I hope this episode feels comforting and grounding. Like a warm cup of tea. Or some nice soup. I've been eating a lot of soup lately. Or laying down on the solid earth, like that. Okay? So let's get started.

Welcome to the *Hello Seven Podcast*. I'm your host, Rachel Rodgers, wife, mother of four children, a lover of Beyoncé, coffee drinker, and afro-wearer,

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and I just happen to be the CEO of a seven-figure business. I am on a mission to help every woman I meet become a millionaire. If you want to make more money, you are in the right place. Let's get it going.

I want to begin today's show by telling you a story. Many of you are familiar with my best friend, Robert Hartwell. He's been a guest here on the podcast and he is a Broadway performer and founder of a company called The Broadway Collective. Robert's company provides dancing, singing, and acting training to young artists, ages 12 and up. He and his team work with kids who dream about being on Broadway one day. They help these young people prepare for a career in musical theater.

Every year Robert and his team do a huge event in New York City. Over 100 kids and their parents fly out to New York City from all around the country. The kids spend five days in the city doing musical theater masterclasses and working with incredible mentors and teachers. The kids go see Broadway shows, they have dinner with the cast members, they meet producers and casting directors. And it all culminates in a fabulous performance where the kids show off what they've learned while the parents watch.

Basically, it's like musical theater heaven for these kids. A week of Broadway magic right on Broadway in New York City. This annual summer event is super popular. It always sells out and it's not cheap. Tickets cost thousands of dollars. This is a high-end and really in-depth experience.

Now, as you might recall the COVID-10 pandemic began raging in the spring of 2020. So, Robert faced a serious dilemma. Would he be able to do his event in New York City in the summertime? Would he have to reschedule? Move to another city? Do it online? And what if tons of parents started emailing asking for refunds?

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Back then, in spring of 2020, nobody knew what was going to happen so it was very difficult to plan things in advance. Especially a complex event with hundreds of people involved, including minors. Many, many children. So, was COVID going to be a temporary blip and then everything would go back to normal after a few weeks? Robert didn't know. The CDC didn't know. The US government didn't know. Nobody knew.

And like many business owners Robert had to plan for the future without knowing exactly what the future would hold. And note that this event was sold out months in advance. So, in winter 2019 this event had already been sold. So it was full, he had collected everyone's money, and he had to deliver something.

So, here's what happened. First, he planned to do the event in New York City, he told his students, "We're not canceling. Let's have faith and stay optimistic that COVID-19 will get resolved quickly and we can meet in the city like we do every year." But pretty quickly it became clear that this wouldn't be possible.

So Robert tweaked the plan, he moved the entire event to North Carolina where case numbers were much lower. This took immense planning and tons of work. Finding a new venue, communicating all the changes to the students and parents, figuring out how to get his entire team down to North Carolina. There were so many details that had to be sorted out. But Robert was committed to succeeding and producing a fabulous event no matter what.

But then, sadly, case numbers in North Carolina began to rise sharply. And that's when Robert realized, "I can't put my students, their families, or my team at risk. We need to change the plan again." And he decided that the safest and best option would be to do the entire event online. No travel, no face-to-face experiences, all the dance, voice, and acting training would be presented in a virtual classroom.

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As you can imagine, this change required tons of coordination and was not easy to pull off. Robert had to figure out how to translate an in-person event to the online space and still make it just as good as going to New York City, if not better. And he had just a few weeks to figure this out. And folks, he did it. It took a couple of miracles and a huge amount of positivity, and conviction, and determination, but Robert and his team made it happen.

The event went beautifully. Students and parents were amazed by how excellent the online experience felt. Many people emailed Robert to say, "Honestly, I was skeptical that this would work online, but it totally did. This was above and beyond my expectations. Your team really blew me away." Robert had to deal with so many twists and turns and heartbreaking challenges and yet, in the end he succeeded. He produced a beautiful and profitable event, his students and their parents were delighted, and it all worked.

So, my friend Robert has a motto that he lives by. It's very simple, it's only three words, "Not if, when." Oh my god, you guys, I can't tell you how often I will say, "Well, if this works out then we'll do blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Via text with my friend or on the phone with him and he will say this to me. He will say, "Not if, when." He will say, "We are bringing when energy to getting this done. We are bringing when energy to making this happen."

Robert doesn't use the word if. He doesn't say, "If I can figure this out." Or, "If we can do our summer event." Or "If I reach my goal." There is no if in Robert's world, only when. He says, "When I figure this out. When I reach my goal. When we do our event. When I become a millionaire. When I buy my dream house." When, not if.

This is the attitude that allows Robert to succeed no matter what. Even when the world feels so unpredictable, for people like Robert failure is simply not an option. Losing revenue is not an option. Disappointing

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customers is not an option. Giving up is not an option. If is not an option. There is only when. When I figure this out. When this works. When I win.

