



Alanna Levenson
Sales and Business Coaching
Career and Leadership Development

Creating Big Business Goals and The Benefits of Letting Go of Control

Increased Revenue by 800%

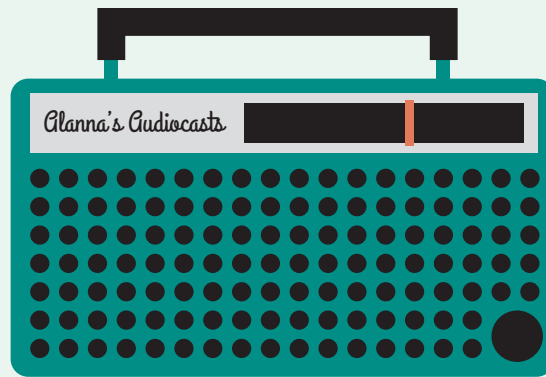
Interviewer: **Alanna Levenson, Founder of I Love My Life! Coaching**

Interviewee: **Michael McCurdy, McCurdy Construction**

**McCurdy Construction Information: In business for over 7 years,
10 employees, and \$1.5 million+ in revenue**

Below are the highlights of our conversation where he shares
what he has learned, and what has impacted his results.





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Alanna Levenson: Hi, this is Alanna Levenson with I Love My Life Coaching, and here with us I have Mike McCurdy with McCurdy Construction in Mesa, Arizona, who is a client of mine. He's agreed to participate in one of my client case studies, so thank you Mike for being here and agreeing to participate in this.

"I was never in construction before I started my business and just self-taught everything before that and during. My biggest thing was I wanted to grow my business I wanted to stop being broke, and I wanted to not be on the roller coaster anymore. I wanted to have a big business, I just didn't know what the next step was."

Mike McCurdy: You're welcome.

Alanna Levenson: I want to start out by allowing you the opportunity to tell us about you and your company.

Mike McCurdy: My name is Mike, and I am a general contractor in the Phoenix, Arizona, area. I've been in business for about six years. We do residential, commercial remodels, overall smaller stuff. Projects under \$100,000 for the most part. That's really about it.

Alanna Levenson: Okay, great. Before you started coaching with me, what were the challenges and concerns that you had that made you decide, "I'm interested in hiring a coach, a business coach"?

Mike McCurdy: Before I started coaching with you, my concerns were just really ... Like I knew there was something more, my sales were anywhere between \$150 and \$200-\$225 range, depending on how that year went, and I was on a roller coaster. I was up and down as far as sales because I was doing everything myself. I just had one helper.

Essentially, if I was on the job, then I wasn't doing bids. If I was doing bids, then I wasn't on the job. So I would get a lot of work and then get no work, and I'd get a lot of work and get no work. I wanted to get out of that roller coaster and I really had no idea as to what to do next.

I kind of taught myself everything with my business. I taught myself how to be a general contractor. I was never in construction before I started my business and just self-taught everything before that and during. My biggest thing was I wanted to grow my business I wanted to stop being broke, and I wanted to not be on the roller coaster anymore. I wanted to have a big business, I just didn't know what the next step was.

Alanna Levenson: Great. Thank you for sharing that with us.

If someone were to ask you, "Why did you decide to work with Alanna," what would you tell them?

Mike McCurdy: Alanna came as a recommendation to me from my cousin who lives in California. My cousin had never actually worked with her, but my cousin knew somebody who had worked with her, something like that, and thought Alanna would work with me well. My cousin, she had worked with a business coach. I talked to her once, I don't know how long ago it was, and she was totally slow like me. Then I talked to her about a year later and she was totally packed and busy and I'm like, "Well, I'm still slow." She said she hired a business coach. So roughly six months to a year later, I finally decided to call my cousin and find out who she felt I should talk to or get recommendations for a business coach. She said, "I don't think my business coach will work out good for you, but I do believe this person, Alanna, will. So go ahead and give her a call."

I gave Alanna a call. We talked for an hour. I liked her and decided to hire her, and then I got a lot of feedback from family and friends about how much money it was and stuff like that. But I went with Alanna anyway because I really liked her website, I liked the way she talked. She talked like she actually cared, as opposed to some of the other business coach websites that I saw that were more like a sales pitch or an infomercial or something like that, which didn't make me feel comfortable at all. But when I spoke to Alanna, when I saw her website, when I saw how she put her website together, it was more .. She actually cared about how her clients were doing and what they were doing and was going to individualize things to how that client needed help, as opposed to one approach for everybody.

She was just very genuine.

Alanna Levenson: Thank you.

“We all have families to feed, and just going off and being in business for yourself or whether you’re CEO of a company and you need to figure some things out, that’s where a business coach comes in as far as I’m concerned.”

I know that coaching was new to you and so, being that there are some people out there that are going to be listening to this who are also going to be new to coaching, how would you describe coaching to someone who hasn't worked with a coach before?

Mike McCurdy: Wow, that's a bit of a tough question, but I think it's basically ... Well, first of all, I would say, just no matter what, be honest with yourself and with your coach. It's not going to help if you're not.

Investment

It's an investment of your time and your money, but I guess getting coached ... Can you repeat the question? I'm getting off-topic already.

Alanna Levenson: Yeah.

If you're talking to someone who was interested in hiring a coach but they either have trepidation or hesitation, or they were just curious because it's a new thing that they didn't know was available to them. How would you describe what coaching is to them?

Mike McCurdy: Okay.

Alanna Levenson: Or the process. The process that we go through.

Creating Big Business Goals

Relaxed Fears

Mike McCurdy: Coaches, or Alanna, they ask you, they interview, they look for the areas that you're having problems with. Not everybody is going to have the

same problem. As far as I'm concerned, my problem with starting off was kind of an early problem, with making my business bigger. My business is bigger, but it's still growing. Whether you're a CEO of a big corporation that's having some issues, or you're somebody like me, who just owns a small business, they're going to tailor that stuff to your individual needs, or they should be tailoring that stuff to your individual needs.

It's not so much them telling you what to do, it's them using their experience to guide you in a way that is going to make things better for you because they're somebody sitting out the box who's seen a whole lot of other situations like yours, and maybe similar situations, and they're going to have suggestions of things you might want to do. "Okay, well, how about you work on this," and "That's actually going to help you to release this and help you to get rid of that fear and help you to move forward."

"My sales have gone from approximately a couple hundred thousand up to about \$2 million in a year and a half, which is amazing.

Besides that, just getting rid of the clouds. The way that I was running my business before was, everything was an emergency, everything was ... I was doing everything myself and I was walking around in a daze, in a fog, and what do I do next. I was afraid to do better because of the new problems I'd have to face. I was afraid to do better, I was afraid to get busier because of all the other stuff that I'd have to deal with: hiring employees, trusting employees."

I guess a lot of people, and I guess what I thought with coaching was somebody is going to sit down, write together, put together a business plan for you and all this stuff and tell you exactly what to do and blah, blah, blah, but that's not what it is. It's more than giving you a helping hand. You're still doing the work, but they're going to help you to relax some of your fears, to let loose some of your fears and trepidations about business in general because we all have our little fears about business, about going into business. It's a big risk.

Alanna Levenson: Yes you do.

Mike McCurdy: We all have families to feed, and just going off and being in business for yourself or whether you're CEO of a company and you need to figure some things out, that's where a business coach comes in as far as I'm concerned.

Alanna Levenson: Right. Well, and I appreciate you ... You didn't realize what you did is you actually painted a distinction between a consultant and a coach, that a consultant will usually come in and assess what's happening and then give you a report and then you're on your own, whereas a coach is there with you throughout the process. Thank you for clarifying that.

I remember a couple months ago, you and I were talking during one of our sessions together and you were saying that when you first hired me, you thought, "Oh I'll just hire her for three months and that's it."

We've been working together for a long time now. What would you say to somebody else about why stick with the process? Why keep it going?

Personal Productivity

Mike McCurdy: First of all, your statement about me thinking I was going to hire you for three months just brought a smile on my face, only because I'm talking to you right now. I'm not going to laugh out loud, but that's what I felt like doing because even thinking about hiring you for three months is just humorous because you've been such a help, after that three-month, six-month, nine-month, one-year term. It's just been such an incredible thing and I've stuck with it because every new level that I reach, I have new issues. I have new problems that I have to work out, I need somebody to talk to about and help me, with somebody who's more experienced, who's seen a lot more than I have.

Each new level brings its own challenges and brings its own little things that I've got to get past and I've got to work on. Having had Alanna there to help me with those things, it's the best investment I've ever made, of time and money. The best investment that I've ever made.

There is no advertising that could have done the things for me that she's done. I could have spend 10 times the amount of money advertising and

had no idea what to do with it if the business came or I had no idea what to do with it when people started calling me. Probably would have begun to have gone out of business or something. But having her to help me and guide me along has made all the difference in the world.

As my business grows, and I've already talked to Alanna about this, as my business grows, there is no chance that I won't be talking to her once every three weeks, once a month or something like that, for the rest of the time that I'm in business.

Alanna Levenson: I look forward to that. It's been fun watching you grow and evolve and your business expand. It's been fantastic.

That leads me into my next question. Why would you say coaching has been a positive and productive investment for you and your business?