I wanted to open today's episode with this story about Robert to inspire you, and motivate, you and get you into the right frame of mind for the rest of today's show. I don't want to hear anybody saying, "I wonder if I can earn money during these uncertain times." No, no, no, no. No if, only when and how. We are going to plan to win, not plan to fail. In 2020, in 2021, in 2022, every year, no matter what.

I know you may be wondering, "But how can I plan ahead when the world turns upside down every month? How can I set goals and make plans when the future feels so uncertain?" Well, I've got some thoughts on this.

Number one, first and foremost, it's important to focus on the things that are certain because a lot of things are very certain. There is a great deal of solidity, repetition, and predictability in our world, even now. Even in the midst of a pandemic. Even with a regime change here in the United States, right? Now and forever, now and always, now and throughout history, no matter what is happening in the economy, the following things are always true.

People always want to make more money. This is always true. People always want to feel healthier and have more energy. This too is always true. And people always want to meet someone special and find love. People always want to keep the spark alive in a long-term relationship. People always want to educate their children. People always want a beautiful home. People always need to eat. People always want puppies.

People always want to be entertained and have a temporary escape from the pressures and troubles of life. People always want to have babies. People always need to plan funerals. People always want to figure out how to work less and play more. People always want to set new goals for the

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new year. People always want glowing skin and healthy hair, and want to look and feel their best. People always have problems and need solutions to those problems.

I could go on and on, but you get my point. Even during a pandemic, even during an economic downturn, even during a social justice revolution, even during a transition from one president to another, no matter what there are certain things that human being always want and always need. These are the things that people will invest in and pay for always always.

We are very predictable creatures in so many ways. Let this provide some comfort to you, especially if you are a business owner. Yes, there is uncertainty in the world but there is also a great deal of certainty. So, if you feel anxious about the future focus on what is known. Focus on what is certain. Let this provide some solid grounding under your feet. Remind yourself there is actually a great deal of certainty in this world. There is a lot I can predict and rely on.

In my own life there are many things that are always certain no matter what. I know that if I feel upset a great workout always makes me feel a little bit better. And I know that I am the breadwinner for my family and that not making option is not acceptable, it's not going to work. I know that spending time with my kids is always the right choice and always a priority. I know that going outside and breathing fresh air is an answer to my problems. I know that connecting with my friends helps get my priorities right every single time. I know I need therapy, pretty much always, right? I always want to grow and improve and heal from trauma. I know that if Beyoncé drops and album it's going to be amazing, obviously, and I'm definitely purchasing it. Right?

Like there is a lot of certainty. In my company, Hello Seven, there are many things that feel certain too. For instance, we know that about 90% of our Club members renew their membership every month while 10% decide to

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leave. It's pretty predictable month to month. We know that if we send four newsletters to our mailing list, release four podcast episodes, and do four additional promotional emails per month then all of that free content will provide a ton of value and will help us maintain or increase our Club enrollment numbers with business owners ready to dig in and learn more from us.

We can see a direct correlation between action and result, right? I know that I can plan for the 10% of our Club members that will leave. I know that I can plan for the amount of content that we want to put out to serve our community every single month, right? I know that if we have a bad month, I'm good on that because I've also planned for that and have also padded my savings, right? So, I have business savings that are there to cover us should we have a bad month. And that is exactly what covered us last year during the pandemic.

This is one reason why, as a CEO, I love seeing weekly and monthly reports. I love to see the data. Show me the numbers, every time all the time. How many new Club members, how many new social media followers, how many book sales, I find it really empowering to look at the data because the data doesn't lie. It's powerful to know, "Okay, if I keep doing X, Y, Z then we're pretty likely to get to this specific result.

You can do this in your own business too. Look at what you did in the last month, look at the results you got or didn't get, look at the data, look at the facts. Use this to choose your next moves. Even better, if you were tracking data in 2020 look at all of the data you collected in 2020 and review that information and see what story it is telling you.

Again, by focusing on what is known you can reduce your anxiety levels and feel more grounded and secure in life and in business too. We don't know exactly what the future will hold but what are the things that we do

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know? Focus on those. That's the first thing that I want to emphasize to you.

Number two, another thing I want to mention is the importance of commitment and consistency. Most people set a goal, make a plan, work the plan for one or two weeks, then give up and start over from scratch. New goal, new plan. This is usually a mistake. When you give up too quickly, you're missing out on the rewards. You have to commit, stick with it, keep working the plan. And give things a chance to actually yield results.