Mike McCurdy: Besides the fact my sales have gone up 10 times and the goals that I've set forth ... My sales have gone from approximately a couple hundred thousand up to about \$2 million in a year and a half, which is amazing.

Besides that, just getting rid of the clouds. The way that I was running my business before was, everything was an emergency, everything was ... I was doing everything myself and I was walking around in a daze, in a fog, and what do I do next. I was afraid to do better because of the new problems I'd have to face. I was afraid to do better, I was afraid to get busier because of all the other stuff that I'd have to deal with: hiring employees, trusting employees. Anything else that comes along with having employees.

As things have been moving along, I get more and further and further into it and I hire more people, having her there with me is ... I don't want to say it's a comfort, but it kind of is.

I don't want to sound like I can't do it on my own, but I'm doing it a lot better with her. Having her to speak to, having her to, you know ... "What do you think about this? Maybe this is what you should try. Maybe you should work on this or do work on this," and "I see what your problem is." She's looking at things from outside of my perspective and each of us is not always going to see every perspective, especially when we're inside the situation.

Alanna Levenson: Yeah, it's having that objective point of view.

Mike McCurdy: Yes, it makes a big difference.

Alanna Levenson: Including myself.

Mike McCurdy: Yes, it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference.

Alanna Levenson: Speaking of employees, how would you say coaching has made you a better manager, employer, business owner?

Hiring Employees

Developing a Management Team

Mike McCurdy: Well, the first thing is, is after coaching I actually got the guts to hire employees. To hire more employees.

That was a big thing. I still shake my head every time I have to do payroll each week, because it's gone from almost nothing to seven times what I was spending on payroll each week before, but I'm getting a lot more work done. I'm getting a lot more jobs. I've started hiring management-position people.

“Don't BS yourself. It's not worth it. You have to be honest with yourself, you have to at least ...If you're going out looking for a coach, you have to at least partially know what's wrong. You might not know to fix it, but chances are you know that you've got some issue or something, or you wouldn't be seeking out a coach. You have to know partially what your weaknesses are.”

As far as my management style, I thought I already had a pretty good management style, but doing it in somebody else's company and then having to do it myself in my own company and do everything else as well, it's been a learning experience because Alanna's seen a lot. She's seen a lot more than I have, and I thought I was a pretty good manager already but she's given me some pointers. I still feel like I'm a pretty

good manager of people. I can be the owner, but I've also got to manage people. That's part of owning a business.

Strengths and Weaknesses

She had definitely given me some insight into some of those things. Little, subtle things, maybe not like big, giant "Aha" moments, of which I think there were probably a few, I just can't think of any off-hand. But the subtle nudges and the subtle things that she brings with it help me to do a better job and help me to be more conscious and more conscientious as to how I'm treating my employees, how I'm talking to my employees, how I'm running my employees, how I'm using my employees, in order for my business to be better and more well-equipped to handle more business and to keep growing.

Alanna Levenson: Yeah, because when you they're equipped and they're a solid part of the business, then they help develop the foundation to keep growing or to keep expanding, and they can actually be a help to you and support to you in that process.

Mike McCurdy: Yes.

Alanna Levenson: Mike, what else would you want someone to know about coaching or working with me, so they can leverage to benefit from it?

Anything that you'd want to share with someone about a coach, about the process of coaching, or about working with me so that they can leverage that process to benefit further for themselves.

Mike McCurdy: I kind of said this in the beginning. I got off track, but the first thing, most important thing, is we know when we're BS-ing ourselves, when we're BS-ing somebody else. Don't BS yourself. It's not worth it. You have to be honest with yourself, you have to at least ...If you're going out looking for a coach, you have to at least partially know what's wrong. You might not know to fix it, but chances are you know that you've got some issue or something, or you wouldn't be seeking out a coach. You have to know partially what your weaknesses are. I would imagine most of us know what our weaknesses are and what our strengths are.

If you're honest with yourself, if you're honest with her, the quicker you get rolling on it, the more effective it's going to be.

Business Growth

Increased Sales and Revenue

Coaching for me at the time was an enormous investment, huge, but it's been the best investment I've ever made, whether personal, private, business, whatever. I'm 42 years old now. It's definitely the best investment I've ever made. I can't think of anything that I've ever done better: stock market, houses, doesn't matter.

It shows with my business. Before, I was selling a couple hundred thousand dollars a year steadily for five years. Now I'm selling \$2 million a year, and I want to sell \$5 million in the next five years, and in the next seven years, \$10 million or something like that. I can't remember exactly what my goals were, but that stuff ... If you start off honest with her and honest with yourself, then you've got a good chance at rolling through. I can't imagine anybody not benefiting from this, I really can't. As long as they actually want to benefit.

Alanna Levenson: They have to want to do that, for sure.

Mike McCurdy: Yes, they have to want to benefit from it. But if you want to benefit from it, I can't imagine somebody not benefiting from it. It just wouldn't make sense to me.

Alanna Levenson: So Mike, one more question. What do you think the most important thing you've learned about yourself from business coaching is?

Mike McCurdy: Gosh, I don't know. It's a tough question.

About myself in business or about myself personally, or-

Alanna Levenson: Or any of it. What's the most important thing you've learned about you from this process?

Mike McCurdy: I think that I'm really hard on myself. At least that's what I hear, and I probably am, but you have to be hard on yourself to be great. But at least

I'm aware of it now. It's not just ... You do. It's not just me doing things. I can appreciate the fact that I'm hard on myself, that's what Alanna tells me about every week, but I'm aware of it. I haven't changed it yet. Maybe I won't change it, I'm not sure, but that's probably the thing that I've learned most.

The second-most is that I can do it, it is possible. Having a business and running a business and how difficult it is and the amount of debt you get into in the beginning. I would say for probably most people ... It would be nice if everybody got into business and it was easy and we all made lots of money, but that's not the reality. It's not easy, it's hard. If it was easy, everybody would do it. But the benefits can be awesome.

The fact that I'm hard on myself, and the fact that I've learned that I can do it, that it is possible, and that with some hard work and a little knowledge, totally possible, you can make things work and make other people work for you.

Employees are Assets

Letting Go of Control

Using your employees, not necessarily using them but using your assets, which your employees are some of your assets to make your business better, and delegating to make your business better. As a business owner, I wanted to do everything myself and didn't trust anybody to do anything, and unless I did it, it wasn't right. I had to let go of that.

That was actually the biggest thing, me letting go of control. Right there. Me letting go of control, and me not feeling like I had to do everything in order for it to be correct. That was the biggest thing I learned. That was the biggest benefit from hiring Alanna was that right there.

“...it is possible. Having a business and running a business and how difficult it is and the amount of debt you get into in the beginning. I would say for probably most people ... It would be nice if everybody got into business and it was easy and we all made lots

of money, but that's not the reality. It's not easy, it's hard. If it was easy, everybody would do it. But the benefits can be awesome."

I'm sure that any people that own businesses that are listening right now, I'm sure they can probably relate that it's difficult to let go of control and it's difficult to turn things over to employees, to other people, and feel like it's going to be okay. That was really hard but necessary.

Alanna Levenson: Very necessary, especially if you want to grow. Yeah, letting go of control is a really, a really, really hard one. You're seeing it yourself that when you do allow yourself to let go, and enroll others in helping and supporting you in terms of growing your business, it's amazing what can happen.

Mike McCurdy: Right.

Alanna Levenson: Yeah. So Mike, any other last comments before we sign off?

Mike McCurdy: Just that the whole thing's been amazing.

It really has.

When I first started, I'm not going to say ... I wasn't skeptical. I was enthusiastic. I was not skeptical but I was enthusiastic but at the same time, it was a large investment for me, so I was a little nervous. But that was the best plunge I've ever taken. Just go ahead and do it.

Do it, put your mind to it, do it, and stick with it and you'll see results. The whole three-month, six-month thing, that's not even a thought to me anymore. Whether it's three months or six months, I just keep going. Keep doing it and you'll keep getting better. The only reason to ever stop is if you want to stop growing your business, when your business gets too big and you say, "Well, you know, I think I've had enough." That's the only time ever to stop. Other than that, I really can't imagine not speaking to her once every few weeks to help me through my most recent issues or problems or whatever. Business problems, that is.

Alanna Levenson: Of course, yes. Yes.

Well thank you, Mike, for saying yes to participating in this. I appreciate it very much and-

Mike McCurdy: Thank you for having me.

Alanna Levenson: I look forward to working with you, so if anybody has any questions-

Mike McCurdy: I look forward to it.

Alanna Levenson: If anybody has any questions about the process or any of my services, feel free to contact me and I'm happy to get in touch with you. So thanks again.

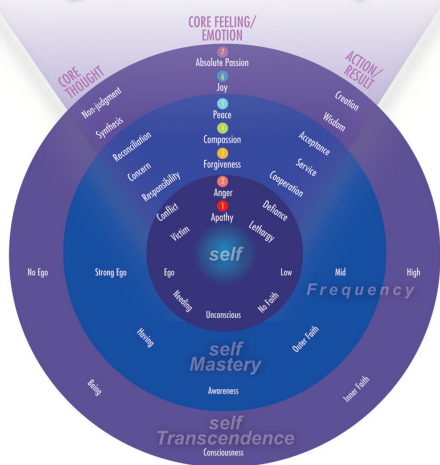
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