For example, let's say your goal is to get five new clients, okay cool. You want five new clients; your plan is to contact 50 potential clients and invite each person to hire you. You're going to contact people via email, text, phone, and through your mailing list. You'll keep going until you book five clients. Great goal, great plan, we love it.

So, you dive in, you start contacting people, you contact three people and the first three people all happen to say, "No thank you." and then what happens? You panic. You freeze. You stop contacting people. You figure this is never going to work so you go ahead and give up. You go back to the drawing board, new goal, new plan, new mission statement, new brand identity, pivot, pivot, pivot.

Do you see how this is a mistake? You're quitting before you even gave the plan a chance to work. Instead of giving up so quickly and pivoting a million times and exhausting yourself in the process, what if you decided how about I stick with the original plan for a while? Let me see how that works if I give it a little bit more time. Stick with it. Yes, of course, you can make adjustments and refine as you go, but if you are dramatically reinventing your business every month that is not a smart move.

Through the pandemic I have watched so many business owners get pivot crazy. Pivoting way too much. Completely new audience, new offer, new

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marketing plan, new website, every other second. This is exhausting and puts you into a state where you are constantly rebuilding and reinventing. But never moving forward and gaining momentum. To succeed you have to cultivate more stickiness, all right? Improve your stick-to-itness. Stick with your goal, stick with your plan, commit for a while.

Remember the story I told you about Robert earlier in this episode? He had to adjust his event plan a couple of times due to unforeseen circumstances, however, he didn't waiver from his original intention. He planned to deliver an outstanding event providing the best musical theater training on earth for students ages 12 and up. And that is exactly what he did. He had to shift from New York City to an online format, but the overall mission, and vision, and curriculum did not change. He was committed and he did not waiver.

There's a lesson here for all of us. In an uncertain world you need to be even more steady and certain. You need to present consistency and commitment to you clients. You don't want to be yet another uncertain element in an already uncertain world. You want to be a person and a company that people can rely on. How could you make your work, your company even more committed, consistent and reliable? Think on that.

Also, do you have a tendency to panic and reinvent everything every couple of weeks? Stop that shit. Commit and work the plan. Show your customers that you are always going to be here, that your business is always going to be here on the same mission, solving the same problems. That is what your people need right now.

Number three, so we're discussing how to plan when the future feels unpredictable. One last point I want to mention. When the pandemic began everything felt new and bizarre and we all had to adjust quickly. Face masks, hand sanitizer, temperature checks, travel restrictions, working online, school online. It was a lot of change very quickly.

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But now we've been rolling like this for a while, we've had a chance to settle into our routines. This stuff isn't surprising anymore, it's basically our new normal, right? As a business owner you know that large in-person events aren't going to be possible for a while. You know that international travel is going to be tough for a while. You know that most people are going to be working virtually for a while. You know all of this so plan accordingly.

How can you plan ahead to make sure that you're keeping you clients happy? How can you help your employees enjoy their work from home and avoid burnout? How can you comply with COVID-19 guidelines to keep people safe? COVID is no longer a big surprise, so let's stop acting surprised, and shocked, and shooketh, and let's plan with this reality in mind.

Within my company, Hello Seven, we are planning ahead into 2021 and even 2022. Our mission to help women earn more money and build wealth, this is consistent, this is not changing. And in fact, it's never been more important with the amount of women that are leaving the workforce every single month due to this pandemic. We are needed more than ever by the women that we serve.

So we're asking ourselves, "How can we continue doing that and do it better than ever? How can we deliver online experiences that are just as good, if not better than meeting in person? How can we keep our clients excited, inspired, and entertained online? How can we help women feel connected and build a close-knit community that feels intimate even when we're all separated? And how can we help our women entrepreneur clients stay in business and build even stronger businesses in the middle of this pandemic?"

A few ideas that we're really excited about is one, some of the upgrades that we are making to The Club. Which include rolling out new content. We have a new course called the Hello Seven Growth Scale that's rolling out in

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the next couple of weeks. We have a We Should All Be Millionaires course that will be coupled with the book in May so that our Club members can work through the contents of the book in this new course format. We also have new features, such as we are adding unlocks to our membership.

So, we are going to start rewarding our members who stay for six months, or a year, or two years, or three years. Our mission is to help women entrepreneurs build million-dollar business in three years. And so we really want our clients to stay for three years so that they can get the full benefit and hit that seven-figure mark. And so, we've decided to add new features and benefits approximately every six months. So, when you are a member for six months it's going to unlock a new library of content. And when you're a member for 12 months it's going to unlock a new planning session.

And so you get different features and benefits available to you as you stay and be a member longer and longer. This benefits our clients, it benefits us, it allows us to not overwhelm our clients by giving them too much too fast, but still allows us to continue to serve them at a higher and higher level over the course of three years. So, we are so pumped about that.

We have pods that our members have formed to get together in small groups and work through their challenges and mastermind together. And so now we are creating a better way to find pods to join and join our pod directory. We're going to have challenges for pods and we have all kinds of cool stuff planned to allow more and more of our Club members to be able to meet in small group settings.

In addition to all of the benefits of The Club, of course, we are super excited about the book. We're excited about We Should All Be Millionaires. The publication date for that is May 4th, so it's coming up real soon and we're really excited to be rolling out all kinds of goodies and marketing related to the book. And, of course, we are excited to get the book in the

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hands of our audience so that you can get this incredible content that we've created for you.

We are looking forward to the day when we can do conferences and retreats and events at my new ranch. We're planning Kentucky Derby parties, book parties, and all those beautiful things. But until it's safe to do that we are working with the reality that we've got and there's so much we can do right now.

One other thing that I forgot to mention that we're really excited about is that we've decided to keep working with DJ Shammy Dee, our beloved DJ who has been DJing my events and parties for quite a while. He is actually going to be doing some fun parties and events inside The Club for our members so that we can incorporate more fun and more excitement and more energy into The Club experience. So, that's another way that we are taking the world that we live in right now and still adding in some fun and some connection.

So friends, we've been discussing planning in an unpredictable world. Here are the main points that I want you to remember. Yes, the future is always unpredictable, this has always been true. There is uncertainty in our world and there is also a great deal of certainty as well. The sun will rise in the morning. The sun will set in at night. Your rent is due on the first. If you have unprotected sex you might get pregnant. You kids need to be educated, and clothed, and fed. And customers always want loving relationships, and more money, and deep sleep, and delicious food, and glowing skin, and healthy hair.

There are certain things that people always want and need and will pay for, no matter what is happening in the world. Focus on what is known, what is certain, and let this ground you.

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Number two, set a goal, make a plan, and work the plan. Stick with it, commit to it. Sure, you can make small refinements as you go along but don't panic and quit too soon and then go and reinvent everything. There are times when it is appropriate to make a major pivot in your business. But if you're doing a major pivot every month that's too much.

Number three, remember that COVID is no longer a big surprise. You know the dealio, right? You know the drill. You know we're going to be working online and avoiding large gatherings and avoiding travel for a while. Plan accordingly.

And, of course, be mindful of your attitude. You can play into the drama, you can allow yourself to feel victimized and powerless, you can tell yourself, "Oh, things are so unpredictable right now, it's so hard to plan ahead, it's so hard to make money, everything is so hard." You can cultivate that type of attitude if you want to, or you can tell yourself, "Yes, some things are unpredictable and some things are very predictable. I'm going to focus on what is known, what is certain, and focus on creating the opportunities that I want."

If you ask 100 people to hire you, chance are several people will say yes. If you practice playing the guitar for 30 minutes a day 100 days in a row, your skills will improve. If you do Pilates three days a week your core will get stronger. If you surround yourself with positive ambitious women who are determined to make more money, their energy will rub off on you. If you decide that failure is not an option, then failure will not be in your future.

These are facts you can count on. Many things are reliable. You put in effort; you get a result. You practice, you improve. You can feel trust and faith in many things. Most of all, you can place trust in yourself. You can navigate the road ahead. You can solve problems, you can find a way, you can make a lot of money. You can take care of yourself rain or snow, pandemic or not, you've got the gold inside of you. Of this you can be sure.

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Did you hear about the plan your year like a millionaire event? It was incredible. DJ Shammy was there, we got together and we had so much fun. And here's the exciting news, you can actually get the recordings. So, if you missed Plan Your Year Like a Millionaire, then you can still join in the fun and get all of the knowledgeable gems that I dropped for y'all. For the low price of four copies of my book, which is around \$100 you can get a million dollars' worth of game.

If you go to planyouryearlikeamillionaire.com you'll see the instructions right there. All you got to do is pre-order four copies of my new book, *We Should All Be Millionaires*, and then we will send you this beautiful course. The Plan Your Year Like a Millionaire event was incredible, we had so much fun, and now you'll be able to watch it from your couch, or your kitchen table, or your office, or whenever, on your own time. You get to decide.

In this incredible day of training, I shared how to set goals like a seven-figure boss. I taught how to spend your time on the right things. I taught how to build the support systems you need, how to bust out of a money rut and start generating more cash, and how to make smart decisions with your money even if you don't have much yet.

I spilled all the millionaire tea and shared concepts that will change your year. Whether you are currently earning zero money, some money, or lots of money you need this training and you will learn a ton. Everybody absolutely raved about it and I had the best time.

Go to planyouryearlikeamillionaire.com to learn how to get access to this incredible course. This even will set you up for a beautiful, successful year. I hope you will grab it for yourself.